Indigent health committee gets members, no travel budget

BY MELISSA REYNOLDS
VALLEYS MORNING STAR

Patients who would like a say in the future of the indigent health-care system won’t get much help from the Texas Legislature.

Lawmakers this year passed legislation establishing an indigent health-care advisory committee that will offer counsel to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission on indigent care issues.

The bill requires four of the committee’s 12 members to be indigent patients or people representing the indigent—however, it makes no provision for those patients’ travel expenses so they can attend committee meetings in Austin.

That makes it very difficult for a consumer to travel to Austin. “Those are the people who don’t have the means to do it,” said Petra Reyna, coordinator of special services for the Texas Center for Rural Public Health.

Reyna is submitting an application to serve on the committee.

Jennifer Harris said that the committee’s creation is a “positive move” for the indigent.

“The idea behind the committee is to regionalize county indigent health issues. We want to help with any financial barriers or difficulties so that patients can participate in the committee,” Harris said.

The committee includes broad, diverse representation, “to ensure that this group includes health-care consumers and agencies who want to help with any financial barriers or difficulties so that patients can participate,” Harris said.

The committee includes health-care consumers and agencies that want to help with any financial barriers or difficulties so that patients can participate,” Harris said.

“We certainly want to make sure there is strong participation in the committee, so we’ll do all we can to accommodate everyone’s schedule and financial circumstances,” Harris said.

Reyna, who read about the committee in the newspaper, said the costs of traveling won’t be a hardship for her, but likely would be for indigent health-care consumers.

“Before we can participate in the committee, we’ll need to know about the committee’s creation,” Reyna said.

The committee will begin meeting in October, officials said. Its objectives, according to the legislation, will be to conduct a feasibility study and develop recommendations for a pilot program that would rationalize county indigent health-care services.

Local officials said they have no interest in a participation of any provision for patients’ travel expenses and also wondered why they heard so little about the committee’s development.

Dr. Elena Martin, director of the Clinica Familias said she had not received notification about the committee and was unaware of it.

The committee’s formation includes health-care consumers and agencies that want to help with any financial barriers or difficulties for patients so that patients can participate.

Proposals include allowing some members to communicate via teleconference or other means in other regions of the state besides Austin, as the committee members don’t have the means to travel as far.

“We certainly want to make sure there is strong participation in the committee, so we’ll do all we can to accommodate everyone’s schedule and financial circumstances,” Harris said.

Reyna, who read about the committee in the newspaper, said the costs of traveling won’t be a hardship for her, but likely would be for indigent health-care consumers.

“I hope they’ll have the necessary funds to sometimes or even all the time,” Reyna said.

Reyna hopes participating in the committee will offer the Valley a voice in policy decisions.

Dillard’s welcomes your Dillard’s charge. Visa, Master Card, American Express, Discover or Diners Club Card.

SHOP TODAY! Take An Extra 50% off ENTIRE STOCK* ALL PERMANENTLY REDUCED MERCHANDISE

LADIES • MEN • JUNIORS • KIDS • ACCESSORIES

SHOES • LINGERIE • HOME

Save up to 82% when you take an extra 30% off!

EXAMPLE OF THE SAVINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNIOR DRESSES</th>
<th>Original Price</th>
<th>Current Price</th>
<th>Extra 30% off</th>
<th>Your Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59.00</td>
<td>14.75</td>
<td>-4.42</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>48.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXAMPLE OF THE SAVINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEN’S DESIGNER KNIT SHIRT</th>
<th>Original Price</th>
<th>Current Price</th>
<th>Extra 30% off</th>
<th>Your Price</th>
<th>YOU SAVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td>-9.75</td>
<td>22.75</td>
<td>42.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All departments except Jewelry and Dillard’s Travel are not included. Dillard’s welcomes your Dillard’s charge. Visa, Master Card, American Express, Discover or Diners Club Card.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 2005, THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD / PAGE 8 •

Wright turns self in, jailed until Sept. 2 hearing

Counsel resigns after incident exposure incident

BY SERGIO CHAPA
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Former Commissioner's Counsel resigns

Wright surrendered to Cameron County Sheriff's Office Saturday after he turned himself in for an alleged deferred adjudication violation.

Wright, 56, resigned from his position as legal counsel for the Cameron County Commissioner's Court through a letter delivered Tuesday.

The Wednesday morning proceeding marked Wright's first public appearance since South Padre Island police arrested him Aug. 14 for public intoxication and disorderly conduct by exposing his genitals.

According to a South Padre Island police report, Wright was drinking and his genitals exposed while he was sitting in a lawn chair within sight of other guests at The Tiki Lounge, 9000 Padre Blvd.

Prosecutors said he admitted the terms of a six-month deferred adjudication sentence in which Wright agreed not to violate any other laws and to consume any alcohol for six months.

Court records show that Robin gave Wright the sentence in March as a punishment for a duty upon striking a fixed object charge for a Nov. 20 accident at the foot of the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge.

Robinson issued a warrant for Wright's arrest on Aug. 19 based on a motion filed by the district attorney's office saying that Wright violated his deferred adjudication.

District Attorney Armando Villalobos said his office is disputing Robinson's acquittal on a weapons charge based on arguments that a call center plea is equal to a guilty plea.

Court records show that police originally charged Wright with DWI and unlawfully carrying a weapon after they found a handgun in his SUV during the Nov. 20 accident.

According to Brownsville Herald archives, Robinson dismissed the charges after Wright pled no contest in all three charges.

The district attorney’s office filed an appeal against Wright for the weapon charge in the 13th Court of Appeals and hoped a decision would provide resolution.

"We deal with plea bargains every day," Villalobos said. "We need to know whether someone who pleads guilty can be acquitted or not. If we're wrong, we need to change our procedures."