

Presentation to the City Council, August 25, 2011

Death in the West: Lubbock City Manager Kills Health Department

By Brian D. Carr, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist, Member, Board of Health for the City of Lubbock

On September 1, 2011 Lubbock will become the largest city in America without a functioning Public Health Service. This has happened without any public input. Our city leaders will say that, despite the clinic being closed, employees terminated and services transferred, nothing will change. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In this action we are witness to the blunt, cruel salute to money over people. The city manager noted in last Friday's Board of Health meeting that "money is the driver" in her view of government. You can view her presentation (and my argument with her) at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZshtGHBumxk>

My family moved to Lubbock in 1932. My father is a well-respected pediatrician who served the families of West Texas for over 60 years. My brother, sister, and myself have all dedicated our lives to providing health care to the public. Along with the vast majority of other medical and healthcare providers in Lubbock we condemn this hasty action of the city and we are sounding the alarm about what we believe the future holds.

Our city already holds several top rankings in undesirable categories. We lead the United States in teen pregnancy. We are 187% above the state average in sexually transmitted diseases. Our newborn children are at higher risk for low birth rate and infant mortality. Any barriers to access to care will spike these rankings even further.

Two services, immunizations and sexually transmitted diseases, are to be transferred to either the Combest Clinic or the Community Health Center of Lubbock. While these facilities are striving to meet the needs of our community the onslaught of new patients will take their crowded lobbies and spill out onto the street. Costs will increase for services and even a modest increase will lead to people not getting their needs met.

Reduced service availability, accessibility and affordability will mean increased disease, disability and ultimately death. Left untreated we can anticipate that our county hospital will see increased ER traffic and hospitalization of preventative diseases. These costs will be passed on from University Medical Center to the taxpayer in the form of higher property taxes via the Lubbock County Hospital District expenses going up.

Along with every member of the Board of Health for the City of Lubbock, we voted at last Friday's Board meeting to submit a resolution I had prepared that provides for many alternative solutions to the plan offered by the city manager. Discussions have already started with the Lubbock County Commissioners about a joint effort to find ways to continue our Health Dept. Every single point raised by the city as to why we must close has been responded to and put down in our plan.

We need the help our citizens. You can contact me at [bha@wiredbrush.com](mailto:bha@wiredbrush.com) and get on the email list for updates. Join us at the Health Dept on Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup> at 4:30 p.m. when the city locks the doors for the last time at the building on Texas Ave and 19<sup>th</sup> Street. Come to the city council meeting at city hall on September 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 a.m. to show support for YOUR health dept. Contact your city councilman and the local media and let them know your opinion.

This is your health, and your city. Don't let it die!