

**Clark County Strategic Plan
Health Care Sub-Committee Meeting
March 8, 2007**

The health care sub-committee of the Clark County Strategic Plan met for a monthly meeting on Thursday, March 8, 2007 at HSU. A panel was assembled to discuss health care issues facing Clark County. The panel consisted of: Dr. Mark Jansen, MD; Dr. Jim Hankins, DDS; Greg Stubblefield, Interim Administrator of Baptist Medical Center; Dr. Barbara Landrum, HSU School of Nursing School Chairman; Dr. James Waymack, Veterinarian; Caron Manning, R.N. Scroll Technologies; Larry Thomerson, Pharmacist; John Miller, Clark County Health Department Director; Barbara Stewart, Baptist Home Health; and Karen Harper, Community Counseling Services.

Dr. Wesley Kluck facilitated the meeting. He introduced the health care co-chairs and thanked the panel and audience for their attendance and participation.

Question #1-Would Baptist Medical Center consider staffing a satellite clinic in Gurdon?

Greg Stubblefield reported the hospital could consider however they face difficulties in recruiting primary care physicians. He reported a new surgeon was coming to Arkadelphia and would share offices with Dr. McLeod, a new hopitailist is joining the BMC staff in April and a new OB-GYN is coming to Arkadelphia.

Question #2-What is the role of nurse practitioner in Arkadelphia Medical Clinic?

Dr. Mark Jansen reported the biggest disadvantage in employing a nurse practitioner is most medical doctors share corporate expenses and that is not feasible with a nurse practitioner. Most medical students go into specialty care because specialty care physicians have a more structured schedule and the pay difference between a specialist and a primary care physician is significantly different. Arkadelphia is hard to sell to medical students because of the demanding schedule as a primary care physician and the lower salary.

Question #3-Do local industries send employees out of town for physicals, drug screenings and workers compensation cases?

Caron Manning, RN at Scroll Technologies, reported Scroll conducts their own drug screening and physicals; however, workers compensation cases go to Hot Springs for evaluation. She reported the occupational health specialist where the employees go can offer an unbiased opinion of the case and the specialist does have primary care patients. Scroll has between 10 – 15 workers compensation cases per year. Scroll Technologies does use Baptist Medical Center for emergency situations. Caron also noted that each industry has different practices with regards to health care and their employees.

Question #4-What is your assessment of pharmacy's in Clark County?

Larry Thomerson, owner of Thomerson's Pharmacy in Gurdon, reported that the new Walgreen's will change the market. Walgreens will be open on Sunday which is needed in the community. Several local pharmacies will respond by also opening on Sunday. He also noted it is easy to get a pharmacy here but hard to find full-time pharmacists. Most pharmacy students (70%) are female and only want to work part-time.

Question #5- Is it possible for Henderson State University to offer a masters level program for a nurse practitioner?

Dr. Barbara Landrum, Chairman of the nursing department at HSU, said the university is currently doing long range planning. It is more feasible for HSU to offer a Masters degree in Nursing Administration. Because HSU has limited clinical sites, it is difficult to consider a masters level nurse practitioner program. Dr. Landrum said it comes down to volume verses efficiency. ***Where do HSU graduates go after graduation?*** Little Rock, Hot Springs, Texarkana and out of state. Arkansas retains 80% of graduates after nursing and Little Rock hospitals recruit HSU graduates heavily.

Question 6-What is the future roll of the Clark County Health Department in providing care in the county?

John Miller, Chairman of the Clark County Health Department, reported the health department wants to work closer with other medical services in the county. Another goal is to continue to provide health services to lower income residents. The future of the health department depends on the State Legislature. ***How prepared is Clark County for an emergency?*** Mr. Miller reported there is a plan in place; however, the plan needed to be modified to work with the 20% of local personal.

Question #7-What is Clark County's capacity in serving the home health needs of current and future residents?

Barbara Stewart, Baptist Home Health, said the home health industry will have to deal with an older population that is living longer. If Clark County is successful in recruiting retirees to the county, the future residents will bring with them financial resources to support more home health providers. Currently, there are only a few home health providers in the county serving the needs of the sick and elderly population.

Question #8-What is the need for large animal vet services?

Dr. James Waymack, Waymack Animal Hospital, reported the need is currently being met, however, in 2 or 3 years only a few large animal clinics will be open in the state. He noted that small animal vets get paid more that large animal vets.

Question #9-Is it possible to have a psychological inpatient facility in Clark County?

Karen Harper, Community Counseling Services, reported it is very expensive but not impossible. There are grants available. The need for mental health programs is sky rocking because of drugs, substance abuse and children of substance abusers. Current patients in need of inpatient care must travel to Little Rock for treatment. This makes in difficult for case workers and social workers who have patients in emergency situations.

Question #10-What is the likelihood of recruiting a new dentist to Clark County within the next 10 years?

Dr. James Hankins, D.D.S., report that he went to school here therefore he had a connection to come back to Arkadelphia. He suggested a group or organization be formed to help recruit health care providers. The group could help the health care provider find loans to get started and assist with relocation. A web-site could also be established outlining health care services that are available in the county.

The panel was asked what they felt were important health care issues for Clark County in the next 10 years.

- Elderly preventive care, immunizations for home bound patients
- Getting business back to Arkadelphia for physicals and having enough business to support an industrial health person.
- Shifting the paradigm of how doctors and dentists are recruited. Creating an attractive package to recruit health care providers.
- Opening a psychological inpatient facility
- Keeping Baptist Medical Center in Arkadelphia
- Making sure the hospital has specialists
- Affordability of all things healthcare
- Recruitment and retention of primary care physicians. “Mining” folks who grew up here, encouraging them to make a commitment to Clark County early in their medical education.
- Addressing the changing trends in health insurance. Need to educate the community on the health savings account, which is likely to become more prominent within 10 years.
- Serving the over 2000 people in Gurdon with a doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Creation of a brochure to show what specialists are available in Clark County.

Dr. Kluck thanked the panel and the audience for their participation.