

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

## Health Coverage for Uninsured Children Subcommittee

**JANUARY 20, 2004**

Members Present: Sarah Gorman, Chair  
Virginia Brockman  
Gloria DeHaven  
Janet Kahn  
Beverly Stockton

Members Absent: Migdalia Aponte  
Mary Crowley  
Debra Kaufman  
Sherri Reynolds

Staff Present: Pauline Tracy

### ***School Data***

Sarah Gorman reported that she spoke to Sherri Reynolds who stated the data to measure the costs to the educational system as a result of children who miss school due to illness was not available. The possibility of surveying or meeting with elementary school teachers to gather additional data was also not feasible.

### ***Workplace Data***

Beverly Stockton reported that she contacted the following entities in her effort to gather data regarding the effect on the workplace due to children not having health:

- State of Florida, Department of Labor Market Statistics
- Sarasota Chamber of Commerce
- Sarasota Human Resource Association
- Two private leasing companies
- National Human Resource Association
- A local worker's compensation employer

She found that the data for Sarasota County was not available; however, according to a human resources website article, unscheduled absenteeism can cost up to an average of \$602 per employee, per year.

Virginia Brockman offered to call Jennifer Lloyd in Tallahassee to see where the Healthy Kids Corporation obtains their workplace data.

### ***Losses to Providers***

Gloria DeHaven reported she had surveyed 5 medical providers (4 in private practice plus an SMH Community Health Clinic representative) asking their views on health insurance coverage for children (and adults). The respondents felt the number of uninsured children had risen over the last few years as well as the number of accounts that are considered delinquent. Several providers made positive comments regarding the Kid Care program.

The providers did express a concern regarding the high number of adults who do not have health insurance. Another concern was the number of patients who wait until the illness or injury is more acute to obtain health care. Many patients do not follow through with obtaining diagnostic tests due to lack of resources.

Gloria will contact the Sarasota County Health Department to gather data regarding losses to the health department from providing health care to children without coverage.

### ***Status of Waiting Lists***

Virginia Brockman reported that as of January 13, 2004 there were 933 children on the waiting list for the Title XXI-Healthy Kids program in Sarasota County. The waiting list for non-Title XXI children was 143.

### ***Other Data***

Virginia Brockman reported that the Orange County Board of County Commissioners, in conjunction with Winter Park Health Foundation, has committed \$695,000 over a three-year period to fund Title XXI children. Orange County no longer provides match for the non-Title XXI children.

Gloria mentioned two reports that may be useful to this work group: the Florida Health Insurance Study (January 2000) which shows the number of uninsured by locale; and the Prevalence of Behavioral Risk Factors in Sarasota County (2002).

### ***Other Models***

Gloria provided the name and contact information for the Ocala initiative where employers pay the premium for the children already enrolled in the Healthy Kids Program. Virginia Brockman offered to contact Peter Foy with Childhood Development Services to find out how the program works, the status of their waiting lists, how they obtained buy-in from employers and how far in advance the premiums have to be paid.

Sarah reported that the JaxCare Project in Duvall County started as a pilot program to provide coverage for adults (expecting to cover the parents of KidCare recipients, among others). A total of 1500 individuals are covered by the pilot. The program relies heavily on local foundation funding. They were able to obtain computer software valued at \$2 million as an in-kind gift to develop an integrated database to track patients and to enable

entry into the program through any participating provider, in compliance with their motto "There Is No Wrong Door." Duval County has support for positive community responses to health care issues due to several major health insurance companies, including Blue Cross/Blue Shield, having a strong presence in the area.

Three important points learned from the JaxCare project were:

1. Start as a pilot and build from there.
2. Ask local foundations to help support the program.
3. Consider that an integrated database will save time and money for program operations.

Sarah also reported that in Santa Clara, California, there were a total of over 12,000 children uninsured at the beginning of their initiative. There was a commitment by the community that all local children will have health coverage as a result of the project. The project began in January 2001 and they have recently received a foundation grant in excess of \$1 million to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the program. Sarah will contact someone local to the project to ask how the objective was agreed to and how the funding partnership (local, state, federal, public, private, and individual donors) came together.

### ***General Discussion***

Pauline suggested that this work group work with the Funding Catalyst Work Group to maximize the federal dollars that are available through the Kid Care program.

The morning issue of the Sarasota *Herald-Tribune* had carried an article about the freeze on KidCare enrollment that omitted any reference to the Governor's option to use Medicaid dollars already received by the state to erase the waiting list. The members of the Committee will propose to the Planning and Outcomes Work Group that a guest column addressing this dimension of the issue be submitted to the newspaper editors by Stewart Stearns, representing the Alliance. Sarah will draft a column for review. In addition, letters to the editor from the community supporting the use of the Medicaid dollars for this purpose would also be encouraged.

[Subsequent to the meeting but prior to distribution of this meeting summary, the issue became politicized statewide in a way that may preclude Community Alliance advocacy; this question will be raised at the Planning & Outcomes Work Group meeting.]

### ***Next Meeting***

The next meeting of the Health Care for Uninsured Children Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, February 17, at 10:00 a.m. at the Healthy Start office, 1750 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Building M.