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City, county, health care professionals to comprise committee

Posted: December 16, 2011 - 7:34pm | Updated: December 17, 2011 - 12:37am

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By **TOMMY MAGELSSSEN**

AVALANCHE-JOURNAL

The Lubbock Board of Health took another step toward a joint city-county Health Department by appointing a five-member committee Friday to study the feasibility of the venture.

The committee, composed of current board members, health care professionals and a county representative, does not have a time frame to report to the City Council, as both the city's and county's budgets are set for the next fiscal year.

Dr. Steve Presley, chairman of the board, said board member Dr. Brian Carr, himself, County Judge Tom Head and Greg Bruce, University Medical Center vice president, have accepted positions on the committee.

Presley also wants someone from Covenant Health System on the committee, and is hopeful Richard Parks, president and CEO of Covenant, would be willing.

The committee is an investigative team, Presley said, and is going to start broadly before getting into the specifics of what makes a health department.

He said financial constraints, which have been a primary talking point for the city and the county, should be explored later in the committee's research.

Likely, the committee will meet for the first time toward the end of January, he added.

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In another presentation, Dr. Anne Epstein told the board about her research into the department's sexually transmitted disease, immunization and surveillance services.

Epstein said she is pleased with the programs, and she also recognized the necessity of these systems with Lubbock's high sexually transmitted disease rate.

In 2010, Lubbock county saw an increase of 139 cases in its sexually transmitted disease rate, from 2,094 reported new cases in 2009 to 2,223 reported cases in 2010. Rates of syphilis, AIDS and HIV all decreased slightly. Reports of gonorrhea and chlamydia increased.

Presley said he hopes to reach out to local experts to speak to the committee about certain aspects of health departments, so the five members can be fully educated about what it takes to run a health department.

Presley also was voted as the chair of the next year. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 20.

To comment on this story:

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TAGS: HEALTH TOMMY MAGELSSSEN ANNE EPSTEIN BOARD MEMBER BOARD OF HEALTH BRIAN CARR CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD CONTACT DETAILS COVENANT GEOGRAPHY OF TEXAS GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES GREG BRUCE HEALTH HEALTH HEALTH JUDGE LABOR LABOR LUBBOCK METROPOLITAN AREA LUBBOCK, TEXAS PERSON CAREER PRESIDENT AND CEO QUOTATION REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD PARKS SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE SOCIAL ISSUES SOCIAL ISSUES STEVE PRESLEY TEXAS UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER VICE PRESIDENT , HAVE ACCEPTED POSITIONS ON THE COMMITTEE

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Where's Input from the CHCL?

By Pappion | 12/18/11 - 01:53 am

Certainly, our Community Health Center of Lubbock should be on that committee; the CHCL provides health and dental care for our region's people, at any income level, and part of a highly regarded state group serving healthcare needs.

It wouldn't be unusual for the CHCL to end up bearing the brunt of closure of the city health department; moreover, they work closely with UMC and Covenant in providing excellent health and dental care for all community members.

Adios!

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