Cleveland County is NOT a Healthy Place!! CC Health is Way above NC Average in Disease and Death rates!! DSS can't find it's way on any Front!! Like a Timebomb, ready to explode!! Mental Health-So bad that People just ain't talking!! DSS Calling for Citizens Engagement Meetings this week!! Report, analysis and conclusions by Robert A

Preface: A few years ago, **Robert A** was in the bookstore at Cleveland Community College and happened upon a big stack of textbooks titled **Social Issues of Our Times**. **Robert A** picked up one of the textbooks and just happened to flip-it open to a chapter titled Duty to Die. This term "Duty to Die," **Robert A** soon learned, refers to a concept that when a person outlives their ability to be a working, productive and taxpaying member of society, they have a "**duty** to die." Many believe that medical treatments and services should not be wasted *withheld" on a person who has reached the end of their normal or useful lifespan. Many also believe that "Hospice"

services are based along that very same concept.

At the April 4, 2023 Cleveland County Commissioner's meeting, one of the main Agenda Items was a presentation by the CC Health Department Director regarding the The "State of Health in Cleveland County Report" as well as a Proclamation that that particular week would be proclaimed as "Health Awareness Week for Cleveland County. The State of Health Report for CC was included as an attachment to the online meeting agenda and **Robert A** reviewed it before the April 4th 2023 Commissioner's Meeting and was shocked. For various reasons that **Robert A** intended to talk about during "Citizens Participation."

So, during the Citizens Participation segment of the April 4th meeting, **Robert A** first brought up the fact that during the previous Commissioner's Meeting on March 21, 2023 that three women came before the Commissioners with reports that big and vicious dogs were roaming around their neighborhood in the 800 block of Kings Road in Shelby and attacking people. At least 3 and possibly 8 people had been bitten and the women claimed that the Shelby PD as well as the CC Animal Control had been called out but did nothing. The women were not advised of whether or not the dogs had been vaccinated and were afraid they would have to undergo painful treatments for Rabies that cost $40,000 per treatment. The women were coming before the County Government, whose first order of existence is to maintain the health and welfare of citizens.

Robert A reminded the Commissioners of this and informed the Commissioners that he had read the draft copy of the Minutes of the March 21, 2023 Commissioners meeting and had read the passages of these three women and the entry in the minutes where the county had inserted that staff had been advised of the dog biting episodes and that some actions had been taken. **Robert A** noted that the "actions taken" had not been identified or defined in any way and wondered if that "was also the Commissioners, way of saying that Nothing was being

done about the vicious dogs biting people." The Commissioners did not respond.

Then **Robert A** proceeded into his observations of the draft "State of Health in Cleveland County Report. **Robert A** noted that he would probably not have enough time left to fully describe what he had learned from the Report, so he would state up front his conclusion. Which was ***"Cleveland County is NOT a Healthy Place!!"*** and that his conclusion was based on a "Health Score Card" that was on page 9 of the Health Report.

That the Report had listed the top 10 causes of death in Cleveland County and the death rates per 100,000 residents. Next to the County's Top 10, there was a listing of the NC Top 10 causes of death and the rate of deaths per 100,000 residents of NC. But the Top 10 lists were not in the same order and were not always the same causes of death. But when **Robert A** compared those causes of death that were the same on both lists and found ***that Cleveland County's death rate for every similar cause of death was much, much higher in Cleveland County than was the State Average death rate for that particular cause of death***. A **CLEAR INDICATION** that there are big problems with "health" in Cleveland County. That apparently the older residents of Cleveland County have a DUTY TO DIE and are fulfilling that DUTY TO DIE much, much more than the average resident of North Carolina. Then, the three-minute time to speak during Citizens Participation ran out before **Robert A** was finished. The Commissioners, by a motion to extend, should have extended the time for this important issue and **Robert A** was the only speaker, but did not do so. They also asked no questions for clarification.

Some other issues **Robert A** had written down to talk about were: (1) The State of CC Health Report spent much more time with underage smoking, teenage pregnancy, a survey of what teenagers thought about using condoms and "**equity**" in prenatal care. And (2) the lack of anything in regard to high death rates and poor health of residents past their teenage years

was included in the Report, except for the Health Scorecard on Page 9. Just another indication of the "focus" of the health department NOT being on adults. Which is at least 80% of the population. Folks, you readers can easily figure that one out.

Also, the focus on **EQUITY** in prenatal care was a concern. "Equity" is NOT typically a term used in relation to a person's health, but a buzzword for liberal, left-wing, socialist and racist Democrats that means whatever they want it to mean for every subject they want it to apply to. It was concerning to **Robert A** that the Commissioners, later during the actual presentation of the State of Health of Cleveland County Report presented by the Health Department Director, had NO questions, comments or directions for the CC Health Department Director about this "Equity" issue, the Death Rates as incorrectly compared in the "Scorecard" or anything else. Instead the Commissioners just voted unanimously to approve the Report as is, as well as to proclaim that week as "Health Awareness Week" in Cleveland County. (For the Commissioners it was all in one ear and out the other ear. Not hitting on anything in between. Unfortunately, as usual.)

The CC Commissioners were obviously the first in line for NOT being aware of Health issues in Cleveland County. The Commissioners also were obviously NOT providing leadership and direction to the CC Health Department as well as the CC Department of Social Services as will be shown in the continuation below of this article.

The Cleveland County Department of Social Services, (DSS*): *Community Engagement Flyer.

Monday, April 10, 2023, **Robert A** found a letter in his Post Office Mailbox that was without a return address. This was NOT unusual as **Robert A** often gets his "source" information that way. A letter in the mail, no return address and an unsigned message inside that report's problems at DSS, CCS, the Commissioners, the School Board and just about everything

else. Cleveland County is well known to take retaliatory actions against ***ANYBODY*** that tells on them for their dirty deeds. This is the source's way to protect themselves. **Robert A** knows this and respects their concerns and fiercely defends and protects their privacy,

On this occasion, the anonymous letter contains a single sheet of what appears to be a "Flyer" of some sort put out by the Cleveland County DSS seeking "Community Engagement" on a number of poorly defined purposes. According to the Flyer, the Purpose of these Community Engagement meetings was: ***"To engage the Community on ideas and solutions around Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Economic Stability."*** The Flyer also offered "Gift Cards" to the first 25 guests in attendance at each of the two sessions as well as surprise "Door Prizes." Also, "light refreshments" would be served.

All this puzzled **Robert A.** Was this letter without a return address genuine? Had DSS purposely sent this to **Robert A** expecting **Robert A** to attend and pass the news along to others? Or was this whole thing a farce? Sending **Robert A** off in one direction in order to divert attention away from some other major problems at CC DSS? Further checking around a little, **Robert A** is led to believe that the letter was sent by a source wanting to inform **Robert A** of major problems and to be on the lookout in other directions. This conclusion was not just based on the letter itself. **Robert A** always double-checks his information. He did some "googling" on the CCDSS official website and then picked up the telephone.

First, there was no such "Flyer" on the CCDSS Official Website about any such **Community Engagement** efforts by the CCDSS. So, **Robert A** called the CCDSS telephone number with some questions. After dialing the CCDSS number, the recording's first instructions were, ***"If your call is in English, Please press ONE***." **Robert A** pressed ONE, wondering how many illegal immigrants have been bused to Cleveland County from President Donald Trump's unfinished wall at the Southern border? Also

wondering how many New Orleans folks are still in Cleveland County from the Hurricane Katrina disaster evacuation in 2005.

When **Robert A** got to the Administration reference, he pressed that number and finally got to a real live human being. That particular person had not heard about this Community Engagement Flyer, but called another person that knew that there was something like that going on, but had no details. Finally, I was instructed to call back and punch in Extension 312 for CJ. When **Robert A** did this twice, all he got was a "click" then silence. But this was Easter Monday and lots of people were probably taking off for the Easter-Spring Break. One thing **Robert A** learned from this exercise is that DSS only uses first names. Why, is a question and speculation Then for another time.

Then, information was received directly and indirectly from two DSS Advisory Board members who did not know about these Community Engagement meetings.

But, not being a quitter, still having the CCDSS Website open on his computer, remembering some info previously obtained from the CCDSS from a Public Records Request and info gathered from DSS Reports presented in Commissioner's Meetings; **Robert A** continues:

- DSS issued Food Stamps (Now on electronic cards) are the preferred currency of choice by Cleveland County Drug Dealers.
- 20,000 Cleveland County residents are on Food Stamps spending $Million$ every month.
- The so-called "Program" at Cleveland Community College allegedly designed to help people on Foodstamps find better paying jobs appears to have been completely lost during the COVID pandemic.
- ZERO cases of Food Stamp Fraud discovered by DSS are prosecuted.
- Free CCS School meals are fed to children whose

parent(s) are on Food Stamps. Meaning taxpayers are paying for those meals twice. Which also allows more Food Stamp money to go to purchase drugs instead of food.

Another takeaway from this Community Engagement seems to indicate that the Cleveland County Commissioners are failing to communicate, instruct, direct and hold accountable those agencies that report to them and take and waste County Taxpayer Dollars in the process. The Commissioners should be providing LEADERSHIP to those agencies, which includes holding those agencies accountable, but are not doing so. Leaving the agencies to flip, flop, and flutter with the wind.

It also appears that the Cleveland County Commissioners presently in office are not willing or are incapable of taking their leadership roles seriously or do not understand that they are supposed to provide that leadership that is required to run Cleveland County in a smooth, orderly, efficient and corruption free manner.

One thing is obvious, If Robert A was elected a Cleveland County Commissioner, along with two like-minded Commissioners, every agency and every department head and every employee would know precisely what their job was, what their accountabilities were and how their performance would be measured. That proper tools and training would be provided along with fair and honest performance reviews and competitive pay. And especially-NO Corruption, NO favoritism and NO Game Playing. NO harassment, NO retaliation. Problem and Complaint Reporting would be encouraged and Problem and Complaint Solving would be recognized and properly rewarded. All for the purpose of reducing waste and inefficiencies and providing value for every tax-dollar raised and spent.

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