

Oklahoma Rural Health Care Reimagined – Revised 3-20-2023

What an exciting and unusual opportunity to make a big and significant impact on Rural Health Care across our great state. This is a beginning proposal to consider based on ideas discussed at earlier meetings of the Ad HOC Committee subject to additional discussion and revision based on the six buckets identified below to help change the direction of Rural Health Care in Oklahoma.

1. The Need for more family doctors across our state. Not enough general practitioners or family doctors are being trained and there is a huge shortage of rural residency opportunities. Not enough doctors are going into practice in rural Oklahoma and these family doctor relationships are missing for many Oklahomans.

We propose to make a Two Hundred Million dollar commitment to this effort with 10 Million available immediately to start the program and fund the first two years. The other 190 Million dollars will establish an endowment to stimulate more medical school spaces at OU & OSU for family doctors, to support more community medical residencies in rural Oklahoma and to help forgive more medical school debt to draw family doctors to rural Oklahoma or other incentives to encourage family doctors in rural Oklahoma.

Annual income at 5% - will generate 9.5 Million dollars per year to support rural residencies like the few TSET has been supporting or loan forgiveness like the Health Care Workforce Training Commission provides for Rural Physicians.

Administered by- Oklahoma Health Care Authority – TSET or Health Care Workforce Training Commission or OCAST?

2. Fund out the Echo and Telehealth Network to support and work with family doctors in rural areas across our state and experiment with providing kiosks for more access across the state. This would supplement capacity in rural hospitals and medical practices and would connect with a regional Telemedicine Center of Excellence. This could tie into either or both of the Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. We propose 25 Million For the Echo Telehealth Network and 25 Million for the Regional Telemedicine Center. We would make a onetime investment of Fifty Million dollars to provide the hardware and software at the counties and to further fund the center to service the network.

3. Expand the very young Extension Health Care Specialist Program into all rural counties to provide nutrition and health training to school age children, SNAP families, other adult audiences within the county aimed at improving health habits, improving nutrition and with a focus on preventative health care. Make this programming available to all schools within the county and encourage local initiatives to reach new audiences and to make a difference in community health. Make a 235 Million commitment to this program with 25 million available immediately to start the programs and fund the first two years. Use the remaining 210 million dollars to create an endowment to fund these nurses, public health experts and/or health educators in all Oklahoma rural counties.

Annual Income of 5% from the endowment would generate 10.5 million dollars per year to support dedicated extension service personnel and programming in all rural counties. Program Funding Administered by – Oklahoma Health Care Authority or OSU Extension Services or OCAST?

Programming and daily operations by OSU Extension Service

4. Incentive Fund for Rural Health Cooperative Initiatives

Recognizing we have many counties declining in population and some with no or very limited health care options this endowment fund is created to inspire new ideas and cooperative efforts to advance rural health care. This can be capital expense items, specialized equipment or specialized talents as well as programming or even studies and business plans to develop survival, sustainability and growth plans for local community health care. All projects will require a local match and extra points will be awarded during project evaluation for cities and/or counties working together. If our state authorizes, and creates regional health districts or regional TIF Districts for rural health care projects – priority will be given to these cooperative efforts.

We propose creating a 50 Million Dollar Endowment to stimulate innovative and cooperative local efforts at rural health care.

Annual income of 5% would generate 2.5 Million dollars which with a 1 to 1 match would result in at least 5 million dollars per year to support rural health care innovation and multi partner cooperation.

Administered by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority or OCAST?

5. Global Port Authority and International Trade

This is an effort to stimulate international trade for Oklahoma, particularly for Oklahoma rural businesses and agricultural products and services. This would be

an accelerated effort to encourage value added systems and products supporting our farmers and agricultural products. These funds would be used to support a global port authority to establish "in state" customs clearance for cargo freight, mixing, canning or processing capacity and warehousing. The funds would be granted to a newly established port authority and paid back over time through user fees which would be used for ongoing operation and expansion of the port authority to further develop new value added products and markets.

Invest 150 million dollars into the Global Port Authority effort. To be managed by Department of Commerce, OCAST or a new Global Port Authority or other entity?

6. Establish a Center for Food as Medicine to focus on the intersection of human nutrition and food production, processing and food safety. This would build on Oklahoma efforts as an early national leader in "One Health" research studying both human and animal health and would take advantage of the Food and Agriculture Processing Center, the OSU Ferguson College of Agriculture, the State Health Department labs, the College of Veterinary Medicine, the OSU Extension Center System and OSU Center for Health Sciences to further study the role and impact of food as medicine and to get this information out to the public.

Invest one time – 25 Million Dollars administered by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority or Oklahoma State University Regents?

These proposals would invest a total of 760 Million Dollars for Oklahoma Rural Health Projects. 260 million would be invested at once and 450 million dollars would be placed in endowments to pay out annually to provide ongoing support for these programs.

These are not intended to be the final group recommendations but as a starting point for further discussions by our Ad HOC Group.