UC AHEC Community Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
March 9, 2021

Special Guests: Dr. Christopher Bernheisel, Dr. Philip Diller
Staff: Dr. Sarah Pickle, Sharron DiMario and Jennifer Stewart-Hamblen

Dr. Pickle welcomed committee members to the meeting and guests Dr. Diller and Dr. Bernheisel. She also announced that Lois Mills of Otterbein Senior Living has agreed to serve as the Advisory Committee chairperson.

Dr. Diller is Senior Associate Dean for Educational Affairs and Dean of Academic Affairs at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. Dr. Diller also served as the UC AHEC Principal Investigator. He joined tonight to meet the members of the advisory committee and listen. Dr. Diller has a rural health background, as his father was a rural physician. He has a deep interest in healthcare workforce issues and understands the importance of physicians and other healthcare professionals to a rural community.

Dr. Bernheisel is the interim director of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Cincinnati. He told the committee of a new partnership between UC and the Adams County Regional Medical Center. Plans are to start an academic rural health site through a full-service primary care office. He said Adams County ranks 87th out of 88 counties for health outcomes. There is significant mental health and substance use in the county, as well as obesity. Primary care is an essential component of a healthy community and there is an insufficient amount of healthcare providers and physicians. This would be the first UC-supported training track outside Cincinnati’s urban core. A rural academic site provides exposure to rural practice, both for medical students and residents. HealthSource currently has a rural track for osteopathic medicine in the region.

Providing students who want to practice rural medicine with opportunities for training can influence their decision to stay in the area. On the rural track, medical students will spend their final two years in Adams County. There will also be chances for community-based participatory research. Plans for the West Union office (completed by July 1) are for staffing three days a week. On the rural track, medical students will spend their final two years in Adams County. UC will conduct a needs assessment and there will ultimately be two Department of Family and Community Medicine staff there too.

Pat Achoe asked if there would be any chances for other health professions students in the Academic Health Center. Dr. Bernheisel said that is a strong possibility. Dr. Pickle asked what the committee could do, in addition to “keeping our eyes and ears open.” Dr. Bernheisel said that establishing trust and relationships is important.

Lois Mills asked if this effort is a foundation for building more locations in the region or state. Dr. Bernheisel said that is a tall order. Sharron DiMario said that UC AHEC is participating in the Rural Physician Training Partnership with several other medical schools in Ohio.
Beth Kress offered to connect Dr. Bernheisel with Rhonda. She also suggested meetings with the Adams and Brown County Chamber of Commerce and other community organizations. She confirmed the issue of healthcare access in both counties and those Nurse Practitioners most of the current care.

Dr. Pickle shared several slides of the Committee’s responses to the survey. For instance, “What should you be doing between meetings?” Look for collaboration opportunities with each other and AHEC. Send us links and items of interest that we can post through social media. The updated AHEC website has a link to Advisory Committee information and materials.

Lois Mills revisited the mission.

There were no questions about the activity report, but Dr. Pickle reminded the group about the use of Geri suits for learners. Contact any staff member to obtain the suits.

The committee was split into three groups to discuss the following questions.

Question Prompts –

1. What type of partnerships are you interested in developing, i.e. more with AHEC, with each other, with other community organizations, etc.?

2. Do you have upcoming activities in your organization that are open to partnerships/looking for partners?

3. What type of partnerships have you developed due to COVID? Any lessons learned and/or plans to continue them?

Room 1 – Pam Williams talked about Brown County’s COVID vaccinations, health fairs, and harm reduction programs. Heather Moore said that UC Blue Ash has low-cost dental care.

Room 2 – Angie Clark said the College of Nursing is also interested in collaborating. Dr. Gebhardt talked about the family medicine residency at UC West Chester. Pat Achoe talked about the joint pharmacy tech and nursing partnership and that Kroger has some training opportunities. The group also discussed the social determinants of health work at Xavier University and the ongoing Health Cafés with Dr. Fichtenbaum. Dr. Binnig also said that HealthSource has opportunities for clinical placement. The group also expressed concern about inconsistent Wi-Fi and internet.

Room 3 – Kim Newberry expressed the need for clinical sites for Laurel Oaks’ students and efforts to expand to Fayette County Hospital, Highland District Hospital and freestanding emergency departments.