

Angelina County Vision 2020
Quality of Life Foundation – Healthcare Strategy Committee Meeting
May 11, 2007

The Healthcare Strategy Committee of the Quality of Life Foundation met on May 11, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. in the Community Room of The Lufkin/Angelina County Chamber of Commerce. Present were: Mark Hicks (Quality of Life Foundation Chairman), Betsy Wagnon, April Snelling, Jennifer Stevens, Tara Watson, Jim Wehmeier, and Susie Cardwell (Vision 2020 Coordinator).

The Healthcare strategy was reviewed with all of its options for improving service and limiting cost growth. Of those present, projects already in progress were discussed and other people that should be involved with the different options were suggested.

Option 1 - *Fiscal responsibility within Medicaid system:* It was suggested that a hospital CFO would be a good leader or participant for this option.

Option 2 - *Every adult and family will take “ownership” of his or her healthcare.* It was determined that this option could be coordinated with Infrastructure/Parks & Recreation Committee for things such as more hiking trails and public use facilities for improving personal health. Future outdoor walking areas were discussed by Tara Watson that Woodland Heights Hospital is preparing to add. These will not only be available to employees and patients, but to anyone that would like to walk there.

Option 3 – *Increase wellness and prevention programs* – Woodland Heights has several programs already in place such as the Red Hot Mamas program and the addition of a work-out/exercise facility at the hospital for its employees. It was discussed that Sharon Shaw of Angelina County & Cities Health District might be an asset to this Option.

Option 4 – *Nutrition and health education, particularly for the poor.* Sharon Shaw of Angelina County & Cities Health District might be very helpful on this option.

Option 5 – *Improve the availability of health insurance for employees, self-employed and small businesses.* Jim Wehmeier discussed that employee benefits packages are required for new businesses that they are soliciting for our area. They are encouraging things such as discounts to health clubs and physical fitness programs and tests to lower deductibles on health insurance plans.

Option 6 – *Provide opportunities to assist residents in understanding the health care system, insurance availability and the best way for each individual and family to insure availability of future health care.*

Option 7 – *Increase assisted living for elderly.* It was suggested that J.C. Burch of Pine Crest, someone from Castle Pines and other nursing home facilities outside of Lufkin be represented on this. Jim Wehmeier discussed the possibility of future development of

assisted living coming to Lufkin. The City does not solicit them, but there has been some interest brought to his attention.

Option 8 – Increase VA healthcare

Option 9 – Coordinate prescription plan for the elderly. There was discussion about the lack of coordination, distribution of information, and education for the elderly on prescription plans and how to access them, since these are through the pharmaceutical companies and not through the insurance companies. There needs to be some way to make these known to the elderly.

Option 10 – Include vision, dental and mental health services

Betsy Wagnon discussed the need for a centralized and organized system of sharing medical information electronically for medical facilities of all types, physicians, hospitals, etc. This is a huge task and is about to be attempted in Dallas. This would be a central location for all patient information throughout the area/city/county. This system is called Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO). This would be a huge benefit to:

Physicians: with access to information electronically in seconds on physicians in emergencies, when patients cannot communicate, etc.

Individuals: portability of medical information

Insurance: sharing of information to cut down on duplicate testing and procedures. This would be a huge money saving benefit.

This system would also help facilities identify drug seekers.

The next meeting was set for Friday, June 15th at 9:00 a.m. and everyone in attendance was encouraged to bring to this next meeting the people discussed that they feel could contribute to the ideas and options discussed.