

## Lynn Institute for Healthcare Research, Inc. (LIHR)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **New Collaborative Organizes Change for NE OKC**

*Reverends, grocers, doctors, police officers, educators, CEOs, and artists  
plan transformation of Northeast Oklahoma City.*

**Monday, August 22, Oklahoma City** – The Healthy Community Collaborative (HCC) – Northeast Oklahoma City, chaired by Jari Askins, former Oklahoma Lieutenant Governor, and Greg Jones, Northeast Oklahoma City business leader, met last Monday at Mama E’s restaurant to discuss how to measurably improve the health of the 33,000 Northeast Oklahoma City residents over the next two years.

Members of the HCC, facilitated by the Lynn Institute of Healthcare Research (LIHR), live, and/or work, or are influence leaders for the Northeast Oklahoma City community. The HCC assembles each month to work towards the overarching goal **of creating sustainable changes in the health of Northeast residents, which will result in positive statistical shifts and health opinions by the year 2026.**

The Fifth HCC session, held August 15, recognized two – year measurable objectives that will help achieve 10 – year goals focused on Health, Environment, Transportation, Economy, and the Community of Northeast Oklahoma City.

“A menu of services is represented by the organizations in this very room and Northeast Oklahoma City is an area that is ready to be reborn,” said Karen Vinyard Waddell, LIHR CEO/President for the Lynn Institutes. “This diverse group of community leaders may not have known each other six months ago, but now each of you can easily pick up the phone to ask for help.”

To begin changing the pattern of generations of poor health of Northeast residents, the HCC set two – year measurable objectives that include providing easy access to a doctor or clinic and mental health care services.

According to the LIHR Lifestyle Summary, Northeast Oklahoma City suffers from a lack of access to primary healthcare, despite sharing zip codes with University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. In addition, this community's suicide rate is more than double the rest of the state and the nation.

"How can we communicate fitness resources that already exist, like the Douglass Rec Center, or the underused 7.5 mile Katy Trail that follows NE 4th Street? Let's get this information in front of people. Sometimes, people just don't know how to get started." said Rita Freaney, Founder/CEO of Sisters in Motion. "Everybody in this room represents some organization that can help, and together we can make a difference."

The HCC identified an unconventional method of placing primary care professionals in non – traditional settings such as churches, schools, and grocery stores. Another measurable two – year objective is to provide consistent training to various community outlets in order to reduce the stigmatism against mental health conditions and patients.

The new two – year measurable objective for Transportation is to inventory currently available public transportation and to compare the facts with the community's transport needs.

"What are the bus routes and other services such as churches, neighborhood associations, and schools? When we have a better understanding of what is being offered, we can identify what the gaps actually are," said Camal Pennington, Field Representative for the American Federation of Teachers.

While the Northeast zip codes of 73105, 73111, and 73117 are home to the State Capitol Complex, a Health Sciences Center, and key cultural and recreational attractions, which all generate revenue for the city and state, family poverty rates are almost double those of Oklahoma County, and 65 percent of children under the age of five live in poverty.

The recommended two – year objective to decrease current poverty statistics and to generate a more sustainable local economy is to identify and develop a business development mini – collaborative that recruits companies that will create local jobs and affect change.

This area has low marriage and high school graduation rates, coupled with the high single head of household rate. In order to provide area children with greater hope for the future, the HCC would like to see every Northeast Oklahoma City elementary school student paired with a mentor, if so desired by the child. Mentorship of children, can reduce adverse childhood experiences and is a first step in creating a culture of strong family units who celebrate education, the group noted.

A 50 – year history of pride and accomplishments in Northeast Oklahoma City has been overshadowed by the physical decay of neighborhoods and exacerbated poverty rates. This community has only two grocery stores, which limits residents' access to healthy foods. In order to transform Northeast Oklahoma City into a safe and beautiful place to live and work, the HCC

recommends a three – pronged approach to begin improving neighborhoods: 1) identify active and non – active areas and associations, 2) engage the non – active areas, and 3) connect all locales with much needed resources, such as OKC Beautiful. HCC co – chair, Greg Jones also would like to see many of the 1500 businesses and 95 churches of Northeast Oklahoma City adopt a street and other public beautification projects.

“What’s happened today is the community coming together, wrapping our arms around Northeast Oklahoma City, as we support local leaders achieve their dreams for the community,” said Lynn Institute board member Laura Pittman, Ph.D, Field Services Division Manager for the OK Department of Corrections.

"With multiple measurable objectives now identified, the HCC is one step closer to meeting long - term goals," said Jari Askins, the HCC co - chair. "This diverse and caring group of people want to help create opportunities for a healthier life, strengthen the economy, have an efficient and affordable transportation system; and celebrate strong and healthy families."

Future HCC meetings are September 19 and October 1.

#### **About the Northeast Oklahoma City Healthy Community Collaborative**

The Northeast Oklahoma City HCC is a group of community leaders with diverse expertise and backgrounds who live and/or work in local business, funding, health, spiritual, and social services.

In March 2014, LIHR began a comprehensive assessment of Northeast Oklahoma City, one of Oklahoma’s – in not the most significant – geographic areas of generations of poor health, and is an at – risk population. For the next 22 months, a staff of three identified and inventoried community assets, studied quantitative research of demographics, social welfare, environment, and disease. Qualitative research was then collected from the general public, influential community leaders, and Northeast Oklahoma City citizen focus groups. In January 2016, the distilled research was published as a 92 – page report, the “Lynn Institute Lynn Lifestyle Summary© – Northeast Oklahoma City, 2016.” With the publication of this professionally reviewed whitepaper, LIHR established and currently facilitate then Oklahoma City HCC, with the assertive effort to develop and adopt a 10 – year plan for positive change.

#### **About the Lynn Institute for Healthcare Research**

The Thomas N. Lynn Institute for Healthcare Research, Inc., (LIHR) was created in 1997 when Integris Medical Center closed its medical research operations and launched two free - standing corporations: the Lynn Institute for Healthcare Research, Inc., a non – profit healthcare research organization, and its wholly owned subsidiary, the Lynn Health Science Institute, Inc., a for – profit clinical research trials organization. Between 1997 and 2012, the Lynn Institute for Healthcare Research conducted internationally acclaimed basic science and medical investigator - initiated research. The primary focus was on sleep and gastroesophageal reflux

disease (GERD) and Lynn scientists produced over 250 internationally acclaimed publications and presentations. Upon the senior scientist's retirement in 2012, the Lynn Institute for Healthcare Research began the transition toward creating sustainable community health research and planning with the mission "to measurably improve the health of the communities we serve."

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