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City clinic looks to expanded role in coming years

By Cliff Lewis

NewsLanc recently interviewed Daniel Jurman, Director of Development for SouthEast Lancaster Health Services (SELHS, a.k.a. SouthEast clinic) in Lancaster City.

SELHS does not provide free health care. Their budget consists primarily of money collected through service fees. What really makes the clinic a vital asset to the community is that SELHS will accept payment through Medical Assistance (MA)—a currency that many doctors would not readily accept. As the need for MA increases in Lancaster County, so does the need for SELHS services. There are currently over 35,000 Lancasterians on MA.

The clinic's ever-growing emergency dental clinic illustrates the role of SELHS. Besides one private dental practice, SELHS is the only place where people on MA can receive dental care in Lancaster County. According to Jurman, the SELHS dental clinic—which operates on Tuesday and Thursday mornings—is never below capacity. So, even through

public funding is available for dental care, the providers of this care are few and far between.

Even if universal health insurance was instituted from a Federal level, this shortage of providers would continue to impede the provision of public health care: *“Let’s say, for instance,...that the Federal government decides to give everyone health insurance: We’re still faced with the same issues that we have with medical assistance. Who’s going to see these people? If they suddenly have a health insurance card, it doesn’t necessarily mean that they’re going to have access to care.”*

Jurman thinks that, as health insurance reform progresses in Washington, Community Health Centers like SEHLS may hold the secret to dodging the current provider shortage: *“Our local representatives...have all seen that Community Health Centers are already set up—in terms of infrastructure—to do that. And we tend to do it at about 40% less.”*

EDITORIAL: Shameful abuse of the public trust

The PA Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau (PDCVB) is largely funded by tax payers' dollars, a good portion of its budget coming from its share of the Hotel Room Sales Tax imposed in order to subsidize the development and operation of the Convention Center.

A press release from the PDCVB claimed that the respondents overwhelmingly favored a street car system. As a result, the poll results was published in the *Lancaster Newspapers*.

NewsLanc's investigation has shown that the information provided to the respondents prior to or with the questions was outrageously distorted, the questions asked were few and slanted, and the interpretation of the poll was a bald face effort to mislead the public.

NewsLanc therefore inquired of the PDCVB: *“Who requested, who paid for the poll, and who prepared the questions?”*

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The response from Joel Cliff, Media Relations Manager for PDCVB, was *“I need to direct you to Jack Howell [director of the Lancaster Streetcar Company] for these details.”*

Shame on the Lancaster Streetcar Company for exploiting the PDCVB, shame on the PDCVB for being so duped, and shame on the Lancaster Newspapers for carelessly (if not knowingly) printing misleading information.

Paul Ware resigns PAM’s Board; Robert Faulk, M.D. returns as Chair

On Monday, June 8, a press release from the Pennsylvania Academy of Music announced the addition of seven new members to its Board of Trustees. What was not mentioned was then Vice Chairman Ely Gonick had tendered his resignation from the board the prior Friday and Chairman Paul Ware resigned a day later.

Ware had led the Academy during the planning and decision process and, when the fundraising fell more than ten million dollars short, had generously

arranged to guarantee loans to make up most of the deficit.

Thus, when the ability to repay construction loans came into question, Ware was in the conflicted situation of serving as the Chair of the Board and as a major creditor.

At the emergency meeting on Monday, the quorum of directors voted to return Robert Faulk, M.D., who had preceded Ware as Chairman, to the position.

LETTER: LGH Residency Program would benefit from Heroin Clinic

“As a substance abuse counselor, I work with the population who is afflicted with this dependency and it is heart-wrenching that only a small percentage of this population has availability of services provided to them by either the county’s lone Methadone clinic or by physicians who prescribe Suboxone (Buprenorphine HCl/Naloxone HCl dehydrate).

“NewsLanc has stated that an investment of \$250,000 (of LGH’s \$113,000,000 recent profit margin) will provide considerably improved services to many more of the opioid-dependent population. At first, this outlay of \$250,000 may seem considerable, especially in this time of economic turmoil. However, it should also be noted that to offer preventive services (i.e. proposed Suboxone clinics within Lancaster General Hospital and their many satellite clinic sites) to this population will actually cost less to the medical community.

“It does not take considerable accounting skills to recognize that an investment of \$250,000 (or 0.0022% of Lancaster General Hospital’s recent annual profit margin) would provide much-needed medical services to this population.

“Lancaster General Hospital’s family practice residency program would greatly benefit from the \$250,000 investment toward services and the establishment of Duke Street and satellite clinic offerings. Family practice residents would greatly benefit from exposure to the opioid-dependent population and the experience of offering treatment such as Suboxone.

“Lancaster General Hospital has boasted that their family practice residency program is viewed very favorably from a national perspective. An inclusion of an opioid-dependent treatment educational tract to the residency program would only fortify this program nationally.”

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