

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### MEETING SUMMARY

**December 15, 2004**

Members Present:           Stewart Stearns, Chair  
                                  Ken Alexander  
                                  Bob Carter  
                                  Kay Glasser  
                                  Sarah Gorman  
                                  Peter Howard  
                                  Bill Little

Members Not Present:     Christine Cauffield  
                                  Elliott Metcalfe

Staff Present:             Chip Taylor  
                                  Pauline Tracy

### **Committee and Work Group Updates**

#### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium

The Consortium and all of its committees and workgroups have been very active, meeting several times during the month. There is a lot of enthusiasm and collaboration among all of the committee members. The Consortium and the Criminal Justice Commission continue to meet jointly to discuss common issues. An additional work group was formed to determine possible locations and funding opportunities for both a Marchman Act receiving facility and transitional housing such as a domiciliary.

#### Health Coverage for Uninsured Children Subcommittee

Sarah Gorman provided a report on the results of the *Caring for Kids* sessions held last week. There were a total of 35 individuals trained in the two sessions. Virginia Brockman reported on changes to KidCare, Sarah provided resources for parents with no health insurance and Janet Kahn spoke of the role of well child health care in school readiness.

A summary of the evaluations of the training sessions indicated the participants were pleased overall with the training and were interested in additional sessions. Sarah also provided members with a copy of the *Resource List for Families with No Health Insurance* that was given to participants at the training sessions.

It was decided that this type of training should become an annual event to update staff on changes and additional resources in the community. Changes that may occur as a result of the legislative special session or the regular session can be communicated to the participants via e-mail.

#### Education and Advocacy Work Group

Pauline Tracy reported that Marylee Bussard, from SCOPE, will attend the January Executive Committee and Steering Committee meetings to give an update on the activities of the Domestic Violence Task Force.

Diana French has asked for a few minutes at the next Steering Committee meeting to show a short video on the role of volunteers during a disaster.

#### Medicaid Reform Symposium Debriefing

Discussion was held regarding the Medicaid Reform Symposium. Overall, the comments received from participants were very positive. The suggestion was made to send out informational packets prior to future events on subjects that are very technical, such as Medicaid. Other suggestions included asking all keynote speakers to stay for the entire event to respond to questions that may arise later in the program. Perhaps more discussion among the panel of local experts would have been informative.

The Committee felt the Symposium did provide an opportunity for the Community Alliance to take the lead on an important issue and to present both sides so that participants can come to their own conclusions. This is a void that is not presently being filled by any other group.

#### Legislative Update

An updated version of the Community Alliance's legislative priorities for 2005 was distributed. The Universal Pre-K issue has been added. A copy of the priorities was mailed to the entire legislative delegation with a cover memo thanking them for the opportunity to present our issues during their public hearing.

The Special Session started this week and the Legislature is expected to pass the Universal Pre-K legislation that only requires a 3-hour school day. Additional legislation expected to pass includes requiring the counties to pay the costs for operating juvenile detention centers. This legislation was passed during the

regular session last year, but was challenged in court by the Florida Association of Counties. The 1<sup>st</sup> District Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the counties; however, it is expected that the legislature will secure the super majority vote needed to pass the legislation again.

It was agreed that the January Steering Committee meeting should include an agenda item in which members can report on legislation that was passed during the special session. Both the pros and cons of proposed legislation should be provided in order to obtain a balanced perspective. It's important for Alliance members to stay on top of pending legislation and to notify the Steering Committee of items we need to support or oppose. If we oppose proposed statutory language, it's important to also propose alternate language.

### **Update of Florida Association of Counties Presentation**

Stewart, Bill, Dave Bullock and Commissioner Mercier made a presentation at the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) Legislative Conference on the human services partnerships and collaborations in Sarasota County. An overview was given on the Community Alliance, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium and the Criminal Justice Commission. The response from the participants, who were mostly county social service managers, was overwhelmingly positive. Based on their feedback, staff have made a recommendation to FAC that the same (but updated) presentation be made at their annual conference which will be held in June in Tampa. The audience at the annual conference would include more policy makers such as county commissioners, county administrators and managers.

A discussion ensued regarding other public forums that would be conducive to similar presentations. Suggestions included Leadership Sarasota, the Chambers of Commerce, and the Tiger Bay Club.

### **New Business**

Bill Little summarized an article in the December 15 *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* regarding FEMA not sharing information on persons affected by Hurricane Charley with human services agencies in Charlotte County, citing HIPAA privacy restrictions. Sarasota County had similar experiences with the Stay-N-Play FEMA RV park but was able to solve the problem by having the residents sign authorizations for FEMA to share information with us.

It was suggested that community agencies need to be trained on how to work more effectively with FEMA in times of disaster recovery. The Health and Human Services Business Center is in the process of establishing a position to coordinate human services during a disaster. This was one of the lessons learned from this past year. Agencies such as Senior Friendship Centers, School Readiness Coalition, Healthy Start, First Step and the mental health

agencies can be valuable resources to each other. Churches and faith-based agencies should also be utilized to ease the strain on human service agencies, if needed.

Sarasota County will be hardening the Health Department building so that it can be used as a secondary Emergency Operations Center. This would reduce the number of people who need to be physically located at the EOC that is located at the County Administration Building. Audio-video equipment will be installed so that staff at the Health Department's EOC can participate in all briefings and updates.

Bill Little will use the opportunity following the video presentation by Diana French to introduce the topic of a more coordinated health and human service response to disasters. A more in-depth presentation by Bill can be made at a future meeting.

Kay Glasser shared a letter to the editor that appeared in the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* highlighting the contribution the Glasser/Schoenbaum Center has made to this community. Over \$5 million in savings have been realized by human service agencies who can use the dollars they would have spent towards rent and put it directly into services instead. The article will be provided to Steering Committee members at the January meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

The regular January Steering Committee meeting date falls on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday (January 17), so the decision was made to hold the meeting on the following Monday, January 24.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be Wednesday, January 19.

The regular February Steering Committee meeting date falls on Presidents Day, which is a holiday for the County and the School Board but not for most of the members of the Committee. It was decided to go ahead and have the February meeting on the third Monday, February 21, at the Community Foundation at 1:30 p.m.