

SEARCH Meeting
March 20, 2018 7:00 p.m.
Trinity Episcopal Church, Spruce Pine
Minutes

Susan Larson welcomed newcomers to the meeting and thanked Fr. Rich Biega for making coffee and making the church available. Total attendance was about 30.

She gave the following updates:

- The Plan B Task Force has decided to separate from SEARCH as their goals and the goals of the larger group have diverged. Some members of the Plan B group have expressed their intention to continue coming to SEARCH meetings and we will continue to stay in touch with the group.
- Four new board members for the BRRH board have been confirmed and are awaiting confirmation by the Mission board. We understand that three are from the list SEARCH recommended and that three more from that list will be asked to serve on hospital committees.
- A family practice doctor will begin his practice for Mission in Burnsville in July and a new PA in March. They have one pediatrician; the other one, who was part-time, is retiring. There are two new PAs already. BRRH should be getting 4-8 days of a cardiologist's time. The new back-up generators, paid for primarily by Mission, have been ordered for the hospital along with other new equipment.
- The Mitchell-Yancey Leadership Forum on Health Care has been postponed/cancelled. If the four state-wide partners who were to sponsor it decide to proceed, it will be in 2019, after the November elections.

Strategic Planning Retreat

Risa Larsen reported that 11 people gathered on March 15 for a SEARCH planning retreat with WNC Nonprofit Pathways consultant Beth Trigg. Outcomes of the retreat included:

- A slight revision to the Mission Statement to read:
To promote safe, quality, affordable, local healthcare for the people of Mitchell and Yancey Counties
- An addition to and re-ordering of Organizational Goals to read:
 1. To preserve, strengthen, and expand access to essential medical services in our area.
 2. To engage in conversations about community health in which all voices are heard.
 3. To empower greater involvement by local residents in decisions affecting our healthcare.

4. To monitor and communicate the effects of changes in local healthcare services and engage with providers and the community as problems arise.
- A statement of Who We Are:
We live in Mitchell and Yancey Counties. We work to foster and defend the healthcare this community wants and needs.

Risa explained that out of the retreat came the recommendation that we morph our task forces into focus groups. Five focus groups emerged: Collaboration, Communication, Outcomes, Research, and Outreach. Each chair explained what that focus group would tackle, beginning with a new focus area, Research headed by Jon Ward:

Research - Jon Ward: “What we need to do is look outside of ourselves, what are other rural communities doing and when to combat loss of services etc. or what else has been done to address problems there that we also have here. It will necessitate looking at government studies, Kaiser Foundation, medical literature.”

The Research Focus Group will meet on April 5, location to be announced.

Outcomes – Jim Deaton and Diane Creek: Meets once a quarter with Becky Carter to discuss birth outcomes of people from Yancey/Mitchell who deliver at Marion and elsewhere. Needs to stay small for confidentiality reasons, but its focus could expand beyond birth outcomes to other services.

The Outcomes Focus Group will meet in early April at BRRH.

Communication - Victoria Hicks and Risa Larsen. Recruiting members with a PR background or with contacts to local media (TV/radio). How are we going to interface with the other groups? Not totally clear where we’re headed because focus groups must provide the content. Communication is the tool to be used to benefit other groups. This group is charged with creating a logo for SEARCH.

The Communication group will meet April 10 at 1:00 p.m. at Victoria’s.

Outreach – Karin Rolett and Charles Hofheimer. One project is to start a pilot project as to what people think they want and what “assets” we already have. That should dovetail with the Community Health Assessment which we can add to because it is more in depth and focused. The second is to strengthen the existing collaborations/organizations that already exist in Yancey & Mitchell county. Include more “voiceless” people so we have a more diverse system. *They would like to have more members who have connections in Mitchell County.*

Outreach GOALS:

Learn about the needs and desires of local residents regarding their health care and their health and wellbeing and about existing resources (formal and informal) and the way they are accessed.

1. Establish personal connections and increase the number and diversity of people working toward improved healthcare.

2. Design ways in which diverse voices can be heard especially those not normally or sufficiently represented
3. Find ways to communicate our findings to stakeholders.
4. Focus on establishing relationships with diverse groups in community and give them voice, particularly ones that haven't been heard as much.

The Outreach Focus Group will meet at the First Baptist Church, Burnsville, probably the second week of April.

They're looking to gather stories and collaborate with Research and Communication Focus Groups.

Collaboration – Susan Larson, Lynda Kinnane, Reid Duncan The idea is that SEARCH should be a neutral organization, the point of intersection between Boards of hospitals, FQHCs, the existing collaboratives (PATH, Mitchell County Health Partnerships, etc.) and government agencies and elected officials. (We don't have a separate "advocacy" task force but could consider all of SEARCH as advocates.) New groups to collaborate with: VAYA Mental Health, DSS. Suggestion was made by Vern Grindstaff, chairman of the MC Board of Commissioners, to have quarterly meetings with local commissioners with specific, respectful requests.

April meeting to be determined by Doodle Poll.

Advocacy: Since at this point there is not an Advocacy Focus Group, Susan Larson asked all in attendance to think about questions to ask candidates about healthcare in the upcoming candidates' forums. These were suggested:

1. Are you in favor of expanding Medicaid?
2. Where do you stand on HB662 – how to fill the insurance gap...
3. And thank you to federal legislators for continuing the funding for the CHIP Program and FQHCs.

What are ESSENTIAL services? Risa presented the list for consideration with place for signatures for agreement. The following questions were posed about the list:

1. Could we add "regardless of income"?
2. Can outreach take this list out to all the members of the community that we're interviewing?
3. Is "nutrition education" on there?

Closing:

Given the choice of three dates for the next meeting , Tuesday, May 1, was the winner. It will be at the First Baptist Church in Burnsville at 7:00 p.m.