



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Critical Quality of Life Issues Special Committee: Access to Healthcare Working Group Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2022

1:00 pm

Lynwood Roberts Room

First Floor, City Hall

117 W. Duval Street

Topic: Critical Quality of Life Issues Special Committee: Access to Healthcare Working Group

Attendance: Council President Freeman; Council Members Newby, Boylan, and Salem; Elizabeth Payne and Noel Comeaux - Northeast Florida Regional Council; Trista Carraher - Council Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey - Council Research Division

Subject Matter Experts: Jennifer Ryan, CEO Volunteers in Medicine; Paul Sapia, Humana

Convened: 1:03 pm

Council Member Newby welcomed the group and called for introductions. He talked about the importance of healthcare access for all, regardless of income. CM Boylan explained the working group process, that will include input from subject matter experts and entities within the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The group will examine the scope of healthcare access in Jacksonville, what is being done to address it and by whom, and the best practices or policies other communities are utilizing. He also noted that council's role in this process is to convene the relevant parties to affect change by making evidence-based policy recommendations in the committee's final report. CVP Salem said that council needs specific actionable recommendations from the group.

Jennifer Ryan, CEO Volunteers in Medicine, reviewed the schedule of meetings, and said that the second meeting will address best practices. She also mentioned that attendees should invite any relevant parties not in attendance today to future meetings to be a part of this process. Paul Sapia, Humana, welcomed the group and noted the level of expertise in the room. He said the goal of this group is to compose proposals to increase access to healthcare.

Susan Grich, CEO Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida (HPCNEF), gave a presentation with an overview of healthcare access. HPCNEF is one of only 11 local health councils in Florida created by state statute, and they provide objective health-related data, planning, and analysis for the public as well as hospitals, health departments, health clinics, nursing homes, and a variety of other health-based coalitions in Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns, and Volusia counties. She defined healthcare "access" to mean that everyone has appropriate personal health services available to achieve the greatest possible health outcomes, including at minimum Primary Care, Specialty Care, Hospital Care, Emergency Care, Rehabilitative Care. She spoke about challenges and barriers to healthcare access, such as lack of insurance, trust, transportation, care provider shortages, culture/language variances, lack of broadband for telehealth and limited preventive care resources. Ms. Grich listed some of the entities providing services in the city, including Agape, Volunteers in Medicine, WeCare Jax, and UF Health/Shands.

Ms. Grich explained the upcoming “unwinding” of Medicaid, and she said that during the COVID pandemic there was a 20 percent increase in Florida Medicaid participation, but that when the national public health emergency ends there will be a huge challenge due to a review of eligibility. During the pandemic, Medicaid agencies may not disenroll anyone from Medicaid unless they ask to be disenrolled, move out of state, or die which has allowed millions of people to stay covered without any interruption. When the continuous coverage requirement ends, states will begin the process of “unwinding” and reviewing all their enrollees’ eligibility for Medicaid. State Medicaid officials will reevaluate each person’s eligibility and many could lose their coverage if they earn too much, don’t receive their notification or don’t provide the information their state needs to verify their income or residency. Ms. Grich estimated that as many as 3 out of 4 children in Florida may lose coverage. She also said that roughly 12 percent of Duval residents have no health insurance at all. Ms. Grich spoke about goals for this working group, to include increasing the number of insured individuals, more funding for safety net agencies, and assistance with insurance enrollment.

There was a discussion and questions and answer session between the attendees and the panel. The following healthcare issues for consideration were discussed:

- social determinants of health impacted by income and socio-economic status (nutrition, water/air quality, safe shelter/housing, transportation)
- income gaps in eligibility for Affordable Care Act coverage
- access to healthcare barriers for those with disabilities
- dental, vision and mental health care access
- lack of knowledge about available resources, educational campaign, directory of resources
- food as a component of healthcare
- differences in healthcare access and health outcomes as related to zip code
- private sector involvement in increasing access
- effect of the minimum wage increase on income limits for insurance and Medicaid
- UF Food Pharmacy
- Infant mortality
- Social service assistance coordinated through health care provider offices

The focus for the next meeting will be best practices to healthcare access used in other cities and counties, and is scheduled for September 29, 2022, at 1:00 pm.

Adjourned: 2:38 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

CHampsey@coj.net 904.255.5151

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