

DELAWARE HEALTH CARE COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 1, 2007
DELAWARE TECHNICAL & COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CONFERENCE CENTER, ROOM 400 B
DOVER

MINUTES

Revised March 1, 2007

Commission Members Present: Lt. Governor John C. Carney, Jr., Chair; Theodore W. Becker, Jr.; Richard Cordrey, Secretary of Finance; Matthew Denn, Insurance Commissioner; Carol Ann DeSantis, Secretary, Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families; Joseph A. Lieberman, III, MD; and Dennis Rochford, President, Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay Authority.

Members Absent: Jacquelyne W. Gorum, DSW; Vincent Meconi, Secretary, Delaware Health and Social Services; and Lois Studte, R.N.

Staff Attending: Paula Roy, Executive Director; Sarah McCloskey, Director of Planning and Policy; Marlyn Marvel, Community Relations Officer; and Linda G. Johnson, Administrative Specialist.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Carney called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 5, 2006 AND JANUARY 4, 2007, MEETINGS

Ted Becker made a motion that the minutes of both the December 5, 2006, and January 4, 2007, meetings be approved. Dr. Joe Lieberman seconded the motion. There was a voice vote. The motion carried.

UNINSURED ACTION PLAN

GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION AWARD

The Geographic Expansion Review Committee has recommended funding \$500,000 for Westside Health Services to open a new health center at 908 E. 16th Street in Wilmington.

The new center will be 7570 square feet with 14 examination rooms, two waiting areas, a pharmacy and laboratory area and a social services suite.

In addition to primary and preventive care, the new center will offer prenatal care, chronic disease management, HIV/AIDS prevention and education and mental health treatment.

The center will be staffed by three family practice physicians, an OB/GYN, a family nurse practitioner and support staff of receptionists, referral coordinator and CHAP coordinator and social services staff.

Westside estimates that within the first year of operation the patient population will total 1000.

Action

The minutes of the December 5, 2006, and January 4, 2007 meetings were approved.

Action

Dennis Rochford made a motion to approve the recommendation that Westside Health Services be funded with \$500,000 to open a new health center at 908 E. 16th Street in Wilmington. Ted Becker seconded the motion. There was a voice vote. Motion carried.

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

DELAWARE HEALTH INFORMATION NETWORK (DHIN)

Robert Conrad has been hired as the DHIN Chief Information Officer and will begin on February 12th. Mr. Conrad has a highly refined understanding of the practice of medicine in Delaware, given his experience as Vice President of Information Technology with Happy Harry's. His salary will be funded by the Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Mr. Conrad will operate out of Wilmington and spend his first 30 days traveling throughout the state, meeting with hospital representatives, LabCorp and physicians practices.

Four medical practices in 27 locations, accounting for about 70 physicians, have signed on to use the Utility. It is anticipated that the DHIN Utility will go live on March 30th and that additional practices will join in May.

DHIN Project Director Gina Perez explained that physicians in Delaware will have the option of how they receive clinical data and test results. The Utility will help manage the paperwork flow as physician practices will receive all results in the format of their choosing. Members of the Medical Society of Delaware's MSDHub may choose to receive results through the Hub, which will be linked to the Utility. Practices may also choose to have results sent to a dedicated electronic in-box or directly to the patient's electronic medical record (EMR). Non-electronic practices may choose to have results sent to their auto fax or printer. Through the use of the EMR, DHIN will eliminate the need for time consuming scanning of data into a practice's medical records.

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

STATE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

The Loan Repayment Committee met on December 5, 2006 and the DIDER Board of Directors met on December 12, 2006. The following recommendations for funding were made:

The current available balance of state funds for dentists is \$271,979, which includes \$100,000 from the FY 2007 budget allocation. There is \$60,000 available in federal funds.

Westside Health Center

Westside is requesting funds to help recruit a dentist at their Wilmington location. This site qualifies to receive federal matching funds.

Action

Westside Health Center was awarded \$500,000 to open a new health center at 908 E. 16th Street in Wilmington.

Robert Conrad has been hired as the DHIN Chief Information Officer.

It is anticipated that the DHIN Utility project will go live on March 30th.

Recommendation

The Loan Repayment Committee and DIDER recommend that \$70,000 be allocated to Westside Health Center to recruit a dentist (\$35,000 federal funds plus \$35,000 state funds). The funds will be allocated for a period of six months. If a dentist is not recruited within that time, Westside has the option to apply for an extension or the funds will revert to the available balance.

Action

Ted Becker made a motion to accept the recommendation that \$70,000 be allocated to Westside Health Center to recruit a dentist. Dr. Joseph Lieberman seconded the motion. There was a voice vote. Motion carried.

Dr. Neena Mukkamala, DDS

Capital/equipment loan application for a new practice in Dover – Site Application included.

Dr. Mukkamala recently opened “All Smiles Family & Cosmetic Dentistry” at 95 Wolf Creek Blvd. in Dover. The medical office space has been purchased and she began accepting new patients on October 23, 2006. She is open a total of 41 hours per week:

Dr. Mukkamala has hired one dental assistant and plans to hire a dental hygienist in the next 9 to 12 months. She graduated from the University of Southern California School of Dentistry in 2003. She completed a residency at Christiana Care in 2004 and is licensed in Delaware. Dr. Mukkamala has already begun to accept Medicaid patients. She is requesting a three-year contract.

Recommendation

The Loan Repayment Committee and DIDER recommend that Dr. Mukkamala be awarded \$70,000 for capital/equipment loan repayment for a three-year obligation to practice in Dover.

Action

Mr. Becker made a motion that the Commission accept the recommendation to award Dr. Mukkamala \$70,000 for capital/equipment loan repayment for a three-year obligation to practice in Dover. Dr. Lieberman seconded the motion. There was a voice vote. Motion carried.

Paula Roy reported that 20 physicians, one nurse practitioner, and nine dentists have been placed since the Loan Repayment Program’s inception. This information was shared with the Joint Finance Committee during the Commission’s budget hearing.

The Governor’s recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2008 includes a \$50,000 increase in funding for the Loan Repayment Program.

Action

The Commission approved the allocation of \$70,000.00 to Westside Health Center to recruit a dentist.

Action

The Commission accepted the recommendation that Dr. Mukkamala be awarded \$70,000 for capital/equipment loan repayment for a three-year obligation to practice in Dover.

The maximum loan repayment award varies according to the field of practice. Advanced-degree practitioners may be granted up to a maximum of \$70,000 total for a two year contract. Mid-level practitioners may be granted up to a maximum of \$35,000 total for a two year contract.

Paula Roy explained that the average debt for a doctor graduating medical school in 1984 was \$20,000.00. In 2004, it ranged from \$100,000.00 to \$140,000.00, so loan repayment can be a powerful recruitment tool.

Matt Denn noted that some of the larger medical institutions in other states are offering young doctors the opportunity to have their medical malpractice insurance paid when they practice within their state as an incentive.

RESEARCH AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

2007 ANNUAL REPORT AND STRATEGIC PLAN

A draft 2007 Annual Report and Strategic Plan was previously distributed to Commissioners for review.

Action

Dennis Rochford made a motion that the 2007 Annual Report and Strategic Plan be approved. Ted Becker seconded the motion. There was a voice vote. Motion carried.

SPECIFIC HEALTH ISSUES

STROKE SYSTEM OF CARE REPORT

Paula Roy presented an overview of the Delaware Stroke Task Force report, "Stroke Prevention and Treatment Strategy for Delaware, Gray Matters." For the complete presentation, please contact Commission staff.

The Stroke Task Force established five sub-committees: primordial and primary prevention; emergency medical services; acute and sub-acute stroke care; rehabilitation; and continuous quality improvements. Each sub-committee submitted its findings to the Stroke Task Force which combined the information to produce a draft report.

A recurring theme from the sub-committees was a need for the establishment of a Stroke Office to coordinate efforts on prevention and rehabilitation programs, continually review best practices and conduct research. The report recommends that a Stroke Office be established within the Division of Public Health under the Bureau of Chronic Disease.

Lt. Governor Carney suggested that stroke initiatives be combined with a broader focus on overall cardiovascular health promotion.

High priority recommendations made by the Stroke Task Force include:

1. Creation of a "Stroke Office"
2. Data sharing and a stroke registry
3. Prevention
4. Public awareness and education campaign
5. Notification and response of Emergency Medical Services

Action

The 2007 Annual Report and Strategic Plan was approved.

The report recommends the establishment of a Stroke Office to coordinate efforts on prevention and rehabilitation programs, continually review best practices and conduct research.

- 6. Acute care and sub-acute care
- 7. Rehabilitation

Legislation is pending in Congress for the Federal Stop Stroke Act. Should it become law, money will be made available to states that have developed a stroke system of care plan.

Action

Dr. Lieberman made a motion that the Commission support the recommendations of the Stroke Task Force report. Mr. Becker seconded the motion. There was a voice vote. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

A CHAP Oversight Workgroup will meet on February 14 to monitor the progress and evaluation of the CHAP program.

The Small Business Insurance Committee will have its “wrap-up” meeting on February 21. The committee report and recommendations will be distributed to Commissioners for discussion at the March meeting.

The Universal Coverage Committee has completed its work by identifying the basic plan design elements and transition issues for two ways of achieving universal coverage: 1) A single payer financing system; and 2) A “building blocks” approach using a multi-payer system.

The next step is to issue a Request For Proposals for econometric modeling of the two plans to estimate how much they will cost and how they could be financed.

The Governor’s recommended budget includes a proposal for the establishment of a Delaware Healthy Life Fund with revenues from an increase in the State tax on cigarettes. An increase in the tax on cigarettes may also help reduce the prevalence of smoking by increasing the price.

The proposed budget also includes funding to expand the CHIP program, funding for year two of Delaware’s relationship with Temple University School of Dentistry, and an increase in State Loan Repayment funds.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Lafferty, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association, thanked Cari DeSantis for her work chairing the committee to review and reactivate the Jefferson Fellows Program, which allows psychology students to rotate through the Terry Center. He stated there is a shortage of child psychiatrists in Delaware, and noted that one of the doctors currently participating in a rotation at the Terry Center has expressed interest in practicing here.

Action

The Commission voted to support the recommendations of the Stroke Task Force report.

Kelly Burris, of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Delaware, asked how mental health professionals are made aware of the State Loan Repayment Program. Ms. Roy responded that brochures are widely distributed and information is posted on the Commission's website. She added that the Commission is always open to ideas about how to market the program.

Cari Desantis said there is a nationwide shortage of psychiatrists and mental health professionals. The field is very competitive, and it is difficult to recruit and retain clinicians regardless of the available financial incentives.

Lolita Lopez, of Westside Health Services, thanked the Commission for investing in Westside's new health care facility. Including the Commission funds, \$1.5 million dollars was raised, which completes their capital fundraising campaign. She invited Commissioners to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house at the new facility on February 8 at noon.

The Commission previously provided Westside with funding for a facility in Brookside, which opened in March 2003. It was estimated that after two years of operation at full capacity, the facility would serve 3,500 patients per year. At the end of 2006, that site served 8,179 patients in one year. It was anticipated that 40 percent of the patients would be uninsured. The actual number was 44 percent. The ethnic breakdown of patients is 25 percent white, 22 percent black and 46 percent Hispanic. The Commission's initial \$250,000 investment generated an additional \$250,000 from New Castle County and, one year later, over \$500,000 in federal funds. Ms. Lopez noted that the Commission's support is appreciated and the State Loan Repayment Program is very helpful.

Dr. Robert Frelick noted that he was involved with stroke and cancer programs that began in Delaware in the 1960s. He mentioned the success of the existing Delaware Stroke Initiative, and emphasized the importance of focusing on overall cardiovascular health. He also suggested that Delaware is more likely to receive funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) if there an "office" is established to apply for, receive, and utilize the funds.

Lt. Governor Carney noted that one of the recommendations of the Health Disparity Task Force focuses on health literacy. An effort needs to be made to learn what kind of health education is taking place in the schools, where the gaps are, and what needs to be done to improve health literacy.

Cari DeSantis said that Nemours Health and Prevention is conducting a health and prevention initiative in the elementary schools.

Mr. Carney said that the Physical Activity Task Force recommended a pilot program to increase physical activity in schools. The State provided funding for half of the schools that submitted proposals, and Nemours provided the remainder. The initiative involves about twenty schools that will develop health and wellness programs that promote physical activity.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Delaware Health Care Commission will be held on Thursday, March 1, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. at the Del Tech Terry Campus Conference Center, Room 400 B.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Next Meeting

Will be held on Thursday, March 1, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. at the Del Tech Terry Campus Conference Center, Room 400 B.

GUESTS ATTENDING

Anthony Brazen, DO
Kelly Burris
Judy Chaconas
Michael Day
Barbara DeBastiani
Robert Frelick, MD
James Gill, MD
Doug Gramiak
Joann Hasse
Katie Rosch Hegedus
James Lafferty
Paul Lakeman
Lolita Lopez
Linda Nemes
Brian Olson
Gina Perez
Brian Posey
Jose Tiese
Betsy Wheeler
Rob White
Calvin Young

Division of Medicaid & Medical Assistance
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Delaware
Delaware DHSS/Division of Public Health
Delaware Health Care Association
Wheeler and Associates Management Services
Medical Society of Delaware
Delaware Valley Outcomes Research
Lt. Governor's Office
League of Women Voters
Delaware Valley Outcomes Research
Mental Health Association in Delaware
Bayhealth Medical Center
Westside Health Services
Department of Insurance
La Red Health Center
Advances in Management
AARP
Electronic Data Systems
Wheeler and Associates Management Services
Delaware Physician's Care Incorporated
UAW Community Healthcare Initiative