

Healthier AtlantaSM and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners
A Concept Proposal for Reducing Health Costs While Improving Health Outcomes

Harris Allen, PhD
harris@vdpb.us

Using criteria such as fiscal soundness, growth in investment capital and infrastructure, and workforce capabilities, recent surveys have ranked Georgia as a top state for business.^{1,2} Similar reasons have been cited for Atlanta's emergence as a finalist for Amazon's second headquarters.³

All but absent in the public dialogue about these developments has been a key consideration: the state and city's standing in terms of health. In the larger context, Georgia's per capita health spending is high. It in fact exceeds the per capita spending of all advanced countries except Switzerland.⁴ Yet, this per capita spending level also ranks 48th among the states and D.C.⁵, with effects on health that have been commensurate. Georgia's health outcomes rank in lowest quintile in similar state comparisons.⁶ Likewise, zip codes across Atlanta report differences in life expectancy at birth of up to 13 years.⁷ Clearly, better managed health costs and improved health outcomes are needed to strengthen Atlanta and Georgia's case as a model city and state.

Paralleling Healthier Georgiasm, which is targeting the entire state, Healthier Atlantasm is an initiative that is using a new approach to tackle this objective, value-driven population health (VDPH)^{SM 8-14}. Integrating proven methods from work on value and population health, VDPH is based on the idea that improved health outcomes are essential to reduced health costs and that sustained health cost control is essential to improved health outcomes. It strives to maximize the value of every dollar spent to improve population health with a system of objectives, measures, and tools that jointly measure and manage health costs and outcomes to improve stakeholder role performance. Healthier Atlanta seeks to foster use of VDPH by local stakeholders that are working in-house and/or are collaborating externally to mount high-potential innovations. Its goal is to better equip these entities to shape these undertakings in ways that are consistent with the long-term vision of VDPH and to serve as models for other entities that are motivated to improve their own role performance.

Recent developments at the Fulton County Board of Commissioners (FCBC) suggest it has much capacity to meet Healthier Atlanta's criteria as a high-potential innovator. Its 2016-9 Strategic Plan¹⁵ embraces the vision of all Fulton Co. residents being healthier by laying out three categories of steps for its realization: promoting health behaviors, fostering access to quality health care, and shaping a healthier physical environment. FCBC has cultivated an in-house performance assessment capability to support this work.¹⁶ It is also uniquely positioned to exercise convening power to foster greater stakeholder group collaboration to advance it.

As reflected in the trajectories that have unfolded for similar initiatives elsewhere¹⁷, FCBC's participation in Healthier Atlanta will generate major benefits – both to FCBC in terms of its own delivering on this strategic plan and to the initiative for the momentum-building model that will result.¹⁸ As currently envisioned, the path toward such participation will include integrating the following into the plan:

- a deep dive into Fulton Co's. current health budget, its current line-item programs and policies, and its linkages with external stakeholders as well as formulation of steps for tackling the openings identified
- the development and implementation of management components that shape existing in-house programs toward VDPH objectives and act on opportunities for collaboration with external stakeholders, and
- the weaving of measurement components into existing infrastructure that augment capabilities for project design, metrics development, data collection, analysis, interpretation, reporting and communication.

The following list of VDPH-oriented moves offers a range of possibilities for informing and shaping FCBC's next steps. On behalf of our team of national experts and partner organizations that provide a range of consensus development, management, measurement and communication services to support VDPH¹⁹, we invite FCBC to join us in negotiating a contractual arrangement and schedule of deliverables for moving forward. Please contact Dr. Allen for next steps. Thanks in advance to FCBC for considering this proposal.

Paving the Way for Reduced Health Costs and Improved Health Outcomes

Ten VDPH-oriented Moves to Help Fulton County Residents Live Healthier & Longer

1. Promote public/private partnerships with the business communities to tackle prevention issues and priorities like affordable housing and better mass transit that benefit population health
e.g., buy the remaining county tracts of land adjoining the [Atlanta Belt Line](#) & complete its surfacing
e.g., promote [use of CDC's Diabetes Prevention Program](#) and FusionHealth's [sleep inadequacy tools](#)
e.g., monitor [Amazon/JP Morgan/Berkshire venture](#) for ways to improve outcomes & reduce costs
2. Support efforts of area providers to shape modalities for health care that improve patient outcomes
e.g., promote [Choosing Wisely](#) to foster provider/patient dialogue that better benefits patients
e.g., facilitate [use of mobile vans](#) that bring pre- and post-natal care to women where they live
e.g., support development of [patient-centered medical homes](#) for total care coordination in the home
3. Coordinate with behavioral health/substance abuse providers and faith-based entities interfacing with at-risk populations (e.g., opioid addicted) to kick start new approaches to root causes of disease
e.g., partner with [Foundation of Art and Healing](#) to integrate use of creative expression modalities to tackle loneliness, engagement, medication adherence, chronic illness management & related issues
4. Advance local initiatives that are tackling social determinants to reduce health inequities
e.g., support the Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement's [Family Pathways](#) program, which promotes policies (e.g. housing vouchers) to improve economic prospects for the disadvantaged
5. Work with Georgia's Bright from the Start program to achieve --universal access to high-quality, pre-school education including health education, prevention & nutrition
e.g., monitor [enrollment and completion rates of eligible 4 year-olds](#) into and from the program
e.g., foster use of evidence-based [quality benchmarks](#) at program sites throughout the city
6. Collaborate with law enforcement, resident groups, and elected officials to promote community policing programs that proactively address public safety issues and concerns
e.g., augment the Police Department's [Community-oriented Policing](#) programs focusing on prevention, early i.d. and enhancement of quality of life; ensure that they are fully funded and staffed
7. Through new zoning regulations and close coordination with the City's Chief Resilience Officer, work to maximize Atlanta's livability, sustainability and capacity to meet new 21st century challenges
e.g., implement [targeted zoning](#) to promote better street lighting & sidewalks, storefront repair, etc.
e.g., work with [100 Resilient Cities](#) to address shocks and stresses that weaken the fabric of the city
8. Advance community development efforts to attract investments in marginalized neighborhoods
e.g., promote use of the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\) Coalition's](#) asset building resources
e.g., expand [Urban Agriculture efforts](#) to get healthy food w/i .5 miles of 75% of all residents by 2020
9. Foster new county momentum for improving stakeholder role performance in the healthcare sector
e.g., showcase the successes of [local employers \(via workplace wellness\)](#) and [health systems \(via quality improvement\)](#) as models for improving purchaser & provider role performance, respectively
e.g., [develop Atlanta as a national model](#) for how to get all key stakeholder groups to tackle this issue
10. Develop and implement a comprehensive, evidence-driven "culture of health" strategy designed to provide all residents, especially the most challenged, with a chance to live the healthiest life possible
e.g., identify/develop/consolidate measures into databases and monitor these (and other) steps
e.g., 4-yr goal: enter Fulton Co. in the [Robert Wood Johnson Fdn's Culture of Health competition](#)

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