

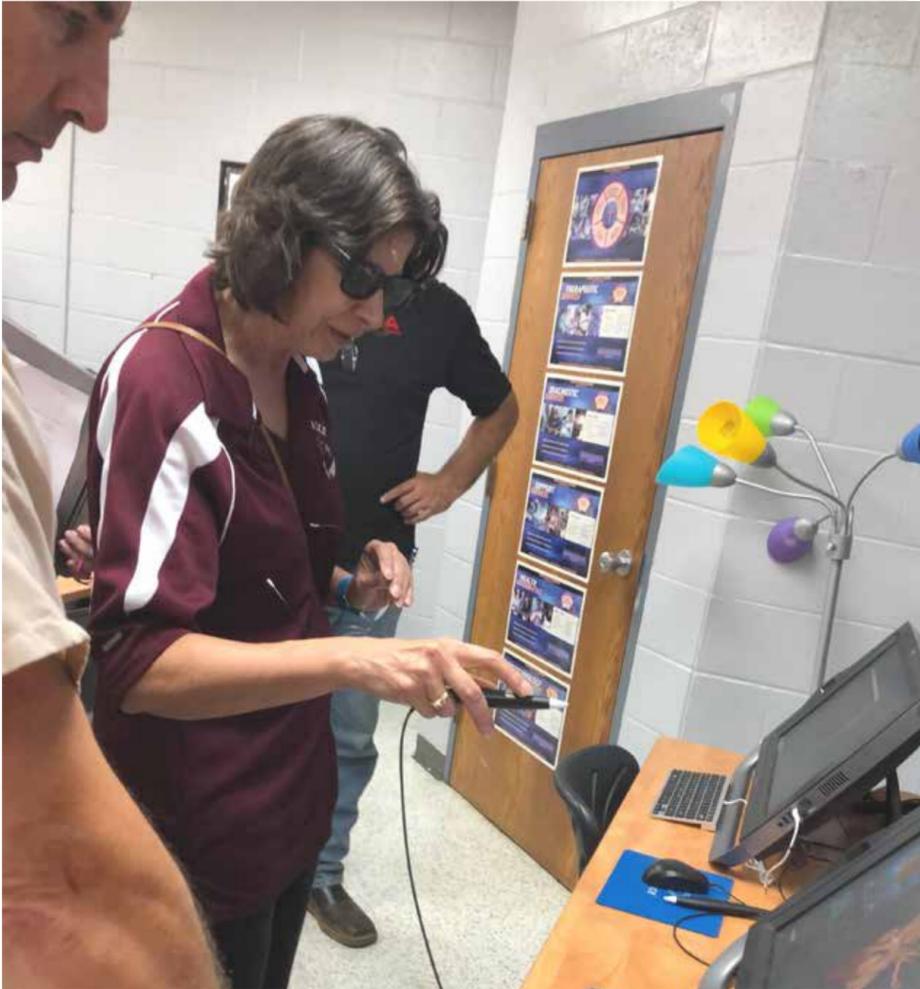
Jefferson Jimplecute

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Thursday, September 12, 2019



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HEART OF THE MATTER

Jefferson ISD Trustee Leah Cooper maneuvers a stylus to simulate procedures on a 3D computer image of a human heart as fellow trustee, Kent Thigpen, DDS, observes in the Jefferson High School Future Health Professionals classroom Tuesday. Trustees toured district facilities at the close of their regular meeting.

Parents Tell JISD Administrators They Want 'Quality' Teachers & to Help

By BOB PALMER When state accountability ratings branded Jefferson Elementary School with a failing grade, the shock could be felt through the entire community.

Superintendent Rob Barnwell assured parents at a public forum Tuesday to discuss the accountability ratings that the district was not going to hide the failure from the community and was taking action to correct the problem.

"If we had an 'F' on a campus, we own it," Barnwell told the crowded boardroom. "We're owning it. I want you to know everything."

Barnwell said the district has made several teacher changes on the elementary campus and no longer has students changing classes between periods as part of their efforts to bring up the grade for that school.

Overall, JISD received a "B," despite "F" scores for the Elementary and Primary schools.

Missy Baldwin wanted to know what the district could do to attract better teachers.

"Why do quality teachers not want to come to our district?" Baldwin asked. "All I hear is how bad Jefferson is. I believe in our school district. I think we are better than the ones around us."

"We advertise for applicants," Barnwell replied. "It's tough. It's hard."

Elementary Principal Lindsey Whitaker said she had three applicants for one position the school sought to fill.

"I think we do have quality teachers," Barnwell said, "but when you are in driving distance of Texarkana, Marshall and Longview," qualified teachers may choose the larger school.

Junior High Principal Tim Phy noted recent events have given Jefferson an edge in the

recruiting wars.

"After the state mandated raises, we are now above Marshall," Phy said. "We are above Harleton. And I think we're above Linden."

Barnwell also observed that Jefferson pays a kind of signing bonus.

The superintendent urged parents to talk with some of the new teachers and find out why they chose Jefferson.

"We've had several teachers who left and came back in one year, because we have got a lot going on," Barnwell said.

When parents asked what they could do, several had suggestions.

Joey Romano, one of the parents, urged people to mentor students and get involved in campus life. Romano also noted how his two sons have flourished in Jefferson after less than stellar years in Bossier City.

Barnwell called on parents to communicate, rather than vent on Facebook.

"Negative comments on social media do not help anything," Barnwell said. "It brings down the perception of the school in the community."

Rather than a social media rant, Barnwell urged talking with the school.

"Communicate with your teachers, communicate with your principal, find out," Barnwell said. "If you think there is an issue, communicate with us. My door is always open."

Phy was even more basic.

"This is going to sound very simplistic," Phy said. "From the time your children are born, until you just can't make them sit in front of you in junior high, read to them and make them read to you."

Texas Has The Most People Without Health Insurance In The Nation — Again

By STACY FERNÁNDEZ The rate of Texans without health insurance rose for the second year in a row, making it once again the most uninsured state in the nation, according to data released Tuesday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

In 2018, 17.7% of Texas residents — about 5 million people — had no health coverage, up from 17.3% in 2017. Both years, Texas had almost double the number of uninsured people compared with the national average of 8.7% in 2017 and 8.9% in 2018. It was one of only nine states to record an increase in the uninsured rate.

Texas is one of 14 states that have not expanded Medicaid, a joint state-federal program that provides health care to low-income individuals, since the 2010 passage of the Affordable Care Act — better known as Obamacare. President Donald Trump made the repeal and replacement of Obamacare a major part of his 2016 campaign, but the U.S. Senate narrowly rejected a bill in 2017 that would have repealed parts of the ACA.

Last year, a federal judge in Texas invalidated a Medicaid expansion that would have filled coverage gaps for an estimated 1.1 million low-income Texans, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Between 2017 and 2018, fewer Texans got their insurance through Medicaid — the number dropped 0.7%, to 17.9%.

Some Texas political leaders, including Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and former Gov. Rick Perry, have argued that expanding Medicaid would increase health care costs for the state, especially if the federal government doesn't keep its promise to pay for the increase in newly eligible people.

Others, like state Sen. Carol Alvarado, D-Houston, are in favor of the expansion. In 2018, the senator filed a bill that would allow county commissioners to request a federal waiver to expand Medicaid in their jurisdictions and roll out the expansion county by county. The bill didn't even get a hearing during this year's legislative session.

Five other states — Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Oklahoma — also had more than 12% of their population uninsured, according to the Census figures.

SCARE MAIL, PBMS, & DIRS Local Pharmacist Explains Why Getting Your Prescription Refilled Faces Challenges from Top, Bottom, & Middle

By BOB PALMER What happens when your mail-order pharmacy doesn't send your medication on time? What happens when they send you the wrong medication? What happens when you have a question about your medication that came from a mail-order pharmacy or big box chain pharmacy? Many times, you go to your local independent pharmacy to ask them for help. However, what if that local independent pharmacy was no longer there? That is a problem that plagues many communities nationwide.

In Jefferson, City Drug is an independent pharmacy owned by pharmacists Beckie and Brian Bates. Recently, the Jimplecute sat down with Beckie to try to understand the reasons why many pharmacies are closing their doors nationwide.

THE DREADED LETTER FROM YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY
The letter from your insurance company can sound ominous enough. The hometown pharmacy where you have always traded is no longer considered a "preferred provider" in your plan. The letter may even suggest that your hometown pharmacy requested to be removed from your plan. The writer conveniently suggests you transfer your prescriptions

to one of the big box pharmacy chains or to their mail-order service.

If you think something is rotten in all this, Beckie will tell you that you haven't lost your sense of smell.

"The preferred provider status makes it sound as if you can no longer use your local independent pharmacy at all, but in most cases, it truly means that you might pay a slightly higher copay. In some cases, there is no difference at all," Beckie said. "It could mean the difference between a \$10 copay vs. a \$5 copay. While that may seem like a big difference to some, consider what it will cost you to drive to Longview or Marshall to have your prescriptions filled," Beckie said. "So you have to decide, is it worth saving that extra \$5 to wait in a long line, then to only be told when you get to the counter that you will need to come back in three or more hours to pick it up," Beckie explained. Bates also warned that the larger chain pharmacy may not stock the medication local pharmacists keep on hand for their regular customers. Waiting for a refill on a medication can take days.

THE MIDDLEMAN
A variety of factors affect drug pricing in today's industry. Your local pharmacist rarely sets

the price of your prescription. Instead, the middleman known as the PBM (pharmacy benefits manager) is in control of drug pricing. Prior to the early '80s, most people paid for health benefits and prescriptions through their insurance company on more of a cost-share basis, meaning that the insurance company paid 80% of the cost and the patient paid 20% of the cost. Healthcare costs were much lower in those days. Then came the birth of the PBM.

They entered the nation's medical stage dressed as a way to save companies and individuals money. "They sell themselves as the saviors and the ones that will lower what you pay for prescriptions, even offering \$0 copays on many generic medications. They promise companies they will save them money by managing the over-inflated prices of pharmaceuticals," Beckie said. "But really all they have done is inserted themselves in the middle between the insurance company that contracts with them and the pharmacy providing the medication to the patient."

The PBM negotiates a rate with the employer or the entity providing health benefits for the employee. They charge the patient a premium for their service. They

More on REFILLS, see page 10

San Antonio Sued For Excluding Chick-fil-A From Airport

By ACACIA CORONADO In a lawsuit citing a controversial new state law, five area residents are suing the city of San Antonio over its decision to prevent Chick-fil-A — a franchise known for opposing same-sex marriage — from opening a location in the city's airport.

"The continued religious ban on Chick-fil-A by the San Antonio City Council has by left citizens with no choice but to take this case to court," Jonathan Saenz, president of Texas Values Action, said Monday at a news conference with the plaintiffs in announcing the lawsuit. "Any other vendor that tries to replace Chick-fil-A at the

airport will be doing so under a major cloud of long and costly litigation with the city."

The lawsuit, which also seeks the city to pay the plaintiffs' legal fees, calls for an injunction preventing San Antonio from taking adverse action against Chick-Fil-A or others "based wholly or partly on that person or entity's support for religious organizations

More on LAWSUIT, see page 12

Burn Ban in Effect



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Volume 172, Number 35
2 Sections, 12 Pages

INSIDE Section 1

- Opinion.....2
- Community News..... 3
- Food & Entertainment.....4
- Art & Flowers.....5
- Bulldog Beacon.....6

INSIDE Section 2

- Sports & Outdoors.....7
- City & Government.....8
- Newspaper Fun.....9
- Classifieds.....11
- Scene Around Jefferson.....12

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