

THE Vision's Voice

HEALTHCARE & WELLNESS

presented by The Cliffs Communities
by Becky Mann

All of us have opinions on health care in the Upstate because all of us have experience with it. Whether we are insured or uninsured, running a small business or a large corporation, an administrator or a consumer, suffering from chronic illness or not, we have ideas, concerns, and questions. The Vision 2025 Health and Wellness Task Force is getting ready to collect those ideas through a series of community dialogues planned for 2007. Information will help the community make progress toward the Vision of having high quality healthcare facilities that support the full continuum of healthcare services needed for the entire population.



An graphic explanation of the many facets of Vision 2025. For more information, contact Russell Stall with Greenville Forward at 233-8443 or rstall@greenvilleforward.com

In each community dialogue planned, a group of 30 to 40 individuals with different backgrounds and perspectives will come together to discuss the future of health care in Greenville. "The idea is to have someone who's uninsured or who's been a user of the health care system be in dialogue with someone who helps craft the health care system," says Eleanor Dunlap, chairperson of the Health and Wellness Task Force. "Community dialogue like this can help shape change. What you come away with are concrete alternative health care systems for the future."

The community dialogue process is part of a national, field-tested program that has been used in 14 other communities in the United States including Virginia Beach, Virginia and Baltimore, Maryland. Trained facilitators will conduct the first two sessions, giving participants a chance to share their vision of an ideal health system, name their priorities for that system, and evaluate our current system and possible futures in light of those priorities. The process is designed make sure that each voice is heard and to help people face the conflicts and trade-offs that are part of change.

While some communities only conduct one or two groups, in Greenville, the approach will be more inclusive. A kickoff information session was held in November, giving more than 50 community leaders an introduction to the community dialogue concept. Following that introduction, the Health and Wellness Task Force has been working to identify those who will participate first. People in the initial groups will be trained to expand dialogue to others. The plan is to conduct these information-gathering sessions over several months and in a variety of venues so that participation can be as broad as possible. "We know that the more people involved in talking about redesigning health care in this community, the more likely we are to experience some change here," Dunlap says.

Dunlap, a partner with SE Consulting, brings a background in

public health to the position of chair. Serving on the Health and Wellness Task Force with her are 15 professionals representing hospital administration, mental health services, human resources, recovery initiatives, medicine, and many other related backgrounds.

The group, which has met for six months, is encouraged by progress made to date toward Vision 2025 goals for health and wellness. Dunlap points to the recent city ordinance banning smoking as an example of an effort the task force supported from an advocacy standpoint.

In addition to advocacy, Dunlap sees the task force's purpose as being to identify, track and report data on health care trends and progress to the community and to be a facilitator of local change, creating partnerships toward actions that will advance the Vision for health and wellness in the community. "The dialogues will be a big initiative for us. They take the Vision one step further by engaging the community in advocating for health care change here in Greenville," Dunlap says.

Vision 2025 goals, including those for health and wellness, are moving forward with the help of Greenville Forward, an organization intended to make sure that the Vision becomes a reality. If you have an interest in being part of a Vision task force, your participation is welcomed. Go to www.greenvilleforward.com or call Russell Stall, executive director of Greenville Forward, at (864) 233-8443. ■



As Vision 2005 paved the way in the 1980s for the incredible quality of life Greenville enjoys today, Vision 2025 spearheads projects that will further elevate our city, culturally and commercially. The Vision's Voice is one of the many ways that The Cliffs is committed to promoting growth in Greenville.



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