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## Health, Human Services & Aging Committee Meeting

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Agency: [Cuyahoga County Council](#)

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### Summary

- Black women's health seems to remain in serious need of attention in the county based on it being a focus in this meeting.
- There were no agenda items focused exclusively on aging in this meeting, despite the name of the committee.
- Pieces exclusively focused on mental health were absent from the agenda as well.
- Providence House officials updated the committee on the progress of a crisis nursery in Buckeye-Shaker.
- The Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition is planning a program next month focusing on Rosa Parks. It is called "A Talk With My Daughters: Black Herstory Meets Black Health."

### Follow-Up Questions

- Have the stats for women's health and infant mortality improved in the area?
- How important are senior issues to the committee, and what are some examples of the committee addressing them?

### Notes

The meeting was called to order by Chair Yvonne Conwell, who noted that the [agenda](#) would be changed. She welcomed the new members present – Robert Schleper Jr. and Mark Casselberry. She also said that new member Michael Houser would not be present. Veteran Council and Committee Member Martin Sweeney corrected Conwell's introduction of him to say that he is the vice chair of the committee and not vice president, adding that Conwell is the new VP of the full Cuyahoga County Council. Conwell talked about county commissions that committee members would get familiar with.

Motion to excuse Houser. The regular roll call was made with a [quorum](#) of four.

With no one registered for public comment.

First on the list was approval of Nov. 20, 2024, meeting minutes, with Sweeney motioning for approval and the motion carrying.

Resolution 2025-0002 is for a grant to North Olmsted for buying a back-up generator for the Oxcart Food Pantry. It was held until further notice.

Conwell went out of order of the agenda and moved onto a presentation about [Providence House](#) due to time constraints of the presenter. President and CEO Natalie Leek spoke about the prior council-approved investment on the Buckeye Road East Side campus. The organization, a crisis nursery, has been around for 44 years, impacting 16,000 children during this time. Their mission is to keep children safe during stressful times within families. They have both a West and East Side location. They strive to be the largest crisis nursery in North America.

Leek gave a [slideshow presentation](#). She said 99% of children served have been reunited with their families for 15 consecutive years. Over 70% of families say the bond with their children is better than it was prior to receiving services from the organization.

Their goal is to prevent the children from going to the foster care system. They work with the county in some emergency care situations. They have worked with the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board. They serve every ward in the City of Cleveland.

There were 691 children added to the waitlist last year, and 876 children and families were served last year. For the second year in a row, 100% of families coming to the organization included single moms or grandmas. They serve men as well. Most are self-referrals and learned about the organization from other people who have benefited.

\$13 million has been spent so far on the [Buckeye Road project](#) in Buckeye-Shaker. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was used for some of it. Administration offices are currently located there, too, as well as a family services site. They anticipate opening a crisis nursery there by Valentine's Day with 25 beds. Staffing is currently being done for second shifts. Approximately 250 to 300 children will be served per year, they forecast.

The county's [\\$100,000 investment of ARPA money](#) is focused on a community services hub at the site. Leek spoke to the prior lack of partners and investment in Buckeye

compared to the West Side. They are fundraising to accommodate the 35% increase from the original cost. The ARPA money helped get the site construction-ready. Phase two of the capital campaign is underway to raise \$4.7 million to complete the project. They have a list of interested partners for that process.

Conwell said the county has to report how the ARPA dollars were used to the federal government. She encouraged the new committee members to visit the West Side location. Casselberry thanked Leek for the work that Providence House does. Schleper echoed his appreciation. He has adopted a child and spoke to the scope of service to the population.

Next agenda item was R2025-0018: \$9,000 of ARPA funds to the Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition for the “A Talk With My Daughters: Black Herstory Meets Black Health” program. The money would come from the District 9 ARPA community grant fund.

Speaking for the coalition was Sharon Spruill, Healthy Communities director. Their mission is to create equity and address disparities within the community. They have been in existence since 2011 as a nonprofit. It’s the first of its kind in the state of Ohio. The specific program has been given since 2018. The program this year will honor Rosa Parks.

The committee was given a folder about the work being done with the organization. Conwell encouraged members of the organization to get in touch with members of the Women's Health Commission. The “Talk With My Daughters” event is Feb. 17.

Sweeney said Spruill is a nice person based on him meeting her prior to the meeting today. She brought the organization’s grant writer. They both started with the coalition at the beginning of the year. Motion made and approved to have the full council hear the resolution for a second reading, with the intent of Feb. 11 being the final reading and vote on passage.

Miscellaneous business was next. MetroHealth’s Shelly Williams, manager of government relations and public affairs, and Romona Brazile, executive director of community health engagement and impact, presented. They advocate on behalf of county residents for fair healthcare. Their desire is to be first on the minds of the people when they think of healthcare as a trusted entity. They want to know the good, bad and ugly to give the best services to the people in the area.

Conwell opened the floor for comments from the newer members. The county ranks low

in national comparison as far as women's health, Schleper said, acknowledging the work presenters spoke about. Conwell said council has seen the need grow for resources across the county since the council started in 2011.

The meeting was adjourned!

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