

Regional Council of Mayors

December 9, 2013

PRESENTATIONS

Health in All Policies

Health is central to everything. “Without health, nothing really manifests itself to the maximum,” said Ed Ehlinger, Minnesota Commissioner of Health
<http://www.health.state.mn.us>.

And mayors and other city officials, whether they know it or not, are making important health decisions all the time, he said. Approving plans for a subdivision that does or does not require sidewalks or that is or is not close to transit, for example, is a health decision. “Zoning laws, tax breaks ..., all have impacts far beyond the obvious,” Ehlinger said. “All I ask is that you put a health lens—and an equity lens—to the decisions you need to make.”

“The decisions we make at our level, you don’t think can move the needle,” said Bloomington Mayor Gene Winstead. “But they can. You just don’t see the results immediately.”

The determinants of health include genes and biology, the physical environment, clinical care, health behaviors and social and economic factors, Ehlinger said, with the last being the single largest determinant at 40 percent. Health behaviors account for 30 percent, but Ehlinger said many of these are influenced by social and economic factors as well. But most of our health spending goes to clinical care, which accounts for only 10 percent of the determinants of health.

“I really think Minnesota has the best medical care system probably in the world,” he said. “But things out of its control overwhelm it. We’re focusing on the wrong things.” Currently, 95 percent of our health resources are spent on medical care; just 5 percent on public health.

Of significant concern is the health disparities in Minnesota between white residents and people of color. Among the Big Ten states, Ehlinger said, Minnesota has the worst disparities. For example, the infant mortality rate for black infants in Minnesota is 14.1 for every 1,000 live births, with a disparity ratio of 3.1. There is a 13-year discrepancy in life-expectancy along the length of I-94, depending on the neighborhood in which people live, he said. “Putting three stops on the Central Corridor was a positive for health.”

Asked how Minnesota came to have health disparities, Ehlinger said, “I’m not saying we did anything wrong, but the disparities are there and we have to address them.”

Ehlinger said he is working with other state commissioners to try to make sure that health considerations are part of all policy development, an initiative called Health in All Policies (HIAP).

Another initiative is the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/ship/>, which supports communities’ efforts to create more healthful environments for residents by everything from helping them reduce tobacco use to creating “walking school buses.”

“SHIP is one of those approaches that looks at policies and systems,” he said. “The policies and systems that are going to change the environment are not the responsibility of the Health Department.”

Although SHIP is still relatively new, Ehlinger said, there are a few positive results already, including a reduction in tobacco use and “a turn” on childhood obesity.

Mayors asked about drug use as a significant health problem. While he agreed that it is, Ehlinger said that Minnesota has high binge-drinking rates for all age groups. “Alcohol has not been adequately addressed,” he said. “Alcohol is really cheap and price makes a difference.”

For more information, [see PowerPoint](#). Ehlinger can be contacted at Ed.ehlinger@state.mn.us.

UPDATES

MoveMN Campaign

About 80 organizations have joined the MoveMN campaign, which will lobby for increased funding for all modes of transportation during the 2014 Minnesota Legislature. Larry Redmond will be leading the legislative strategy for MoveMN.

After the January 6 public launch of the campaign, MoveMN will hold meetings for regional stakeholders around the state, according to Jim Erkel, MCEA and MoveMN. The website <http://www.movemn.org> should become fully active before the end of the year.

It would take \$50 billion to meet the transportation needs for Minnesota, but that number is unlikely to be reached, mayors said. “We need to figure out where the money is going to come from,” said Bloomington Mayor Gene Winstead. “This is going to be a multi-year campaign.”

Mayors will get an updated copy of a letter signed by the Richfield City Council, supporting increased funding for transportation. ULI Minnesota Executive Director also asked mayors to sign a letter of support as mayors—not on behalf of their city government.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Coming in 2014

ULI Minnesota Executive Director Caren Dewar asked mayors to list topics they would like to explore during the joint Regional Council of Mayors/ULI Minnesota Advisory Board meeting on January 13, 2014. Issues and concerns included:

- How do you do high-density housing right? How do you get it into “tight” places, especially where it’s redevelopment rather than new development?
- Can older office buildings be repurposed, how and as what?
- What can be done about city streets and roads that are long past their lifespan?
- What are the best practices of other cities in the region? How to spend time sharing some of them?
- What will the emerald ash borer mean to cities in the region?
- Can public-private partnerships provide cost-effective ways to deliver services?
- How does high-density housing benefit cities outside the urban core?
- How do cities outside the core handle growth, for some at an unprecedented rate?
- How do lawsuits against condo builders impact cities?

Rail~Volution

The 2014 Rail~Volution Conference <http://www.railvolution.org> will be held in Minneapolis, September 21–24. Rail~Volution is a nonprofit organization that supports “the intersection of transit, livable communities and transit-oriented development.”

The conference includes local tours of transportation and community projects and assets, and presentations on challenges and successes in other cities. Dewar said she will be looking at mayors to help promote the conference. Those interested in being on the volunteer committee for the conference should contact phil.eckhert@co.hennepin.mn.us.

COMING UP

The next RCM meeting will be Monday, January 13. Minnesota. This will be a joint meeting of the Regional Council of Mayors and the ULI Minnesota Advisory Board.

Mayors are encouraged to email caren.dewar@uli.org with their suggestions for topics to add to the agenda.

ATTENDEES

The following individuals were in attendance on December 9, 2013:

Mayors

Chris Coleman	City of St. Paul
Bill Droste	City of Rosemount
Jerry Faust	City of St. Anthony
Debbie Goettel	City of Richfield
Shep Harris	City of Golden Valley
Kathi Hemken	City of New Hope
Jim Hovland	City of Edina
Tim Hultmann	City of Long Lake
Marvin Johnson	City of Independence
Sandra Krebsbach	City of Mendota Heights
Scott Lund	City of Fridley
Lili McMillan	City of Orono
R.T. Rybak	City of Minneapolis
Terry Schneider	City of Minnetonka
Nora Slawik	City of Maplewood
Elizabeth Weir	City of Medina
Ken Willcox	City of Wayzata
Gene Winstead	City of Bloomington

Guests

Rick Carter, LHB; Mark Casey, St. Anthony Village; Ed Ehlinger, Minnesota Department of Health; Jim Erkel, MCEA/MoveMN; Kevin Frazell, League of Minnesota Cities; Michael Huber, Blue Cross/Blue Shield Minnesota; Jenn O'Rourke, City of Minneapolis; Julia Parenteau, Minneapolis Realtors; Cathy Polasky, City of Minneapolis; Irene Quarshie, Target; Elizabeth Ryan, Family Housing Fund; Adam Schiff, Sen. Klobuchar's office; Jamie Verbrugge, City of Brooklyn Park;

ULI Staff/Consultants

Caren Dewar, Aubrey Austin, Cathy Bennett, Linda Picone