

Solutions, not Soundbytes.



Community Clinics: A Tax-Saving Approach to Primary Care and Prevention for Low-Income and Uninsured Houstonians

Noel Freeman's plan to bring more community clinics to our neighborhoods

We spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars a year providing healthcare to low-income and uninsured citizens. A very large portion of that funding pays for the cost of providing non-emergency and primary care at Harris County hospital emergency rooms. Another large portion is invested in using Houston Fire Department ambulances to transport patients with non-life threatening health issues because those patients do not have access to transportation. The cost of care provided by emergency rooms and ambulances is frequently not reimbursed, leaving taxpayers with the bill. By establishing a better system of community clinics, we can reduce the cost of care and provide better access to non-emergency and primary care for Houstonians, while reducing the burden on emergency rooms, the Houston Fire Department, and ultimately taxpayers.

★ More Community Health Clinics

Houston has seen great success in providing community healthcare through federally qualified health clinics (FQHC) and other community clinics like those in Denver Harbor, Montrose and Independence Heights, especially among the elderly and uninsured. The cost of an emergency room visit and ambulance transport can easily exceed \$1,000, but the same medical treatment at a FQHC can be as little as \$100 or less. Additionally, community clinics provide better access to preventative and routine care and create medical homes for the indigent. I will work with our Congressional delegation and the Harris County Hospital District to aggressively pursue new clinics and better funding for existing clinics in communities throughout Houston.

"My work in underprivileged communities has shown me how important access to quality health care is. I am committed to bringing that care to Houstonians and saving taxpayers money in the process."

- NOEL FREEMAN

★ Minor Care and Primary Care at Apartment Complexes

Many of our low-income and uninsured Houstonians live in or near large apartment complexes, which are excellent candidates to host small part-time clinics for primary and preventative care. Such clinics could be hosted in apartment units and staffed by volunteer healthcare providers or paid providers who rotate to different clinics throughout the community. Like FQHCs, these

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clinics reduce the cost of healthcare and the burden on hospitals and the Houston Fire Department. Volunteer providers, apartment owners and utility companies could receive tax credits for their services as a charitable contribution, and the cost savings created by a lower burden on emergency rooms could be used to fund operations of these clinics. I will work with the Houston Apartment Association, Housing and Community Development, Harris County Hospital District, Houston Fire Department and other agencies to create an effective program for bringing accessible, affordable care to our apartment communities.

★ Public Health is Public Safety

Many aspects of our public safety rely on public health. The use of ambulances for non-emergency transport consumes vast amounts of resources our Fire Department relies on to respond to emergencies and keep Houstonians safe. Lack of access to quality, affordable primary and preventative care puts Houstonians at risk of life-threatening illnesses and communicable diseases. Investing in public health will be a fundamental part of my plan to improve public safety.



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