

Pass Christian Mayor Jimmy Rafferty Discusses Innovative Initiative to Make Mississippi Healthier

The Mississippi Municipal League recently announced a groundbreaking partnership of nationally recognized health care organizations to bring Mississippi municipalities and communities more affordable health insurance and access to better health care. Mayor Jimmy Rafferty of Pass Christian appreciates the benefits the program will bring statewide.

How did you become involved in this partnership to improve health in communities throughout Mississippi?

Prior to becoming Mayor, I worked in the Human Resources profession for over 30 years in New York, Hong Kong, Boston and Washington, D.C. During this time, I worked in three industries (financial services, pharmaceutical and aerospace/defense) and managed the global benefits programs at four multi-national companies.

What were some of the key issues and opportunities identified by the task force of municipal leaders that met for two years under the leadership of Mayor Errick Simmons of Greenville?

In my discussion with Mayors at the MML Conferences, I became aware that many small towns do not offer any health insurance to their employees and this negatively affects the recruitment and retaining of employees. For many small towns that do offer health insurance to their employees, the cost of family coverage is too expensive. In my town of Pass Christian (roughly 6,000 people), the City covered the cost of health insurance for our City employees, however, the cost of City employees covering their families was very expensive (e.g., the medical premium for family coverage was \$1,057 per month). As a result, we had only three out of 100 employees who had family coverage. I am excited about the Ambetter from Magnolia Health plan because it will enable our employees to cover their family members in a cost-effective way, as well as access to Vigilant Health clinics, in most cases at no cost.

What is unique about this new MML partnership?

The mission of MML is to help each city in our state. MML will play an active part in this arrangement, and each city that participates will know that they have a trusted partner with MML. A partnership with MML will ensure that instead of a small town having to bear all the risk and incurring a higher cost, cities that enter into this program will enter into an arrangement where their employees are part of a larger pool of city employees and will realize lower costs.



In partnership with the
Mississippi Municipal League



How will the partnership help individuals, municipalities and other organizations in the state?

The MML is well resourced, they are an integral part of the workings of each city in the state, and they have a proven track record of bringing about positive improvements. The MML identified an area of need and has marshalled the resources to offer improvements in these areas.

Why is this partnership so important to you?

By forming a partnership of MML and Vigilant/Ambetter, we are bringing together organizations that have succeeded in the past, and I firmly believe that we now have a winning team that will bring about positive things to communities in Mississippi that are in need. Not only can this partnership help cover City employees, but it can also cover non-City employee citizens in the community who are also in need.

What is the next step for municipalities interested in learning more about this program and how it can benefit their communities?

If you have not yet been contacted by a representative from Mississippi Communities Health Advisers, please reach out to them at 769-241-2423, 888-343-2999 or mscommunitieshealth.com. They can give you an overview of exactly how this new program can benefit your City employees and citizens in your community.