

DURHAM RECOVERY AND RENEWAL TASK FORCE

VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

Friday, January 8, 2021

8:00 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.

MINUTES

Task Force Members

Steve Schewel, Mayor City of Durham

Brenda Howerton, Chair, Durham County Board of Commissioners

Katie Galbraith, Task Force Co-Chair, President, Duke Regional Hospital

Maticia Sims, Task Force Co-Chair, Vice President and Corporate Controller, Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC

Ibukun Akinboyo, M.D., Assistant Professor, Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Duke Health

Susan Amey, CEO, Discover Durham

Ed Boyd, Chief Strategy Office, iNvictus

Dr. Herbert Reynolds Davis, Senior Pastor, Nehemiah Church

Lois DeLoatch, Executive Vice President, Self-Help

Geoff Durham, Durham Chamber of Commerce

George Habel, Vice President, Capitol Broadcasting Company

Philip Harewood, CEO, Lincoln Community Health Center

Rodney Jenkins, Health Director, Durham County Department of Public Health

Jodi Miller, Deputy County Manager, Durham County Government, representing the Emergency Operations Center

Eliazar Posada, Advocacy & Civic Participation Department Director, El Centro Hispano

Anthony Nelson, Dean, North Carolina Central University School of Business

Nicole Thompson, CEO, Downtown Durham, Inc.

Call to Order

Co-Chair Sims called the meeting to order.

Priority Updates

Mayor Schewel thanked everyone for their work on the Task Force and shared his feelings of pride and appreciation for their efforts. He acknowledged and welcomed Chair Howerton to the Task Force.

Mayor Schewel noted, at the request of the Task Force, he and Dr. Mubenga, Durham Public Schools Superintendent, convened a group to explore the creation of a new roundtable dedicated to Pre-K through Grade 12 education. The group agreed to the creation and Dr. Mubenga, the Board of Education, and the Durham Association of Educators would each appoint one chair for the roundtable.

Mayor Schewel discussed the City and County's creation of the Durham Cares Small Business Grant Fund. The City and County contributed together \$500,000 to the fund which was administered by the City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development Office. Grants were distributed to 57 local

Durham small businesses. Mayor Schewel confirmed more information would be presented to the Task Force at the next meeting.

Mayor Schewel briefly spoke on current events and ongoing concerns such as vaccination distribution and acceptance, addressing vaccination hesitancy in the community, economic recovery, workers, Back on the Bull, public schools, federal relief, and rental assistance. He expressed his thanks to the Task Force for all their hard work.

Chair Howerton spoke on the pandemic's effect on the affordability of childcare.

Vice Chair Jacobs echoed Mayor Schewel's comments regarding her appreciation for the Task Force and the community's ability to come together and respond to the pandemic in innovative ways. She provided updates regarding the Governor's recent actions such as extending the eviction moratorium through the end of January, bringing in the National Guard to help with vaccines, extending the curfew, and approving drinks-to-go for alcoholic beverages. Vice Chair Jacobs noted that Duke Health started distributing vaccines to residents 75 years of age and older. She also provided updates regarding Durham County's efforts towards the effects of the pandemic.

Vice Chair Jacobs looked forward to more discussion regarding how to position the Durham community to get everyone vaccinated as quickly as possible.

Co-Chair Sims welcomed Member Eliazar Posada to the Task Force, who was replacing Member Pilar Rocha-Goldberg while she enjoyed her sabbatical. Co-Chair Sims provided updates on the budget proposals the Budget Subcommittee reviewed in December 2020.

Co-Chair Katie Galbraith recognized BCBSNC for the donation of 250,000 bottles of hand sanitizer and 50,000 masks. More than half of these items already were distributed to Durham Public Schools (DPS), Community Health Ambassadors, health workers, and local nonprofits serving vulnerable populations. She recognized Member Deloatch for connecting the Task Force team with an individual who donated 10,095 masks. Co-Chair Galbraith confirmed DPS's plans to continue remote learning until the end of the semester.

Co-Chair Galbraith announced a Vaccine Forum with the Durham Faith Leaders Roundtable on Wednesday, January 13th from 2-3:00 p.m. She reported on the Immigrant and Refugee Roundtable's plans to hold an Immigrant and Refugee Multilingual Townhall sometime in mid-February (more information to come once the date was solidified).

RRTF Update and Discussion on Current COVID-19 Case Statistics and Vaccine Distribution

Co-Chair Galbraith provided the following updates on hospitalization numbers:

- 180 patients across the health system
- There were 144 patients at Duke University Hospital and Duke Regional Hospital
 - 110 active cases
 - 34 resolved cases
 - Nearly 35 of those patients were in ICU
- The seven-day moving average (SDMA) was 95 (last month's SDMA was 64)
- Capacity steadily remained above 90%

Co-Chair Galbraith provided an update regarding the current state of COVID-19 cases in Durham.

Member Amey inquired as to whether a trajectory existed in Durham which suggested that rationing of care would be required in the future. Member Posada inquired as to what would be the implications of reaching full capacity. Co-Chair Galbraith discussed the efforts put forth to accommodate and care for the high number of patients. The hospital “flexed-up” to take care of patients who needed care and did not turn patients away; however, this usually led to longer wait times and administering care in different settings than a traditional hospital room. The hospital’s surge plans (which were not yet being utilized) called for having beds available in multiple locations that were not traditional bed locations inside the hospital. She noted the biggest challenge was related to staffing, but there were aggressive recruitment efforts underway. Member Akinboyo noted that the hospital regularly flexed up and down to accommodate utilization trends and the concerns regarding capacity were related to whether most hospital beds were occupied by COVID-19 patients as that would require the hospital to operate differently.

Co-Chair Galbraith stated the Duke system received transfers from other hospitals around the state on a regular basis. Duke Regional Hospital transfer numbers were lower in the past few weeks than they were around this time the previous year—she believed this to be due to capacity constraints.

Referring to the status of vaccinations for hospital staff, Co-Chair Galbraith stated they had a successful launch and were now a little over three weeks into the process. The second doses began during the start of the current week and over 12,000 individuals across the health system were vaccinated.

Member Akinboyo discussed the acuity of cases; stating patients’ symptoms regularly fell into different categories and while there were more cases, the pattern of severity had not changed. She confirmed that staff had not seen the variance in COVID-19 strains lead to worse clinical disease.

Member Jenkins provided the following updates:

- 1082 total current active cases
- 14,890 Durhamites beat COVID-19
- 149 deaths to COVID-19
- 16,126 total cases since the pandemic began
- The seven-day moving average (SDMA) in the community (which was a reflection of transmission) was 122
- The month of December as a whole saw a total of 3,790 cases
- 22.4 percent of all cases were among Hispanic or LatinX individuals (14 percent of Durham County residents identified as Hispanic or Latinx).
- 39.26 percent of all cases were among Black or African American individuals (37 percent of Durham County residents identify as Black or African American).
- 27.18 percent of cases were among White individuals (54 percent of Durham County residents identified as White).
- 45.83 percent of cases associated with Hospital, general medicine and surgical were Black or African American, 72.62 percent were female.
- 52.12 percent of cases associated with Nursing Care facilities were Black or African American, 59.39 percent were female.
- For the week of 12/27/2020 to 1/02/2021, 11 percent of labs reported electronically were positive (the prior week saw 6.9 percent).

Member Jenkins discussed the continued vigilance on school-aged children. He believed that we would continue to feel the effects of the holiday gatherings during the next six weeks. Member Jenkins confirmed the Durham County Public Health Department received vaccines and had administered around 1,100 vaccines to a specific population. He noted that while there were not currently enough vaccinations in the state, there would eventually be enough to vaccinate every person who wanted to be vaccinated.

Member Jenkins discussed the storage of the vaccine and why the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine needed to be more methodical than that of the flu vaccine.

Ryan Smith, Strategic Initiatives Manager, was requested to provide the Task Force members with information regarding the hotline number, survey, and the listserv to receive vaccine updates so members would distribute it to their contacts.

Co-Chair Galbraith and Member Jenkins discussed the role the Task Force could play in the vaccination effort—now and once there were enough vaccines for everyone. The Task Force was encouraged to serve as champions and advocates for the vaccine, emphasize the need for patience due to the complex logistics required with vaccinations, and continue to encourage the public to adhere to the COVID-19 safety measures (i.e. the 3 Ws).

Member Harewood stated the community health centers had yet to receive an allocation from the State. He stated the Lincoln Community Health Center (LCHC) received 200 COVID-19 vaccines from the Durham County Public Health Department and noted the LCHC continued to administer around 100 COVID-19 tests per week—of those tests, around 38 percent returned a positive result. The LCHC administered over 10,000 flu shots and saw little to no flu cases.

Co-Chair Galbraith and Member Jenkins discussed the vaccination rate and what it was expected to be in the future once the logistics were refined and the system was made more efficient.

Co-Chair Galbraith believed it was too early to tell whether there were any trends regarding which communities had a propensity to not seek vaccination or had difficulty accessing the vaccine. Member Jenkins noted that the only data they had at the moment was from surveys which showed historically marginalized populations were the most reluctant towards getting vaccinated—the Black population was the highest in reluctance followed by the LatinX population.

Member Akinboyo discussed the importance of building trust by being honest and using facts to dispel any myths about the vaccine. Member Amey noted the proposal to encourage people to take a vaccine pledge in order to help build trust and raise visibility of community members who pledged to take the vaccine.

Update from Economic Recovery Subcommittee

Member Durham emphasized the importance of continuing to support small businesses as well as education, training, and upscaling opportunities for Durham's growing industries.

Member Nelson provided updates on economic recovery metrics such as the unemployment rate, small business activity, small business revenue, and consumer spending,

Referring to the economic recovery metrics stated by Member Nelson, Member Amey noted the most-dire numbers were among low-income workers and small businesses. She thanked Mayor

Schewel and his wife for their generous private donation to Durham Delivers and acknowledged Mayor Schewel's efforts to recruit more donors. She provided updates on Durham Delivers and stated they had done about \$40,000 in revenue for the participating restaurants.

Member Amey stated the top 10 festivals and events in 2019 contributed about \$20 million in economic impact and a lot of that fed small businesses. While it was not yet safe to have large gatherings, she believed it was important to work as quickly as possible to get to a place in which events could occur safely. Considering that many festivals and events took around a year to plan, it was necessary to begin thinking about how to create an environment which allowed people to gather safely in the future because bringing back these types of events would propel Durham towards economic recovery.

Member Amey provided an update on the communications proposal.

Discussion was held regarding the possibility of creating an economic recovery dashboard as suggested by the City's interns. Vice Chair Jacobs believed it was a great idea and hoped it would get going.

Member Thompson discussed the winter plans for small businesses in downtown Durham such as the popup Streeter, drinks-to-go, and the takeout pledge/challenge.

RRTF Discussion of Priorities for 2021

Mayor Schewel voiced his thoughts regarding important priorities; they included helping with vaccine rollout, overcoming vaccine hesitancy, economic recovery, grappling with the potential eviction crisis, and maintaining a racial equity lens while working on solutions. Chair Howerton concurred and added supporting seniors and addressing food insecurity. Vice Chair Jacobs agreed and added public schools and supporting families through virtual learning.

Member Posada appreciated the discussion around racial equity lens and wanted to note the importance of including language equity and addressing all vulnerable populations in the community.

Member Amey highlighted the importance of the Task Force thinking through the important things to do as well as the important things to communicate to the community.

Adjournment

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, February 12th at 8:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tania De Los Santos
Durham County Senior Administrative Assistant