

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

Health Coverage for Uninsured Children Subcommittee

FEBRUARY 17, 2004

Members Present: Sarah Gorman, Chair
Virginia Brockman
Gloria DeHaven

Members Absent: Migdalia Aponte
Mary Crowley
Janet Kahn
Debra Kaufman
Sherri Reynolds
Beverly Stockton

Guest: Frank Brunner (Manatee Rural Health Services)

Staff: Pauline Tracy

Update of Letter to the Editor

Sarah Gorman provided an update on the letter from the Community Alliance to the Sarasota Herald-Tribune regarding the Healthy Kids issue. A draft was sent to Chip Taylor and Stewart Stearns but things changed so quickly once SB 2000 was introduced that the information in the letter was no longer timely. Now that we know more details about the proposed bill, another letter can be sent with language addressing the specifics of the bill.

Update on Kid Care Program

Virginia Brockman reported that there are major changes proposed to the KidCare program in SB 2000. The bill as currently written will:

- Eliminate the waiting lists and allow families to sign up during two enrollment periods annually (although two enrollment periods are not mandatory).
- Eliminate outreach currently being done by the county public health units.
- Require families who have access to child care through their employer, regardless of the cost, to disenroll from the program.
- Eliminate all dental coverage.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for the Healthy Kids Advisory Council to meet and become active in opposing this bill and proposing alternatives. Their role is to organize

and lobby the delegation on behalf of the Kid Care Program. Virginia stated she will schedule a meeting in mid-March.

Sarah reiterated that the role of the Health Care for Uninsured Children Subcommittee is to advise the Planning and Outcomes Work Group as well as the Executive Committee of the Community Alliance on the position the Alliance should take on children's health care issues. The charge to the subcommittee is to identify gaps in the health care coverage system for children in Sarasota County and to look for ways to fill those gaps. The subcommittee's vision is that all children in Sarasota County will have health care coverage. This subcommittee needs to be an action-focused group and not discussion-only focused.

Updates

Virginia Brockman reported that Orange County no longer pays their required match for the non-Title XXI children. Instead, they use the funds to develop a comprehensive system of care for children. Gloria DeHaven offered to conduct some research into how Orange County set up the system and how it is working.

By June, Virginia Brockman will have access to data being gathered by the Florida Healthy Kids office concerning the anticipated number of kids in Sarasota County who will be disenrolled due to their parents having access to health care coverage through their employer if SB 2000 is passed as currently written.

Virginia will also confirm whether the rules governing the KidCare program preclude Sarasota County from accessing revenue maximization opportunities in order to provide coverage for more children.

Frank advised that the subcommittee should bring solutions versus problems to legislators, such as a pilot project which is innovative and cost-effective.

Sarah reported that Sarasota Memorial Hospital has introduced an insurance product for local small businesses which will provide affordable family health care coverage for employees. She has contacted Mark Lazarus with Sarasota Memorial Hospital and will invite him to speak about this at a Steering Committee meeting.

Frank suggested asking the Chamber of Commerce for information regarding the average health care premium cost for family coverage, the average hourly wage of non-management employees and the percentage who purchase family coverage through the employer's health insurance plan.

Virginia reported that the Ocala area Healthy Kids collaboration with businesses to provide coverage for more children has come to an end.

She also reported the number of children enrolled in the Healthy Kids Program from Sarasota County has decreased since July 1 by approximately 90 children, while the waiting list has reached over 1300 children.

Gloria DeHaven reported that she had spoken to Veavie DeLaughter, Child Health Clinic Manager at the Sarasota County Health Department. Ms. DeLaughter stated that although they do not keep statistics, she believes she has seen an increase in the number of children without health insurance. Gloria offered to gather more information about the services offered by Manatee Rural Health Services. She also offered to conduct an Internet search on what other communities have done to close the gaps in health coverage for children.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Health Care for Uninsured Children Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, at 10:00 a.m. at the Healthy Start office, 1750 17th Street, Building M.