

Meeting summary for NCAFCC Region 6 Meeting (01/23/2025)

Quick recap

The meeting focused on the first region meeting of the year, with introductions from new members and a presentation on a research project involving healthcare professionals' attitudes towards homeless patients. The team also discussed upcoming surveys, the new website for the organization, and the strategic plan for 2024. Concerns were raised about potential federal funding cuts and the need to reassess sustainability and expand services, while progress was reported on various clinic expansions and partnerships.

Next steps

- Allison to distribute the immigration toolkit to all members after the meeting.
- Allison to share Dr. Wolseifer's handout with the meeting recording in the follow-up email.
- Allison to send login credentials for the members portal to those who need them.
- Allison to pose the question about how federal policy changes with DEI impact the association to April and the board.
- Association to engage with lobbyists to seek a new appropriation in the upcoming legislative session.
- Lynn to add regional structure information to the NCAFCC website.
- Lynn to add NCAFCC accreditation information to the website.
- Members to review their clinic information on the new NCAFCC website and ensure links are working correctly.
- Members to complete the 2024 annual survey by the end of February.
- Medical clinics to complete Lacey's brief survey about supportive care for life-threatening illnesses by January 31st.
- Members to pay NCAFCC membership dues by January 31st.

Summary

Region Meeting and Research Project

In the meeting, Allison welcomed everyone to the first region meeting of the year and expressed hope for a healthy and successful year. Sommer, the region leader, thanked everyone for attending and encouraged new attendees to introduce themselves. New members introduced themselves, including Dr. Katie Wolseifer, John Price, Lynn McRae, DJ Jones, Lacey Brotherton, Angela Lizarazo, Anysa Fernandez, Peter Le, Elaine, Nicole Porter, and Allison Kelly. Dr. Katie Wolseifer, a professor from Appalachian State University, was also present to discuss a research project involving Kelsey Landgraff's senior honors thesis. Dr. Walsifer shared her screen to present the project and promised to email a handout with her contact information for further communication.

Healthcare Professionals and Homeless Patients

In this discussion, Katie explains that she is a researcher studying prejudice and discrimination, and her honors thesis student Kelsey is conducting research on the attitudes and beliefs of healthcare professionals towards patients experiencing homelessness. The goal is to understand these beliefs and eventually develop interventions to improve patient care for this population. Kelsey has conducted a literature review which revealed a lack of knowledge about medically-specific beliefs regarding homeless patients. The planned study aims to recruit healthcare professionals from free and charitable clinics in North Carolina to assess their attitudes towards homeless patients and is an anonymous survey.

Healthcare Clinic Study and Conference

Katie presented a study on healthcare clinics, which is a single session online survey expected to take 5-10 minutes. The study aims to gather data without identifying the respondents, and the results will not be shared in any publications or presentations. The study has received ethics approval and plans to collect data from the end of the week, with data analysis and report writing to be completed by May. Katie also discussed three recruitment methods for the study, including attending staff meetings, emailing the study link, and visiting clinics. Allison then announced that the next annual conference will be held in the spring of 2026, with the dates set for April 28th and 29th of 2026. She also reminded everyone that the NCAFCC membership dues are due by January 31st.

Medical Clinics Surveys and Strategic Plan

In the meeting, Allison discussed the upcoming surveys for the medical clinics and the immigration toolkit from the National Association. She also mentioned the new lobbyist for the Association and the new website for the organization. Lacie shared about a survey she had sent out to gather data on the percentage of the population diagnosed with serious life-threatening illnesses and the supportive care provided by the clinics. Lynn encouraged the members to visit the new website and provide suggestions for improvement. The team also discussed their strategic plan for 2024, with a focus on celebrating past achievements and projecting future goals. DJ Jones expressed his excitement about collaborating with other organizations and making a positive impact in the community.

Medicaid Expansion and Clinic Updates

Diana reported a decrease in patient count from 1,600 in 2023 to 1,400 in 2024, attributing this to Medicaid expansion. She noted that the clinic still serves a significant need for the uninsured and onboarded a substantial number of patients. Diana also mentioned that the clinic's main goals are to improve patient health and expand partnerships. Allison asked about the transition of patients to Medicaid, to which Diana responded that they were ahead of the game in reaching out to patients and providing resources for application. Nicole from Alliance mentioned that they are now requiring Medicaid denial letters for new patients. Peter from St. Joseph reported an increase in patients due to unavailability of appointments and higher fees with Medicaid.

Addressing Federal Funding Cuts Impact

Gina raised concerns about the potential impact of federal funding cuts on the association's work, particularly in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Allison clarified that the association's funding is state-based, not federal, but the implications of any funding cuts were still uncertain. Gina and Sommer discussed the challenges of balancing celebration with the uncertainty and potential negative impacts of the funding cuts and immigration enforcement. Gina emphasized the importance of voicing opinions on policies that affect their patients, while maintaining a non-partisan stance as a nonprofit.

Expanding Services and Mobile Clinic

In the meeting, Sommer discussed the successful funding for their clinical expansion and the partnership with the Salvation Army to use their space for more operatories. She also mentioned plans to open an urgent care clinic and the challenges of raising funds without a capital campaign. DJ discussed the need to reassess their organization's sustainability and expand services to other areas of the county. Angela and Allison discussed the progress of their mobile dental clinic, acknowledging the challenges and learning from them. Lynn added that they are committed to getting the mobile dental clinic right and are working on a long-term vision for expansion.