

Partnership for a Healthy Durham
Access to Care Committee
January 8th, 2026 - 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Virtual

Minutes

Facilitators: Edeia Lynch & Brad Caison

Access to Care: This committee's activities include advocating changes that will affect health care coverage for residents across all ages and developing community and agency-based strategies to make measurable improvements in access to care for the uninsured and underinsured residents of Durham.

Attendees: Bria Miller, Edeia Lynch, Brad Caison, Karin Symanski, Hollis Smith, Sierra Elrahal, Pam Purifoy Angel Romero, Eliabeth Bill, Charita McCollers, Elim Lee, Scott Esko Brummel, Kimberly Monroe

Project, Topic, Goal	Major Discussion Points	Recommendations & Action Step(s)
Icebreaker 9:00 - 9:05	• Resiliency • Tending to ourselves • Strength • Proactive resting • Hope Find joy	
Last meeting Recap, Notes Review, Co-chair update 9:05 - 9:10		
Affordable Care Act (ACA) Update <i>Hollis Smith, Sierra Elrahal</i> 9:10 - 9:15	• There is not much new information on ACA, besides a new proposal for a three-year extension where subsidies would be the same. Although this is proposed, there are no guarantees of it passing. • As of Jan 1st the enhanced subsidies have become much more limited than the past five years, though it is not too late for them to be extended once again. People have already started making payments. Is there any push to have employers provide insurance benefits more since the will of leadership is not in support of the ACA?- Some employers might be making that decision, but the marketplace's rule for the subsidy is that in order to be eligible for the subsidy, you <i>cannot</i> have another offer through employment that is reasonable/affordable. If you received the subsidy and you were not eligible, you will have to pay the subsidy back. • If a family has an offer of health insurance the whole family could not get a subsidy but now it is just the employee and then the rest of the family can access a subsidy but the employee is not eligible. • Marketplace functioning – if someone is eligible, the Medicaid Marketplace has continued to reach out to them. Some are auto enrolled to the next plan. • Start dates for changes are set for Fall, which is after the election. Changes will not be felt until after the election. How do we educate the community? – voting, help people register to vote and educate people about the process of voting so they know how to participate. They should know where their district is, where they go to vote, when early voting is, and what the voting date is.	Charita McCollers has many questions about work requirements and SNAP benefits. She should connect with Sierra Elrahal: sierrae@legalaidnc.org , 919-226-5914 (direct line)

	Are we working on addressing verification for benefits, especially for the unhoused and transient population?- Lincoln Community Health Center and Durham emergency departments (EDs) are discussing how to educate the community with all the quick changes occurring. A main concern is people falling through the cracks, and it is a real concern with people moving and unhoused. Helping people to get the right level of care and keep non-emergent care needs, such as colds, out of the ED but at their PCP for treatment. How can we help people get the right access to care? Educating the elected officials is what we do, but we need to also educate the people that we are serving to help them navigate the system.	
Listening Session Facilitator Round Robin 9:15 - 9:35	Facilitators talked to eight people, with the goal of capturing this moment in time and what access to care looks like in our community The goals of today's conversation are: 1. Discuss between listening sessions facilitators what their takeaways were from the overall experience 2. What do we want to do with this information once synthesized? Key Takeaways included: • It's extremely important to use plain language ◦ Especially with skills training, such as wound care • Printed resources are helpful, especially to teach basic care skills • Refugee populations still need messages of hope and resiliency in the community. There is still a need to keep fighting and moving forward • There is a very large gap between ethnicities with resources and how to access care. ◦ Spanish-speaking communities seem to have robust resources in knowledge, but another community was not as connected nor familiar with terms used in healthcare, such as the term safety net. ◦ Haitian community is not very well connected ◦ Providers' experiences were very different and diverse • MyChart access is helpful and available in other languages • It's helpful to have other tools for people to use a phone and in-person, since not everyone is tech savvy • It could be helpful to put a provider's number in the patient's phone so they are recognized when they call • Not everyone is comfortable with digital platforms and are concerned with spam • There are gaps for those that are homebound and helping a loved one with not knowing they can get paid-this is a barrier • Overall, people are tired. They are caring for a loved one while also fighting with the system for the care needed During these listening sessions, did anyone mention that there were several services previously that are no longer available? Yes, refugees lost certain access to care, as well as now only having one location for medication boxes. The Partnership will be doing some analysis to dig more into the feedback from these listening sessions.	Dr. Joan Clifford leads Duke's community-based language initiative and can help connect students to service opportunities. The Spanish language students are well connected but French language students could use more opportunities to plug into the community. jcliffor@duke.edu
Walk with a Doc, Safety Net Provider Support 9:35 – 9:55	There was not enough time to fully discuss these topics, so the February meeting will be dedicated to them.	

9:55 – 10:00	Kimberly announcement – Duke Cancer institute will be hosting annual Health Equity Summit in February. Speaker will be sharing access to care and clinical trial experience. Free event. The Durham Benefits Access Coalition (led by former Mayor Schewel) is having a working group meeting Monday at 2: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84742211302?pwd=COQfZXFKJLU8ccYNM1coYHg3vm4lw.1&jst=3	
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