

June 18, 2019

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

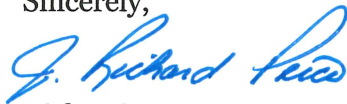
On behalf of the Mountain West NC Partnership, I wanted to offer our sincere thanks to you for recently attending our regional Economic Development and Healthcare Summit at Southwestern Community College. The generosity of your time and your input was greatly appreciated by our organization.

As we work to promote a better understanding of various sectors that can work collectively to improve economic condition in our area, our conversation was very timely, informative, and hopefully enlightening for all in attendance. It is paramount that we continue to convene leaders from across numerous public and private sector organizations and agencies to not only discuss the relevant challenges of high speed broadband access, affordable housing, transportation and the like, but to also collaborate on finding innovative solutions for those problems.

Your expertise and willingness to participate in relative economic development related discussions will undoubtedly benefit our efforts moving forward. As our economic developers continue to focus on new job growth and capital investment in our communities, we can do so with a better understanding of how our healthcare system peers can ultimately become our partners in growing our local economies.

Again, thanks to all.

Sincerely,



Rich Price

Chairman, Mountain West NC Partnership





HEALTHCARE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A MOUNTAIN WEST PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT

Following the June 5 Healthcare and Economic Development Summit, it became clear that the conversation revolved around several main categories: Social and Community Infrastructure, Workforce, and Wellness. This report contains information on each of these categories as they relate to healthcare and economic development in the Mountain West region of NC, and it also contains models for success that were identified during the summit.

These notes reflect the opinions of those present at the summit and are not necessarily representative of the Mountain West Partnership or the Southwestern Commission.

Held at Southwestern Community College
June 5, 2019

01

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE:

1. Broadband

- High-Speed to every home would help improve the ability to share resources with consumers and also provide access to telemedicine
- Some transportation solutions require better broadband access
- Improved broadband would help with the recruitment of workforce
- Many healthcare issues were tied to the need for improved broadband

2. Housing

- Housing is the first building block to greater health. Providing/ Following up on social and medical services is difficult if participants do not have a consistent home

3. Transportation

- Lack of public transportation reduces access to healthcare.

4. Childcare

- Cost of childcare can disincentivize work

MODELS OF SUCCESS:

- Community Care of WNC is doing a pilot program using Uber and other similar services to provide rides to medical care for those who do not have transportation
- Jackson County Public Transit has partnered with medical providers to share transportation resources with patients
- There is a grant available for Head Start to increase the capacity of childcare facilities ([**CLICK HERE**](#))
- Clay County offers childcare for teachers

02

WORKFORCE

1.Childcare

2.Recruitment

- In need of techs, nurses, and physicians
- Physicians are looking for high-speed internet, higher-end grocery stores, and traditional neighborhoods where they practice

3.Housing

- Lack of housing options is a challenge for many healthcare professionals

4.Cost of Living

- The level of pay versus the cost of living makes attracting and keeping workforce a challenge, particularly with lower-paying positions such as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA's)

MODELS OF SUCCESS:

- Harris Regional Hospital sponsors/offers tuition benefits to students from WCU and Southwestern Community College who agree to work for them full-time after graduation
- Harris Regional has begun to address wages for CNA's and to focus more on creating a career path for those workers
- Effective storytelling can help to advocate for higher pay for healthcare professionals

03

WELLNESS

1.Social Determinants of Health

- Population issues like educational attainment levels have the greatest impact on health outcomes
- Jackson County Community Health Assessment found that the biggest issues were a lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, and obesity
- Broadband was mentioned as a social determinant of health

2.Addiction Disorders

- Lack of entertainment for young people can lead to higher instances of substance abuse
- The focus is on crisis detox, when it needs to be on rehabilitation

3.Aging Population

- A rapidly growing aging population means greater healthcare needs

4.Communication

- Cross-marketing among organizations would help to get materials to low-income people
- Regular convening is important for sharing resources and perspectives

5.Access to Healthy Foods

6.Access to Healthcare

- 70% of the region is Medicare/Medicaid eligible, but this is a loss of money for providers because of lower reimbursement rates
- Medicaid transformation will hurt healthcare because of emphasis on profits.
- Medicaid expansion is important because the greatest determinant of access is the ability to pay

MODELS OF SUCCESS:

- Telehealth through schools is one way to reach hard-to-reach populations
- Active Routes to Schools helps encourage healthy behaviors in school-aged students
- Harris Regional is partnering with Erlanger to offer Telehealth consults on-site
- Hi-5: These represent non-clinical community approaches to health that would have the greatest impact on health in our communities over the next 5 years
- Government agencies can help to collect and share models of success

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