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Giving
Honoring charitable organizations and people across the Charleston region.
Inside



Change of command
SPAWAR transitions leadership to Capt. Wesley Sanders. **Page 14**

Contract ended
SAIC adjusts expansion plans in Hanahan after Marine Corps cancels contract for vehicles. **Page 11**

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Biotech companies push for thoughtful innovation

Execs at SCBio conference seek innovation amid fragmented system

By Patrick Hoff
phoff@scbiznews.com

When Palmetto Health and Greenville Health System merged in November 2017, it was a decision borne mainly out of financial necessity, according to Palmetto Health president John Singerling.



Jim Greenwood, global president and CEO of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, gave the keynote at SCBio's annual conference. (Photo/Patrick Hoff)

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Biotech CEO: Political understanding crucial to research and development

By Patrick Hoff
phoff@scbiznews.com

Jim Greenwood says biotechnology is about understanding life at the molecular level and using that knowledge to solve human problems.

"I don't think it's hyperbolic to say that there isn't a disease on the face of the earth

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PAVING A HEALTHIER WAY

A consortium of health care stakeholders in the Lowcountry created a plan to improve health in the region over the next five years through better access to and knowledge of resources available in the community. **Page 10**



Photo/Ryan Wilcox



Harbor project could be in line for more money

By Liz Segrist
lsegrist@scbiznews.com

The Charleston Harbor deepening project is now one of three port projects in the country eligible to receive funding from the president's next fiscal budget, S.C. Ports Authority CEO Jim Newsome said.

The S.C. Ports Authority is in the midst of deepening Charleston Harbor from 45 feet to 52 feet. Port officials have said the additional 7-foot depth is critical to staying competitive, attracting cargo and handling the bigger ships being deployed by ocean carriers.

Newsome said that federal funding is needed to help pay for the \$558 million project, adding that the port will fall behind if the dredging work is not completed by 2021.

"It's critical to realize this project on time," Newsome said during the State of the Port address late last month in North Charleston.

The Army Corps of Engineers recently recalculated the project's benefit-cost ratio.

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What does \$1.537 billion buy?

You didn't win the lottery, but if you did, imagine what you could do with the money if you bought products made in S.C.

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Report provides guidelines for healthier region

By Patrick Hoff
phoff@scbiznews.com

A month after the national wellness company Blue Zones pulled out of Charleston, a coalition of Lowcountry individuals and organizations has released a report outlining ways to improve the region's health over the next five years.

Healthy Tri-County was established in 2017 by Roper St. Francis Healthcare, Trident United Way and the Medical University of South Carolina while conducting a 2016 community health needs assessment.

"People have done needs assessments for decades," said Mark Dickson, vice president of the mission department at Roper St. Francis. "Unfortunately, they usually sit on the shelf and collect dust. This one ... forced us to listen to the community, to find out what the real needs are in the community."

The Tri-County Health Improvement Plan, released at the end of October by Healthy Tri-County, prioritizes five topics that were ranked as most important by over 1,500 community members: access to health care; behavioral health; clinical preventive services; maternal, infant and child health; and obesity, nutrition and physical activity.

The plan took 80 volunteers and 60 organizations approximately 2,300 hours to develop over a 12-month period. Over half the organizations were nonprofits, but 24% of the organizations were businesses and another 24% were government entities.

"This is not a top-down plan that we are forcing on the community," said Kellye McKenzie, director of health for Trident United Way. "This is something that truly was forged in partnership with our community members with lived experience."

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control provided technical assistance on the plan, and R. Taylor Lee, DHEC's public health director for the Lowcountry, said the department will continue to support the plan during its

implementation.

"The ultimate goal of this initiative is improving the health and well-being of every person and community in the tri-county area," he said.

Parallel to the five health priorities, the plan incorporates the promotion of equitable health outcomes in its recommendations.

"Health is more than just health care," said Anton Gunn, executive director of community health innovation and chief diversity officer at MUSC. "The social conditions matter. ... Health is tied directly to the distribution of resources in our community. The single strongest predictor of our health is our position on the class pyramid — or another way to put that, the biggest thing that determines your life expectancy is your ZIP code."

According to county health rankings by the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute, Beaufort County has the highest health outcomes ranking in South Carolina and Marlboro County the lowest. In Beaufort County in 2016, 19% of children lived in poverty and the unemployment rate was 4.9%; at the same time in Marlboro County, 41% of children lived in poverty and the unemployment rate was 8.2%.

Berkeley County was ranked No. 7 in health outcomes by the institute; Charleston County was ranked No. 3; and Dorchester County was ranked No. 6.

'Take action and create change'

Each of the five priorities in the report includes a set of goals and recommendations for achieving them in the next five years.

The goals are broad and mainly focus on increasing public awareness and access to services already available in the tri-county area, including the MUSC Center for Telehealth; Fetter Health Care Network, which provides health services regardless of someone's ability to pay; and Help Me Grow South Carolina, a program that links families to resources and services for children at risk for developmental, behavioral or learning problems.

Several priorities also encourage advocacy for certain policies, including accurate, evidence-based sexual health education in schools and safer "active living routes," such as bicycle and pedestrian trails.

Several priorities also end up overlapping in the plan, making access to health care an overarching theme across the other four priorities. For example, better access to health care helps improve cancer screenings and other clinical preventative services, as well as access to and knowledge of behavioral health resources.

In addition to the 28-page health improvement plan, Healthy Tri-County also released an eight-page community action guide to help community-based organizations and individuals take action by creating or joining support groups and using established networks to promote healthier behaviors, such as sharing recipes and promoting cancer screenings.

Gunn said the plan is "strategic and decisive" about the issues that it covers. "We know we can't do everything. ... But if we make a decision to be strategic, we will have monumental impact," he said.

Gunn said other regions in the country have developed similar plans — Healthy Tri-County based its plan's framework off of the Maine State Health Improvement Plan — but the Tri-County Health Improvement Plan is the first of its kind for the Lowcountry.

Lorraine Lutton, president and CEO of Roper St. Francis, said the plan is "daunting but it's inspiring, and I know we can do it."

"We are committed to making sure that access is important to all of us," she said. "With the rising uninsured rate ... we want to make sure that there's no barrier to someone having access to care, and that is our mission and our commitment."

Gunn said it's up to every member of the community to "take action and create change."

"You can have the greatest plan in the world," he said. "You can spend all the time putting all of the right dots in the right places, crossing the T's, lining up

arrows, focusing on retention. You can do all of those things, but if you don't take action, nothing will change."

'Spreading the gospel'

McKenzie said now that the plan is out in the world, the next step is letting people know.

"Over the next couple of months, we're going to be spreading the gospel and sharing the word about the TChip (Tri-County Health Improvement Plan)," she said.

McKenzie said MUSC will work to educate the business community, academia and health care institutions; Roper St. Francis will work with health care institutions and faith-based communities; and Trident United Way will work with the nonprofit and social services sectors.

"We want to do a very concerted, strategic effort to ensure that this plan gets out into the community," McKenzie said.

She added that the only way the plan works is if community members in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties feel ownership of the plan. With that in mind, Healthy Tri-County is releasing a campaign in January asking citizens to sign a pledge to live a healthier lifestyle.

Healthy Tri-County will also monitor health outcomes in the region over the next five years, releasing formal evaluations every six months about the progress of the plan.

"We're committed to transparency," McKenzie said. "We know some things are going to work and some things aren't going to work, and we're going to be working with you (the community) to course-correct and make sure that we reach the ultimate goals that are outlined in the plan."

McKenzie said Healthy Tri-County is also actively pursuing grants and private funding to continue its work, as well as identifying other resources that could help implement the Tri-County Health Improvement Plan. ^{CBJ}

Reach staff writer Patrick Hoff at 843-849-3144 or @PatHoffCRBJ on Twitter.

