LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH

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Lewis and Clark City-County Board of Health
Board Resolution
December 2008
Access to Universal Health Care Task Force

WHEREAS, there are an estimated 12,274(21%)[i] citizens in Lewis & Clark County who do not have health insurance, and;

WHEREAS, the best available data indicate that citizens without health insurance experience a serious lack of access to healthcare, causing significant health problems that include a greater risk of dying from cancer, serious complications and worse clinical outcomes for chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and mental illness, and a higher rate of premature deaths[ii], and;

WHEREAS, the Board of Health is charged with improving and protecting the health of Lewis and Clark County residents, which includes developing strategies to improve the general health of citizens and their access to quality healthcare, and;

WHEREAS, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) encourages local health officials to support comprehensive universal health care coverage that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, preventive services and health education, access to primary care, chronic disease care, mental health care, oral health care, and vision and hearing services, and supports health coverage that ensures access to health care regardless of income, age, employment or health status in a manner that will increase positive health outcomes and improve the health status and health equity of all persons[iii], and;

WHEREAS, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) also recognizes that health and access to health care are basic human rights;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Health of Lewis and Clark County also hereby recognizes that health and health care are basic human rights, such that everyone has a right to access to a universal healthcare system, with corresponding local, state and national government responsibilities, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health of Lewis and Clark County shall appoint a Task Force on Local Access to Universal Healthcare that will be charged with implementing a multi-phase project that includes:

<u>Phase I: A community needs assessment that:</u>

- Clearly defines the scope and the extent of the problem of the lack of access to quality health care in Lewis & Clark County;

- Identifies and quantifies the impacts this lack of access has upon the health status and life expectancy of citizens in Lewis & Clark County, paying particular attention to those who are uninsured or underinsured and thus lack adequate access to healthcare;
- Identifies the leading causes and contributors to this lack of access to health care in Lewis & Clark County;
- Correlates this local information to the data, trends and information on the state and national level;
- Collects and reports on the experiences and views of community members;
- Engages community members in an assessment of their needs;
- Consults with community members about how their health needs can best be met and seeks their views on strategic and action options;
- Identifies options to address the health problems and needs in Lewis & Clark County;
- Specifically addresses how health care access in Lewis & Clark County would be improved as part of universal health care programs at the local, state, and national levels;

Phase II: An action plan that:

- Identifies and prioritizes specific strategies and action options that the Board of Health and the Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department should consider to address the lack of access to healthcare, particularly local options for universal healthcare, including but not limited to developing a single payer system, establishing a local universal healthcare zone, expanding community health centers into the hub of a universal primary care network, and asking citizens to consider passing a resolution on the right to health care;
- Sets principles, parameters, objectives, and benchmarks for preferred action options, with due weight given to the community consultation findings;
- Identifies specific strategies, actions, and recommendations that local government officials should make to state government, and federal government leaders regarding the best options for addressing the lack of access to health care and achieving universal healthcare in Lewis and Clark County.

Task force membership shall include two members of the Board of Health and up to seven citizens appointed by the Board, as recommended by the Chairman.

The work of the task force would be dependent on sufficient funding for completing the community assessment and the organization of the task force.

The task force will provide a Phase I report to the Board within 12 months of the first meeting of the task force, and a Phase II report six months subsequent to that. The task force will sunset in two years. The task force shall meet for the first time no later than 2 months after the approval of this resolution.

Approved this 4th day of December 2008.

Signed: Jay A. Krauss, MD