



The 2017 class of the Conway Area Leadership Institute participate in a retreat in Mountain View.

Training helps groom future community leaders

By Corey Parks

Every city and town has a core group of leaders who are involved in all aspects of the community. They answer the call to serve when their communities need them most. Their service may include building consensus among citizens for proposed initiatives, making financial contributions to projects, sitting on boards and commissions, or running for political office. Without these key leaders, cities would not be what they are today. But eventually, someone must replace these influencers. Is your city prepared for a transition in leadership?

Maintaining a community's leadership capacity is critical to the economic development strategy because stable leadership enables cities to develop and implement strategic plans, recruit quality talent, and attract families and employers to the area. It also encourages collaboration among community stakeholders who make public policy and regulation decisions.

Today's influencers have a responsibility to ensure the next generation of leadership is prepared to step up when necessary. This preparation requires leaders to actively seek ways to groom their successors as they reduce their involvement. While development can sometimes happen organically, communities across the state are utilizing leadership development programs to ensure they are cultivating the next generation of leaders.

Greater Little Rock Leadership and Leadership Fayetteville allow those two cities to cultivate their leaders of tomorrow. In Conway, the Conway Area Leadership Institute, formerly known as the Faulkner County Leadership Institute, develops emerging leaders. Batesville and Morrilton are benefitting from Leadership Batesville and Leadership Conway County, respectively. These are a few examples of local programs, but this list is not exhaustive. There are also statewide and regional leadership development opportunities available.

MHBF Health Tips



Telemedicine: MHBF's newest benefit

Statewide programs include the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service's LeadAR and the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Arkansas. The Delta Regional Authority's Delta Leadership Institute is a regional program Arkansans in the DRA region can attend. Leadership programs are not a new concept, but they are increasingly important as community leaders transition into less involved roles or retire.

Each program's curriculum will vary, but they all share the same objective: to establish a pipeline for the next generation of leaders. Participants have the opportunity to explore their community and develop their skills through sessions on leadership, education, workforce development, economic development, infrastructure, agriculture, arts and culture, history, natural resources, tourism, local and state government, quality of life, healthcare, military, and public safety. These sessions prepare participants to be well-rounded board members, commissioners, elected officials, and other community leaders or volunteers. Through the collaborative efforts of these new and current leaders, cities can advance their economic development agenda more seamlessly.

In closing, I'll pose the question from the opening paragraph again: Is your community prepared for a transition in leadership? If not, I encourage you to begin having conversations with the leaders of your community to determine the topics with which rising leaders should be familiar. This dialogue will reduce the learning curve, increase continuity among stakeholders, and better prepare everyone for changes in leadership.



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Arkansas recently became the last state in the nation to allow telemedicine consultations, and for Municipal Health Benefit Fund members it is the newest benefit to be added to the plan for a low \$20 co-payment.

Have you ever called your primary care physician and been told that they did not have an open appointment until the following week? Or have you ever been on vacation out-of-state and gotten a sinus infection or stomach bug? Telemedicine is a solution whose time has come for these reasons and many more. MHBF and eDocAmerica are working together to offer this benefit to its covered members.

In Arkansas, it is currently law that the first consultation with a licensed telemedicine physician must be a live video consultation. To meet this requirement, the patient must log into the eDocAmerica telemedicine portal where the video consultation will take place. This portal can be accessed via computer or smart phone. After the initial video consultation, future telemedicine consultations can be accessed by phone, with or without video.

Here are the steps to use the new MHBF telemedicine benefit:

- Call 1-877-308-3362 to schedule a call or video consultation;
- A Care Coordinator will gather your information, collect your \$20 co-pay, and get your consultation scheduled;
- If the physician writes a prescription, it will be called into your pharmacy of choice.

Telemedicine consultations are for common ailments like colds, allergies, pink eye, UTIs, sinus infections, headaches, and sore throats. This benefit should not be used in the event of a medical emergency. Telemedicine physicians will not treat severe or chronic conditions, nor is telemedicine designed to take the place of your primary care physician. Telemedicine physicians will not prescribe opioid pain relievers.

If you have questions regarding telemedicine or other benefits, please contact Municipal Health Benefit Fund at (501) 978-6137. 🏠