

To: Members of the JTFUHC
Date: October 14, 2020
From: Tom Sincic, MSN, FNP-Retired
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My name is Tom Sincic, a retired Family Nurse Practitioner, I am thankful for this repeat opportunity. I am personally thankful for the dedication of this group to bring the necessary systemic change to this complex and inequitable system which has failed to meet any of the first six purposes that this body is tasked with addressing,

- 1) Improving the health status of individuals, families, and communities;
- (2) Defending against threats to the health of the residents of this state;
- (3) Protecting individuals from the financial consequences of ill health;
- (4) Providing equitable access to person-centered care;
- (5) Removing cost as a barrier to accessing health care;
- (6) Removing any financial incentive for a health care practitioner to provide care to one patient rather than another.

OHA Director Allen, the OHA staff, and this body are well aware of these failures. OHA has shown the data to numerous committees that have tried to address this in piecemeal fashion.

You collectively will indeed need to be a Task **Force**. This challenge is immense but essential and doable. We must get away from the piecemeal approach.

There are, however, significant concrete steps that can be taken in the interim. I suggest that the Task Force establish a pathway forward by not waiting until the end of the next legislative session to bring your first recommendation to the legislature. You should collectively weigh in early so that the legislature seriously addresses some issues in this next session. All this is possible now. Here are some examples:

- Increase the necessary funding for public health—to improve community health and reduce unnecessary clinical care expenses.
- Address social determinants such as food insecurity, housing, daycare, etc.
- Ask that the CDC declare racism a threat to the public health so it is addressed systemically and clinically through proper protocols and funding.
- Curtail the obesity epidemic in children (disproportionately impacting people of color) through measures to severely curtail consumption of soda by children.
- Do more to ban the thousands of chemicals in our food—to address their endocrine disruption properties.
- Drug Pricing and Drug Transparency—to control the profiteers and create necessary transparency.
- Telehealth as a clearly approved method of providing care (For your entertainment, I have provided a picture of me safely and successfully providing telehealth services in rural East Tennessee in 1983. That was 37 years ago without the benefits of any current technology.)
- Access to dental services such as with the increased use of dental therapists.
- Curtail the costs of dialysis.
- Address climate crisis now.

I also want to refer you all to my previously submitted testimony. I want to reiterate that Purposes 1 and 2 of SB 770 were intentionally listed as number 1 and 2 because that is how you build a system of health and healthcare that allows the achievement of the other purposes under the values and principles listed. The Work Plan seems to go down a clinical path to meeting the purposes. The ill health and costs related to those needing dialysis are just one example of how you cannot meet these purposes through the archaic medical/insurance model.

I, again, strongly suggest that you invite a group of public health and public health policy experts into this work asap. I especially recommend Dr. Charles Gallia, long time OHA employee and one of the chief crafters of SB 770. The sooner the better.

Another suggestion is to invite someone such as OHP ombudsman Ellen Pinney to bring a first hand and collective account of the challenges that individuals face in healthcare access.

I also want to point out that the required public input process is not outlined in the Work Plan. You should request needed funding and extended timetable to continue this work.

I have a final two questions. How will you be determining invited testimony such as needed expertise including perspective? Will you be inviting them to the work groups or in front of this Committee?

Sincerely,

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