Policy Recommendations, Industry Research, and Data Collection: Promoting Healthcare Access in Fairfax County

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Background

- Fairfax is 5th-wealthiest U.S. county,* but 6%+ of population lives **below the poverty line**
- Many **low-income** and **uninsured** community members confront challenges when seeking health services

*US News, 2023

Areas of Focus

- Need for revisions to local health governing board's **policies**
- Lack of streamlined **referral system**
- Financial barriers to **specialty care** for uninsured patients

Initiatives

Proposed Revisions to Local Board's Policies

- Reviewed state government's 2024 changes to Virginia Freedom of Information Act
- Proposed revisions to Health Care Advisory Board's policies to ensure compliance with the law
- Delivered presentation and took questions from county health leaders

Advanced Affordable Housing in Zoning Process

- Analyzed historical development proposals
- Collected data on community need for continuing care communities, requirements for affordable units
- Wrote proposal to Board of Supervisors on behalf of Health Care Advisory Board recommending zoning approval for medical facility

Researched Industry Trends

Economic benefits of free HIV/STI testing

- Analyzed data on costs saved from testing and treatment
- Presented findings to health department leaders

CMS final rule on minimum staffing standards

- Summarized 125-page final rule
- Delivered report to county workgroup

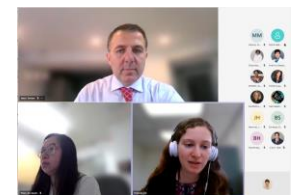### Collected Data for Referral Platform Implementation

- Developed survey for health department program managers about their referral processes
- Identified critical data to collect during in-depth conversations
- Facilitated interviews with health department employees, documented findings in Excel

Supplemental Experiences

- Toured county **health center** and shadowed physician
- Worked across the **health department**
  - Epidemiology training; meetings with health equity team, outreach team; all-staff discussion with health director
  - Informational interviews with employees in IT, maternal health, Office of Innovation + more
- Met with **community partners**: Emergency Food Strategy Team, Neighborhood Health, HealthWorks + more

Policy change proposal to Health Care Advisory Board

Presentation to health department leaders on economic data

Continual collaboration with VDH intern Hailey

Takeaways

- **Data-driven approaches** are necessary to address inequities in healthcare
- Collaboration between **public and private sectors** is key to driving change