

## Tuesday Topics – Summary

**August 4, 2020**

Alice Weingartner, Chief Strategy Officer, Community Care Network of Kansas and Linda Ochs, Director, Shawnee County Health Department, co-presented a program, “Community Health in the Age of COVID-19.”

Alice Weingartner opened the presentation with an overview of the Community Care Network (formerly Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved). The network works to help provide high-quality health care for everyone by operating health centers that include 34 clinics serving 100 communities in Kansas. The clinics provided \$44 million of uncompensated services to 317,000 Kansans. Services included medical, dental and whole-person care. According to Ms. Weingartner, 9% of Kansans are below the poverty level and 33% of Kansans are uninsured. Services include using telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic and coordinating with community partners. CCN has worked to provide testing, respiratory clinics, and has distributed 100,000 personal protection equipment (PPE). The current focus is on COVID-19.

Linda Ochs began her part of the presentation. *How we got here:* Ms. Ochs showed a chart from Dr. Norman depicting the upward trend of COVID-19 from March to July 11. She added that Kansas may be improving. According to Ms. Ochs, many health disparities exist with more people of color impacted by COVID-19 as well as shorter life expectancy and infant deaths.

*What we are doing now:* Reduced staff works from home. Because results happen at the policy level, they work on strategies, laws, regulations that support health, and a mask ordinance. Additionally, they work with the hospitals, Valeo, Grace Med and Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods on housing, food and thermometers. They also work with Parks and Recreation on a variety of projects and hope to collaborate with them to find a grant writer who can work to secure much-needed funding to improve health.

When asked what kind of support our league can provide, the answer was to contact elected officials to share your opinion and advocate for clinics. Medicaid expansion would provide health care for 150,000 Kansans and fund health centers to meet people’s needs. Medicaid expansion would mean healthier Kansans who are more able to work.

Health care is a big challenge. Due to COVID-19, there has been a 90% loss of patient visits that creates a struggle for clinics. Telehealth care has transformed health care. If someone can’t get transportation to health care, setting up telehealth is an option. Barriers to telehealth include policies, funding for prescriptive help that is available for clinics but not home visits.

Regarding COVID-19, a vaccine expected next year is going to help but will not make everything go away. It will not be 100% effective. Only 60% of flu vaccine is successful. Family gatherings, lack of masking, and lack of social distancing are problems.

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Funding for the Shawnee County Health Department comes from several sources.

\$2.1 million from taxes

\$4.3 million from state and pass through federal grants and the tobacco settlement

**A video recording of the August 4, 2020, Tuesday Topics Zoom meeting is available on the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library [website](#). Additional information about the Community Care Network is available [here](#) and the Shawnee County Health Department site is [here](#).**