

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### MEETING SUMMARY

**September 14, 2005**

Members Present: Ken Alexander  
Bob Carter  
Kay Glasser  
Sarah Gorman  
Elliott Metcalfe  
Stewart Stearns

Members Not Present: Christine Cauffield  
Peter Howard  
Bill Little

Staff Present: Kathleen Marie Hall  
Chip Taylor

#### **Medicaid Reform and Changes to Medicaid/Medicare**

Stewart Stearns brought up the discussion on Medicaid Reform and felt that this was an issue that the committee should track and understand.

Sarah Gorman mentioned that on the federal level they have postponed the rollback proposal on Medicaid Reform due to the tragedy with Hurricane Katrina.

Sarah shared with the committee a press release from the Governor's office regarding the online publication of Florida's application for a waiver from the Federal Government to transform Medicaid. This release also mentions the proposal for the pilot program to begin in Duval and Broward counties in the spring of 2006. The online publication is located at <http://ahca.myflorida.com> and will be available for public comment for 30 days prior to being submitted to the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Some of the thoughts on the Medicaid reform proposal were as follows:

- The intent of Medicaid Reform is to spend less money on the Medicaid providers and this would be a handicap for them.
- It indicates that fewer people would be eligible, and therefore fewer people would be accessing services and fewer services would be available.
- It proposes a strong statement on fraud.

- It will cause the aging services to move away from the non-profit organizations to the larger corporate insurers.
- If on the federal level they will not approve the increase on the Upper Payment Limits, Medicaid Reform will be a dead issue.
  - The Upper Payment Limits would protect the providers as costs increase instead of using the fixed rate.
- The federal government's concern is that Florida is being looked at as the model state and if it yields to increasing Florida's Upper Payment Limits, then they would be under pressure from other state seeking waivers to do the same.
- There is a very strong objective on the federal level to control Medicaid costs and that is the bottom line.
- Medicaid costs will be more predictable.
- The public will have 30 days to comment on the draft of the waiver and then Florida can submit the final waiver to CMS and hope that the Fed's will yield to the waiver.

Some of the suggestions on the Medicaid reform proposal were as follows:

- To invite someone from the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to speak to the Steering Committee at a future meeting on what the rules and regulations are within the Medicaid Reform and receive an update on the changes to Medicaid/Medicare.
- Hold a seminar with the speakers from last year along with some local providers as a panel discussion on their perspective of the impact on these issues.
- Request the link to the website on AHAC.
- Invite Ralph Gladfelter from the Florida Hospice Association to a future Steering Committee meeting or request him to provide a summary on his views on this reform, where the agencies and citizens stand and where they go from here.

## **Committee and Work Group Updates**

### **Health Coverage for Uninsured Children (HCUC) Subcommittee**

Sarah Gorman gave an update on the November 10 community forum, *Community Solutions to the Challenge of the Uninsured* and handed out the approved draft of the invitation letter and the partial listing of participants. Sarah stated that on this listing she did not include the Community Alliance Steering Committee members or the CHIP Leadership Council members, but that all members would be invited to participate in this forum. Each participant will receive a packet in the mail prior to the forum.

The format for this event will be as follows:

- 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. — each speaker will be given 35 minutes for their presentation, including their question and answer period.
- 10 minute break

- 11:10 – 11:30 a.m. — Leslie Clark will present local data and innovative approaches to healthcare here in Sarasota County, such as the Varsity Health Plan at Sarasota Memorial Hospital and the Adult Health Clinic at the Health Department.
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.— Lunch with small group discussions

Sarah stated that one of the reasons for this forum is to find out if anyone else in the community really cares about these issues besides the committee members. They will review the feedback after the forum and make a determination whether they will or will not continue this committee.

### **Planning and Outcomes Work Group (POWG)**

Ken Alexander reported that at the last POWG meeting they discussed the *Communities That Care* Middle School and High School survey results. Future surveys will be scheduled through the school system, alternating each year between high school students and middle school students.

Ken stated that after reviewing the risk and protective factors data, the group found that there are several areas indicating positive or negative differences from the national norm. The work group's goal was to take a look and see if the funds that have been directed through Sarasota County's Grants-in-Aid (GIA) Program and other efforts throughout the community have made an impact. There are a number of areas that show improvement and other areas that demand attention. It is very clear that something happens between the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels: the protective factors diminish and the risk factors go way up. The target areas that the group is looking into are in substance abuse, delinquent behaviors, drug use and binge drinking. The toughest part is to figure out if these factors are ones that the group had not identified and were unintended consequences, or did that specific program or the larger efforts drive it in the right direction. Ken thanked Chip Taylor and Jamie Mahadeo for putting together this spreadsheet that presents all of the data and what our goals are up through the fiscal year 2007. This data will be presented to the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners in the near future.

The only down side to these surveys is that the survey company has sold their business. Chip Taylor is in the process of finding out whether or not, at this point, the work group will be able to continue to use the present data and if the new owners will agree to continue the process.

Stewart Stearns requested that this report be presented at the Steering Committee meeting on Monday, September 19. Ken stated that he would not be at the meeting, but would have Chip Taylor provide the data for the committee members to review.

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium (SAMHSC)**

Ken Alexander reported that the Marchman Act Receiving Facility is set to open in January, 2006. This facility will have 30 secure beds. Ken stated that in his experience, it is the first time in this community that there has been an array of

services and a true continuum of services including the Marchman Act Receiving Facility, the VIP Program, and the Transitional Living Program. A great deal of enthusiasm is evident and there is a spirit of cooperation across the board among the different agencies.

Ken mentioned that the Acute Care Task Force is actively pursuing ways to find specific protocols to help law enforcement make good and effective decisions on treatment for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues. An example of this would be in making sure that people with certain mental health issues are not ending up in the hospital emergency room for treatment when they should be going to a mental health treatment facility

Ken stated that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Coordinator, Michael Theall, is bringing the appropriate people together and addressing the issues that have needed to be faced for quite sometime. He thanked the SCOPE Board for their work which produced the recommendations on their mental health study. He also thanked the Community Foundation, the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, and the County for assisting in funding this position.

There is a challenge on how the community will address the mental health issues in the southern portion of the county. The task force has come up with a proposal for a north and south county “node” concept so whatever is placed in the north county, will also need to be placed in the south county. The discussion centers on how to put an actual assessment center or a virtual type of arrangement in place.

### **Community Disaster Preparedness Committee (CDPC)**

Stewart Stearns reported that there has been an influx of Internally Displaced Person (IDP's) or evacuees into our area as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Chip Taylor reported that there was a well-attended, faith-based volunteer training at the EOC on September 13 where they learned about the EOC and shared information on what was happening locally in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Tom Pfaff met with six ministers on September 14 to discuss their concerns and frustrations regarding assistance for the IDP's. Their main concerns at this time are not knowing what to do for the IDP's or where to send them for assistance.

Chip stated that there are approximately 275 IDP households in Sarasota County at this time and there is a need for services to be available to them. But there are several problems that the county is facing at the moment.

1. There is no central database that would capture the contact information on all the displaced people and what their needs are at this time. At first, the plan was to use 2-1-1, which would initiate an intake form, a referral and then would automatically dump the information into the Human Services Information System (HSIS). This system is a web-based software program (ServicePoint) that would indicate where people are from, where they are staying, what their needs are, and what services they are

- receiving from the various agencies. But the problem with this is that 2-1-1 is not a case management agency; they are simply an information and referral system. Therefore, the information would go into a database but no one would be managing the cases.
2. The other problem is that a lot of people are here and receiving services without going through 2-1-1. The school board reported yesterday that they already had 36 children enrolled in their system, Red Cross has served 127 households, and the Health Department has served approximately 30 people.

Chip reported that at a meeting yesterday, they discussed how the agencies would electronically transmit their information to 2-1-1 so it could be added to the database. There was also a discussion regarding using volunteers to input the information from the school system and other agencies into the HSIS system. Chip was advised that 2-1-1 was not using their database because there was a problem with their system, which means that all the information that was thought to be in their database had not been inputted at all.

The hope now is if Sarasota County creates this database, it would be the first county to actually have a handle on who is where, what the needs are, and what services have been provided. First, though, there must be case managers in place. This is problematic, because all of the County's case manager positions have been outsourced at this time. Bill Little will initiate an appeal for a statewide tracker request that could generate some funds to hire case managers to be located at the Health Department or another agency. This way the services that are not being provided through the school system or elsewhere will be handled through the case managers.

The bottom line is that many agencies have a part in the process but no one agency is case managing the entire family for the long haul. There needs to be a connection between the temporary housing, schools, mental health, counseling, dental, nursing services, employment and much more. This could be accomplished through the HSIS system, which every agency that receives HUD McKinney-Vento funds is required to participate in. Many of these agencies are still using their existing system because it works for them and they don't want to replace their existing data system to use HSIS. But for our purposes in this time limited event, HSIS should work very well. Agencies such as Red Cross are not on HSIS but it would be very simple for them to sign up and become a member. There are 40 agencies that are supposed to be on-line, but only 4 or 5 are actively participating on the system by updating their records and adding clients. This system was mandated last year, requiring these agencies to register on HSIS, which they did and therefore they are technically in compliance, even though they are not actually using the system.

Other issues that came up were the confidentiality and HIPAA requirements and constraints on information-sharing, but the County has been informed that there is a temporary waiver of HIPAA regulations due to Hurricane Katrina. The problem that they foresee is that once the waiver has been lifted, the information is still in the system and people's confidentiality will be compromised. Therefore

the question is whether the IDP's should sign a waiver on confidentiality and HIPPA before initiating any paperwork.

### **The Nominating & Membership Committee**

Chip Taylor reported that the Nominating & Membership Committee has been notified that the new executive director of that agency, Maria Garcia-Casellas, will replace Millicent Puleo for the Hispanic-Latino seat. The business seat that was filled by Luis Baron is vacant and there is a call out to people who would like to represent this business seat. The issue regarding recommendations on reassigning the seat formerly assigned to "Homeless Persons" is being addressed by the committee.

### **New Business**

Chip Taylor mentioned that Donna Peterson, the Dean of the College of Public Health at USF, has been discussing the possibility of using Sarasota as a model for doing research/laboratory for student interns.

Dr. Kay Glasser mentioned that Dr. Peter French of USF School of Social Work came to a recent board meeting at the Glasser-Schoenbaum Human Services Center and announced that he considers Sarasota County to be a teaching and learning laboratory and would like to create a partnership with their center. The board accepted this partnership with the purpose for service, internship, and research. Dr. French will have an office at the center.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Executive Committee meeting will be on October 12, at 1:30 p.m., at The Community Foundation.