



3rd CARING COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

Strategies for the Future: Capitalizing on Our Assets, Opportunities and Change

Background

In September 2007, 104 community leaders met for the first Caring Community Conference. For three days participants carefully reviewed the issues and assets of northeast Florida, discussed their impact and considered opportunities for the future of Health, Medical Care and Bioscience in the region. Twelve Recommendations were identified to improve the individual and economic health of the region. Formation of a Healthcare and Bioscience Council was unanimously proposed to address the Recommendations.

By May 2008 the Council was formed, comprised of 17 regional leaders with diverse expertise and chosen for their exceptional leadership and community involvement. Distinguished ex-officio members were named to the Council, including the Mayor of Jacksonville, the Honorable Fred Schultz, and the Presidents of five regional universities. Since then Council Workgroups gathered information, researched best ways to address the Recommendations, initiated collaborations and implemented programs. Council members presented planning efforts at the 2008 Caring Community Conference (CCC), and will provide updates at the 2009 CCC. Three panel discussions will explore regional progress on enhancing the individual and economic health of northeast Florida. In the final panel, national and international experts will share opinions and predictions and invite discussion on health system reform and the potential impact on our region.

Panel I, “Our Hidden Value: Medical Education and Research” addresses two of the highest priority recommendations of the 2007 CCC, enhancing our Regional Academic Health Science Center (HSC) and increasing medical residencies. Progress is critical to meet Florida's need for physicians, nurses, pharmacists and dentists. Global shortfalls are predicted in the near future, and we must ensure that Jacksonville continues to attract top quality residents and faculty, who will remain in the region. Council members visited all of the Jacksonville area institutions that provide medical care, medical education and research and are convinced that their excellent quality and growth can be significantly furthered by collaborative action. Panelists representing major institutions of medical education, research and patient care will describe their institutions' activities and impact on Education and Research, plans for the future, and how the community can assist their institutions in enhancing the individual and economic health of the region.



Panel II, “Collaborating to Build a Region of Medical Excellence: Quality, Safety, Communication and Health Information Technology” explores northeast Florida’s progress toward becoming a region of excellence in medical care, education and research. Examples of regional collaborative achievements include the consolidation of several organizations to form the North East Florida Health Information Consortium (NEFHIC), which works to advance Health Information Technology (HIT) and Electronic Medical Records (EMR). Jacksonville has a high degree of implementation of HIT/EMR. Improving interoperability will improve patient care, quality and safety. Another collaborative group of regional leaders in Quality and Safety formed in December 2008 and held a Caring Communications Seminar in February 2009. This led to the creation of a Caring Communication Course to improve patient care through better communication. The course is soon to be implemented in three regional institutions. This workgroup also implemented a highly successful Quality Safety Forum on April 28, 2009, which led to the formation of the first Regional Quality Collaborative and plans for the 2nd Quality/Safety Forum on April 29, 2010. Council members from the HIT and Quality/Safety Workgroups will describe their priorities for progress, and how the community can assist in advancing these tools for optimal health and patient care.

Panel III, “Economic Impact of Our Healthcare and Bioscience Industries” presents the contributions of northeast Florida’s Healthcare and Bioscience industries to employment and per capita income in our region. Panelists are leaders of large and small biotechnology companies and a university office of technology whose efforts focus on the translation of science, from “bench to bedside”, including the successful development of incubator centers. Panelists will describe the enormous potential of our healthcare and bioscience industries, the highly competitive global marketplace, and what the community can do to foster this critical industry, including strengthening the math and science education needed for a competitive workforce.

Panel IV, “Healthcare Reform: Rhetoric or Reality?” will address the national debate ongoing for two decades, now reaching crescendo, regarding what changes should be made to decrease the cost of health and medical care, and improve access and quality. Regional, national and international experts will present systems and recommendations from various perspectives and engage in a discussion with participants on most promising solutions. All changes have the potential for enormous impact on medical care, education and research, and ultimately the individual and economic health of our region and our country. Thus investments in change with the highest probability of positive return on investment, which “do no harm (or the least harm)”, should be carefully made with full transparency, objective analysis of models available, careful definition of terms, and civil discourse.