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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# PRESS RELEASE

## Fort Bend County Judge KP George Judges Impactful Rice Health Policy Hackathon

**(FORT BEND, TX)** - Fort Bend County Judge KP George, Commissioner Precinct 4 Dexter McCoy, and Fort Bend County Health & Human Services hosted the inaugural virtual Rice Health Policy Hackathon event in collaboration with students from Rice University beginning on Friday, August 4 and concluding on Sunday, August 6. The event united over 100 college students with diverse talents to address community challenges and marked a significant step towards technological advancement and improved well-being for residents.

Judge George, who served as a judge for the event, is committed to supporting initiatives that positively impact Fort Bend County and the greater Houston area. The Rice Health Policy Hackathon provided a platform for students to develop innovative solutions to improve healthcare access, address diverse population needs, and explore sustainable financing strategies for Fort Bend County through three themes: "Maximizing Information Technology," "Culturally Appropriate Quality Services," and "Financing Indigent Health."

"The ideas and solutions provided by the students during this Rice Health Policy Hackathon are invaluable," Judge George said. "Each participant became an agent of change, contributing to a brighter and healthier future for our community."

The Keynote Speaker, Dr. Asim Shah, highlighted the relevance of indigent health and health equity issues to the community. The event featured 30 mentors and offered the winning two teams a year-long internship opportunity with the County and a \$5,000 stipend for their creative, innovative indigent policy impactful idea.

The lead organizer was Amna Sidiq, a senior at Rice studying Social Policy Analysis on the pre-med track. Her role was facilitating relations with Fort Bend County, creating all materials for the participants, and coordinating with all partners, including the Rice Social Policy Analysis Department and the Episcopal Health Foundation. She also received support from the Hackathon Organizing Team, including Dillan Patel, Eunbi Chung, Rithika Iyengar, and Kathryn Phung, all students at Rice University.

The winning teams' policies were titled "GROW Together: Addressing Mental Health Accessibility in Fort Bend ISD" and "Free Pregnancy Test Incentivized Prenatal Care Resources and Support Groups."

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