

Community Health Strategies: Improving the Health Status of Your Community

On Friday, April 1st, the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) hosted the continuing education event, “Improving the Health Status of Your Community”. In anticipation of the Dell Medical School’s opening, a panel discussion featuring Dr. Richard Friedman, Vice Dean Clinical Affairs, Dell Medical School, Christie Garbey, Senior Vice President, Central Health and Jose Colucci, Director, Research & Development, Dell Medical School Design Institute for Health, was moderated by Valerie Eubert, Policy, Strategy & Development Manager, Health & Human Services Commission.

Kicking off the discussion, Valerie asked the panelists to define the level of commitment within their organizations to improving Travis and Williamson county resident’s health status. As the financier for the Community Care Collaboration (CCC), Christie stressed Central Health’s mission to improve access and community health for low income and un/underinsured residents. According to Jose, the Design Institute will be researching healthcare service delivery from a patients view in preparation for improvements. Lastly, Dr. Friedman stated that Central Texas needs a “health” system that focuses on prevention and wellness versus acute care. Partnering with organizations within the healthcare continuum, collaborating with community partners, seeking new ways to educate the care team, designing new processes and reimbursement strategies represent ways to achieve this goal.

With a firm understanding of the need to improve the health of the people that this community serves, Valerie inquired how healthcare executives can be involved in this transformation? Per Christie, the current delivery system reform incentive projects (DSRIP) address social determinants and health disparity. Dr. Friedman responded that new models for provider education, healthcare delivery and reimbursement represent ways to better distribute resources and coordinate care. For Jose, seeking ways to better engage patients and provide social intervention offer tremendous opportunity for healthcare transformation.

Having culled a wish list for transformation, Valerie asked the group what current strategies are being employed by their organizations to improve the health status of their community. Christie reiterated that health disparities were being addressed at the Southwest Health & Wellness Center via a teaching kitchen, exercise rooms, and shared space with WIC, as well as, the Capital Area Food Bank. According to Dr. Friedman, integrated practice units, which co-locate multiple specialists under one roof, are being developed at the medical school for improved access and experience. As noted by Jose, the Design Institute is currently researching social interventions in the community, as well as, the paucity of services and infrastructure in southeast Austin.

The Central Texas ACHE chapter would like to thank the presenters for sharing their insights and best practices regarding healthcare transformation. For more information on future events, please visit us at ww.centraltexas.ache.org or send us an email at info@centraltexas.ache.org.