



City of Racine, Wisconsin
Agenda BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

AGENDA DATE: November 24, 2024

PREPARED BY: Dottie-Kay Bowersox, Public Health Administrator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Communication sponsored by Alder Horton, on behalf of the Public Health Administrator, requesting permission for the Mayor and City Clerk to negotiate and execute a lease and an agreement with Kenosha Community Health Center, Inc., d/b/a Pillar Health, to operate a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in the new Lincoln King Community Center and Clinic building.

Background and Analysis:

Federally Qualified Health Centers, or FQHCs, are federally funded nonprofit health centers or clinics that serve medically underserved areas and populations. Federally qualified health centers provide primary medical care, dental care, and mental health care services for their patients. Racine is the largest community in the State of Wisconsin that does not have an operating FQHC, with the entire territory of the City of Racine covered by both Primary Care and Dental Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). An HPSA designation occurs when the number of health professionals in a particular field, such as dental care, is insufficient to meet the overall needs of the population. “Accessible, affordable, and quality health care” was identified as one of the top five social or economic issues in Racine County according to the *Racine County Community Health Survey Report 2024*, with a main function of FQHCs being to increase access to quality and affordable care in the communities they serve.

The Lincoln King Community Center and Clinic building will be located within the 53404 zip code. According to the Economic Innovation Group, 53404 is one of the most distressed and impoverished zip codes in Wisconsin, a ranking based on metrics such as educational attainment, poverty rate, unemployment, housing vacancy rate, median income, and change in the availability of jobs. Nearly half (45%) of the residents of the 53403 and 53404 zip codes, the primary service and focus areas for the FQHC, live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, with an estimated 31% enrolled in Medicaid and another 10% of area residents uninsured.

Pillar Health, a division of Kenosha Community Health Center, is unique and provides integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services in a health home model. This places patients and families at the center of care delivered by a patient-focused team and uses evidence-based approaches and referrals to resources to address individualized health and social needs. Care will be available to all regardless of insurance status, with a Sliding Fee Discount Program enabling uninsured patients to receive care for as little as \$30. Pillar Health currently operates several facilities across Kenosha County, providing medical, dental, and mental health care to more than 1,000 Racine residents on a regular basis.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

The FQHC will be primarily federally funded, with most of the operating costs being absorbed by Pillar Health as part of the lease agreement.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to negotiate and execute a lease and an agreement with Kenosha Community Health Center, Inc. d/b/a Pillar Health, to operate an FQHC in the new Lincoln King Community Center and Clinic building.