*This is the transcript from my interview with the Nonprofit Chamber of Palm Beach County in April 2022. Coming out of two years of the pandemic. The Nonprofit Chamber is a group of over 100 CEO’s in Palm Beach County. They asked me to provide my perspective as a funder in the community. – Randy Scheid*

* 1. Has the pandemic changed your foundation’s giving strategies and if so, how?

Our giving strategy did pivot during the pandemic. Once we entered the summer of 2020 and it was clear that we would be in the midst of the pandemic for quite some time, we accelerated funds to provide more short-term intermediate assistance to non-profits.

Initially, much of this work focused on community-based agencies working with clinics to setup rapid testing sites in communities that would otherwise be overlooked by traditional providers. Then we provided additional funding to a few select nonprofits to help with virus mitigation strategies (Community Health Workers) and to a few other agencies helping residents at risk of becoming homeless due to economic hardship.

As things progressed into 2021 we also accelerated the amount of funding we normally provide to smaller grassroots agencies. Most all of these were providing assistance with basic needs to their people. These agencies are not the ones applying for state or federal assistance.

With this pivot there was a slight orientation away from an interest in innovation and systemic-change. This is probably a by-product of the environment in which everyone was operating; just survive and do what you can.

Hard to tell how things will play out right now.

* 1. What do you currently see as the greatest needs in our community from a funding perspective?

This is such a tough question as just about any population and any sector you examine with this lens screams for funding, especially here in Florida.

Broadly speaking, we are entering a very precarious time. We do not really know what things will look like as we exit the pandemic. The health of the nation and of those here in Florida has suffered terribly during the pandemic.

For example:

-The number of deaths involving alcohol **increased between 2019 and 2020 by 25.5%;** the 35-44 age group saw an increase **of 39.7%.**[**[1]**](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftn1)

-The number of opioid overdose deaths **increased 38% in 2020, with a 55% increase in deaths** involving synthetic opioids such as fentanyl.[[2]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftn2)

-Life expectancy at birth for the total U.S. population **declined by 1.5 years** in 2020; the biggest decline since at least World War II.[[3]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftn3)

-**25% increase** in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide.[[4]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftn4)

-**employment in healthcare is down by 524,000 since February 2020**, with nursing and residential care facilities representing about four-fifths of the losses[[5]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftn5)

[[1]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftnref1) JAMA March 2022: Alcohol-Related Deaths During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

[[2]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftnref2) AMA February 2022. Issue brief: Nation’s drug-related overdose and death epidemic continues to worsen

[[3]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftnref3) CDC July 2021.

[[4]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftnref4) WHO March 2022.

[[5]](https://quantumfnd.sharepoint.com/sites/all-staff/Shared%20Documents/Strategic%20Planning%202021/BOD%20Talking%20Points%20March%202022.docx#_ftnref5) Bureau of Labor Statistics. October 2021.

At the state level, there are very concerning policies already under implementation that restrict an individual and doctor's decisions on health services.

According to the Florida Policy Institute, earlier this week, the State of Florida Department of Education indicated it will no longer participate in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

(YRBS) provides unique and critical data that guides public health approaches to protecting and promoting the physical and mental well-being of Florida’s young people. The YRBS is crucial because it helps monitor and address the rising mental health, substance use, and physical health problems experienced by Florida’s young adolescents and young adults.

Where does that leave us? My sense is that we can't go back to 'normal' operations. We really need to re-examine how and what we do. This includes our foundation!

* 1. What does it mean to you to partner with a funded agency? What does that relationship look like?

At the granular level we would literally converse with the other funder and fill in gaps in project funding, say with a staff person that would manage the program.

At a higher level there would likely be an alignment with funding.

It's a mutually beneficial relationship for us as we can learn from the other funder involved in the project and they can help us with due diligence on the project.

* 1. Like many businesses, nonprofit organizations are experiencing challenges with rising costs of housing (for clients AND staff), salary increase needs and staff vacancies as many are taking higher paying positions or moving out of the area because of increased cost of living in Palm Beach County. How are these issues impacting your foundation’s giving strategies?

We are constantly talking about this matter with our board so we can paint of realistic picture of what it is like to try and run a nonprofit in the current economic environment. The conversations come up frequently and we try to be proactive to our trustees understand how helpful our giving can be especially if it is in the shape of a 'general operating' grant.

We have not been proactive but we do avoid limiting factors that can contribute to further strain by avoiding such policies as a cap on administrative expenses.

* 1. What do you consider to be the greatest barriers between foundations and agencies who are seeking funding?

Honestly, I'd be more interested in hearing the answer to this question from the nonprofits here today. One I can think of is the time lag from a request to actually receiving funding. We try to minimize ours but there is only such much of the administrative process we can 'shrink.'

* 1. Name your top three most important qualities in an organization your foundation would be interested in funding?

Clear mission and purpose and an ED who can clearly and succinctly articulate what it is they do and how they do it.

Track-record of success and ability to demonstrate how the agency measures success.

Networked organization with clear allies in this space and clients that vouch for their work.

* 1. Is your foundation currently offering multi-year grants? If not, is this something you would consider?

We already offer them.

* 1. From our collective experience, we understand that the foundations represented today do not typically offer unrestricted grant opportunities. Is this something your foundation is currently doing, might be considering or would never consider in the future?

We do provide general operating funding. These grants have been provided to agencies and partners who we have a long-standing (10+ years) funding relationship with and are completely centered with our mission as it relates to health.

It is very competitive to obtain one from us. Probably one out of every 20 grants we make would be considered 'general operating.'

* 1. What do you suggest is the best strategy for interested agencies to approach your foundation about potential funding?

It is not required but perhaps best practice to email one of our program officers and ask for a few minutes to chat. They can advise on the concept as well as the timing of things.

Officially you can go on our website and submit a letter of intent. I always tell people to reach out directly as well but it is not required. We do receive many letters of intent so oftentimes if helps to just make sure your application didn't get lost in the shuffle.