

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE STUDY SESSION

October 19, 2019

To: Alta Healthcare District Board

Presented By: Al Serna and Chad Thompson

On Saturday, October 19, 2019, thirty-eight members of the community met for 5 ½ hours at the Dinuba Senior Citizens Center. The group came from all over the District and represented all age groups from high school youth to senior citizens. After going through introductory materials, the group dealt with three separate breakout sessions consisting of the following general topic areas:

1. What are the major physical health issues in the District and what are some recommendations to best address them?
2. What are the major mental health issues in the District and what are some recommendations to best address them?
3. What are the areas where preventative actions can best address physical and mental health issues before they actually proceed to become an illness or condition?

Each Board member facilitated the discussion at their assigned table with the participants switching tables after each topic was dealt with. So, there were 5 group discussion for each of the three topical sessions. The results of each of the breakout sessions is attached to this report as Appendix A. After the breakout groups concluded their discussion, they reported back to the group at large as to their findings on each topic. The groups had available a healthcare survey taken of 160 residents of the District and a memo showing the type of programs, projects and services being provided with other healthcare districts throughout the State.

After the three breakout sessions were concluded and reported out to the group at large, each table was then asked to select the most significant issues that had been identified. After reporting the priority issues the breakout groups were asked to identify the best recommendations for dealing with those issues. This then led to a general discussion amongst all participants to finalize a listing of issues and recommendations that make up the substance of this report.

It was pointed out that the District annually receives approximately \$500,000 in property tax revenue to distribute to worthwhile endeavors. The District does not own

property or have employees but rather operates as an agency that makes grants to other municipal organizations or non-profits to partner with and support those entities projects, programs and services. It was important when developing recommendations to remain practical because while \$500,000 was a significant amount of funds it certainly was not an unlimited funding source. The goal was to look for ways to maximize the effectiveness of the funding throughout the District.

One general theme that got a lot of traction during the discussions was the idea of “Bright Spots.” The idea was to look to programs, projects and services that were already working in the District and find ways to expand and enhance those whenever possible. Rather than focusing on creating the new from the ground up, instead focusing on supporting those programs, projects and services that had an established track record.

Another theme that emerged was building community through communication and collaboration. The Board was encouraged to look at how it could encourage various organizations within the District to work together cooperatively to accomplish more than any single organization can on its own. To the extent silos exist in the approach to dealing with health issues, that efforts be made to eliminate the silos to learn to work in a collaborative environment. The Board should be encouraged to add a section to its grant application requesting to know what collaboration the applicant is already engaged in and how a grant could be used in ways to create greater collaboration.

There was also a discussion about how to best allocate the available funding. There are lots of good ways to spend the monies, but the goal needs to be to allocate the funding in such a way to achieve the best results for the overall District. This means trying to focus on the issues raised during the Study Session and the proposal for addressing those issues. It requires on occasion to say no to a “good” project in favor of being able to fund the “best” projects.

It was also recognized that in the end these are simply recommendations to the Board and that it needed to retain its independent judgment to make ultimate decisions about what programs, projects and services to make grants to. These recommendations are to serve as guidelines to be considered as the Board moves forward with its work from meeting to meeting.

The attendees were also encouraged to help find programs, projects and services that they could bring before the District in line with the day’s discussions. Further, they were encouraged to attend and participate in the upcoming meetings of the Board. The Board’s regularly scheduled meetings are at 11:00 AM on the third Thursday of the months of January, March, May, July, September and November at either the Dinuba Library or Fire Station.

Two attendees at the Study Session, Al Serna and Chad Thompson, agreed to present this Report and Recommendations to the Board at the November Meeting. The Board will then decide whether to accept and adopt it.

What follows are the recommendations that came from the full body of the Study Session after the breakout sessions were concluded. The first discussion was to sort through all the issues and recommendations that had come out of the 15 separate breakout discussions that had been reported out to the group in general. The question was that out of all the things that had been suggested what should be looked at further.

Issues

1. Access for services to treat physical and mental illnesses
2. Transportation for residents to access services
3. Obesity/Physical Fitness
4. Training of medical staff (developing a pipeline of students to provide services within the District)
5. Senior Services (various needs were discussed in this general area)
6. Air Quality – Pollution/Allergies (improving air quality is beyond the resources of the District, but coming up with ways to address outcomes of poor air quality is the issue)
7. Drug and Alcohol Addiction
8. Addressing the stigma related to mental health (both as to the person dealing with mental health issues as well as their family members)
9. Trauma and Depression
10. Bullying (especially among the youth)
11. Social/Emotion Issues
12. PTSD/Bi-Polar conditions
13. Nutrition
14. Homelessness

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

1. Bright Spots – Don't recreate the wheel. Look for who is already engaged and what is working and work to enhance and expand that.
2. Education and Training.
3. Provide information on a wide variety of subjects to targeted audiences.
4. Provide training on dealing with various physical and mental ailments.
5. Access to expanded local medical care, especially during off hours.
6. Provide more local urgent care.
7. Exercise facilities. Expanded physical fitness opportunities.
8. Identify the most beneficial senior services and expand them.

9. Services that deal with the outcomes of bad air (Cannot fix the air itself.)
10. Peer Counseling.
11. Training on coping skills and intervention skills.
12. Shelter for homeless that act as half-way houses.
13. Family resource centers.
14. Promote Youth – Seniors connections.
15. Early diagnosis and treatment in both mental and physical arenas.
16. Work with faith-based entities.
17. More counselors and mental health professionals.

Realizing again the financial limitations of the District and the fact that not everything could be accomplished, the attendees were asked to work and prioritize the issues and ideas into something more focused and do-able and the District moved forward. The Board should look to allocate funds in such a way that the focus is to address these identified issues as a priority. This is not meant to exclude the ability to fund issues off the list, but rather keep these priorities in focus at all times.

Prioritizing Issues

1. Access to local physical and mental services (urgent care and after hours)
2. Early Assessment (developing tools to address physical and mental issues before the rise to the level of an illness)
3. Transportation (work with those already providing transportation to improve and increase those services throughout the District)
4. Workforce Development (provide expanded training to provide new personnel to service those in the District)
5. Access to drug and alcohol addiction treatment
6. Senior issues (loneliness being one specific area. Look to develop youth-senior connections)
7. Mental Health issues across the board need to be addressed
8. Nutrition/Food/Security

After the issues were prioritized the entire group was asked to identify recommendations of the best ways to effectively deal with the issues. There are a lot of ways to address the issues however what would be most effective from both a cost and impact basis. Remember, the work basically needs to be done through local non-profits and municipal entities.

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

1. Look for ways to expand both physical and mental health services that already exist by expanding access and hours of availability.
2. Look into creating joint powers arrangements with such entities.

3. Focus on building collaborative arrangement between organizations within the community that are focused on various healthcare needs.
4. Identify what is already working and seek to expand and enhance those things.
5. Look to leverage resources by favoring projects, programs and services that have matching funds available.
6. Work with the current transportation services within the District to expand and enhance those services.
7. Use programs, projects and services already in place to get out educational materials and training. Food distribution services is one place where this could be done.
8. Look to develop a marketing budget to promote projects, programs and services that are being funded throughout the district. Expanding communication should be a priority.
9. Efforts should be made to take the work of the District and have it help to build community. What can we do for ourselves within the District to enhance physical and mental health outcomes? Local empowerment is a key.

APPENDIX A

What are the major physical health issues in the District and what are some recommendations to best address them?

Group 1 – Session 1

Issues

Access to Medical Services

Lack of Transportation

Outreach on Medical Services

In-home services/outreach

Lack of importance of physical health

Seasonal Employees don't qualify for medical services

Evening hours

Annual exams

Lack of Education on nutrition and health

Lack of access to Gyms for fitness

Urgent Care needs

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Collaboration with schools

Fitness center/access to exercise

Nutrition education

Group 2 – Session 1

Issues

Access to healthcare

Non-insured/Uninsured

Education

Retention for Medical Professionals

Access to Transportation

Obesity

Fitness centers

After hours medical attention

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Scholarship loan to give back to the community/grow students

Job Shadow Drs./EMTs/Nurses

Scholarships for adults who go back to school

Group 3 – Session 1

Issues

Mobility issues for seniors

Transportation

Medical Management

Medicine

Physical activity for children

Lack of knowledge of Nutrition and health

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Asma/Medical Education

Workshops informing people on Nutrition

Air quality education and how allergies affect people

Nutrition Tips

Group 4 – Session 1

Issues

Ambulance Services

Lack of opportunity for physical exercise

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Expand bright spots

Outreach campaign

Walking trails to give people opportunity to exercise

Exercise Equipment/Opportunities for trainers

Keep youth involved with seniors

Expand community center and senior center

Group 5 – Session 1

Issues

Air Quality Education

Symptom Awareness for diabetes

Low-income patients

Lack of medicine knowledge

Awareness of signs of Dementia for seniors

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Local afterhours/weekend care

Weight loss program

Volunteer to bring the community together

Ramps

Yoga Classes

What are the major mental health issues in the District and what are some recommendations to best address them?

Group 1 – Session 2

Issues

Drug and Alcohol Addiction

Childhood depression

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Group 2 – Session 2

Issues

Depression

Lack of Coping skills

Knowledge of symptoms

Education – ability to diagnose

Development

Addiction/Smoking

Bullying/Stress in school

Social media issues

Loneliness in senior citizens

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Volunteering/ activities with senior citizens

Group 3 – Session 2

Issues

Mental health issues being identified

Services to access mental needs for children and adults

Coping mechanisms

Need access especially off hours

Homeless center

House facility

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Need program to identify these issues in the local community instead of transferring them somewhere else

Mental health facility

Group 4 – Session 2

Issues

Break down of all demographics

Stress and anxiety in children

Treatment options

Coping mechanisms

PTSD

Bi-Polar disorder

Availability of help

Loneliness in Senior Citizens

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Educate on signs and symptoms of anxiety, stress, and suicide

Reducing Stigma

Encouraging disclosure of mental health issues

Education on Medication

More faith-based options

Build a youth campaign to assist senior citizens

Group 5 – Session 2

Issues

Stigma of Mental Health

Self-medication

Use of Alcohol and drug to cope with mental awareness

Lack of family support/Connections

Homelessness

Loneliness in senior citizens

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Education of parents for mental health in children

Work with medical providers and parents to educate and help students dealing with mental health

Counselors to help with mental health awareness and support

Use family resource center to help educate parents and students and encourage acceptance

Early Intervention

What are the areas where preventative actions can best address physical and mental health issues before they actually proceed to become an illness or condition?

Group 1 – Session 3

Issues

Senior Involvement in community activities

Laziness

People self-medicating without healthcare education

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Gym memberships for senior citizens

Health Education

Farmer Markets to encourage involvement and health awareness

Food donations/recycling to homeless and get volunteers to deliver food some days

Developing a sense of community

Group 2 – Session 3

Issues

Education

Coping skills and openness of mental health

Investment/Attendance in education courses

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

“Next Steps” Program

Community engagement

Parenting partner

Education courses

Group 3 – Session 3

Issues

Awareness on Mental and Physical health

Resources exist but how do we get them out to people?

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Messaging and Outreach

Host Training Sessions

Preventive dental care

Simplify access channels

Pre-natal care

Early Intervention when illness is developing

Messages on Message boards

Group 4 – Session 3

Issues

Availability and access to medical services

Accessibility

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Possibly provide medical services through churches

Follow up connections by providers when services are sought

Encourage walking and provide sidewalk and better lighting

Free counseling/ability to keep it private

Neighborhood Watch/encourage positive neighborhood environment

Fall/Risk reduction programs for Senior Citizens

Group 5 – Session 3

Issues

Education and Communication

Improvement of environment in which people live

Ideas for Dealing with Issues

Coping classes in schools

Additional health related classes

Provide speakers who can provide mental and physical health awareness/needs