

SEARCH Minutes from November 2, 2017 (Spruce Pine Methodist Church)

Welcome – Karin Rolett greeted newcomers to SEARCH

New & Newsworthy Developments:

At the invitation of the Mayor of Burnsville, SEARCH leaders had a convivial meeting with the Town Council of Burnsville to inform them about the purpose and progress of SEARCH. They also made a brief presentation to the BRRH Board.

Susan Larson also reported on a discussion she and David Larson had in Chapel Hill with Mark Holmes, the ED of UNC's Sheps Center on Health Services Research. Rural healthcare is his area of research, and Susan suggested that anyone interested in following rural health topics could sign up for the Center's rural enews: <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/programs-projects/rural-health>. She also reported on a talk by University of Chicago professor Katherine Baecker on her research on the well-being of people who by lottery were chosen in Oregon to receive Medicaid benefits. Anyone wishing to read the original publication on this research click on: <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1212321#t=article>

Risa Larsen and Susan Larson attended a forum of N.C. Grantmakers to find out about options for funding healthcare in North Carolina and were encouraged by discussions with representatives from the Duke Endowment, the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation, and the Golden Leaf Foundation in particular.

Task Force Reports:

Task Force 8: Community Outreach – Karin Rolett reflected that SEARCH needs to be talking about health more broadly than the BRRH; we should be promoting discussion about what healthcare could be in our community, discussions including industry, business, providers, consumers.

Outreach has taken on the short term project of getting the word out about the deadline for ACA sign-up. Karin brought information for people to disseminate and 15 people signed up to help. The enrollment is not easy but can yield significant savings for those who work with a navigator to understand the options available to them. The enrollment period ends December 15.

Task Force 7: Plan B – Bill Sweetser (report from Charlie Hofheimer)

Charlie Hofheimer reported for the group which has been meeting regularly and of late has been gathering information and reports on various topics.

Task Force 6: Search Infrastructure: Karin, Susan, Risa

Susan Larson listed some of the questions this group will grapple with when they gather with Task Force Chairs before December. The big questions are: 1) Are we going to take on action items? 2) How do we make decisions? 3) Do we need to be a 501 (c)(3)

Jim Haaga reported on the meeting he organized with the Doctors Group. The meeting was mostly about doctors being able to communicate with Mission leaders as well as with the BRRH Board. Jim voiced the opinion that both sides could work better together one on one, perhaps on a neutral topic of local importance to health, such as building an indoor swimming pool in Spruce Pine.

Task Force 5: Monitor Outcomes – Jim Deaton, Diane Creek – report by Jim Deaton with additional responses by Becky Carter.

Jim Deaton reported that Becky Carter has joined the Outcomes Task Force. Jim said that we will now have access to Mission data. Question: Are we tracking negative outcomes that begin at BRRH and end up elsewhere? Answer: We are. Question: do we have access to personal health data? Answer: Yes, with signed confidentiality. Question: Can we track “our” people who don’t come through our hospital first? Answer: If they go to a Mission Hospital, yes. We can also track through death certificates. Question: Are we collecting data regarding what happens when there is a lack of transport? Answer: Yes, we will have access to that information. Becky explained some of the obstacles to timely transport. Several people said this information is very important and that the community should be informed. In addition to data, we need to be collecting stories to be shared through the media. Juanita Brown made the point that the process we use determines the outcomes. Again the question came up as to what is being done to inform people about their healthcare options when they are entering the system.

Task Force 4: Government Relations – Joy Boothe – report by Susan Larson and Risa Larsen

SEARCH learned that Becky Carter will submit a monthly article about the hospital to the local papers. Discussion about SEARCH’s request for BRRH board seats prompted Becky Carter to say that the terms for new BRRH board members begin in January and that there will be two vacancies from Mitchell as well as openings from Yancey. She referred to the competency grid which she said both BRRH and Mission boards use to fill their slots. There are typically two seats on the Mission Corporate board for members who represent regional hospitals. Risa interjected information about a meeting at the old courthouse in Bakersville with 11th district house candidates on November 28 at 7:00 p.m.

Task Force 3: Media Relations – Susan Larson and Victoria Hicks

Susan Larson reported that the task force had met and that Chelsea Wilson Thayer is working on a December article about SEARCH for the *Blue Ridge Christian News*. Susan said that we are waiting for the responses to the 14 questions asked of Mission on October 2. Becky said that she had drafted responses and that she was waiting for Dr. Paulus to edit them.

Task Force 2’s report was given at the beginning of the meeting, and Risa reported for Task Force 1 that content for the website should be sent to her or to Connie Sales.

Open comments/questions:

Lisa Schultz suggested that a key role for SEARCH should be to educate the public on what healthcare services/providers are available in this area. Diane Creek of the TRH District agreed to work on this.

Jeremy Troxler asked if there had been contact with the Mission Board. He said we should present an unfiltered narrative to them if we could find a way to do that. Question: Are the boards of the other Mission regional hospitals only advisory as is ours? “Yes,” Becky.

Ron Rolett asked if we have major emergency plans. Reponse by Becky: yes, with drills to test them.

Next meeting: Tuesday, December 5, 7:00 p.m., First Baptist Church, Burnsville.