

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

Planning and Outcomes Work Group

August 5, 2004 Minutes

Members Present: Ken Alexander, Chair
Sandy Baar
Karen Bogues
Sarah Gorman
Sandra Figueroa for Lisa Phillips

Guests Present: Shelley Rence

Staff Present: Chip Taylor
Jamie Mahadeo

Housekeeping

Sandy Baar announced that she has taken another position and will no longer be serving on the Community Alliance. The President of the Sarasota County Coalition for the Homeless, Colleen Reardon, will be taking her place.

Update on Communities That Care Survey

The Communities That Care Middle School Survey is not yet available. Staff will contact Sherri Reynolds periodically to ascertain the progress being made on the project. The committee is hopeful that the survey will be available for their next meeting.

Services to Substance-Exposed Newborns

Sarah Gorman introduced Shelly Rence, Healthy Start Program Administrator for the Health Department. Ms. Gorman explained that a number of agencies in the community have been reporting increased numbers of mothers and babies testing positive at birth for prohibited substances (typically cocaine). Additionally, an appeals court has determined that, by strictly interpreting the law, substance exposure alone does not constitute child abuse or neglect. This decision limits the amount of assistance and/or intervention that can be done on behalf of substance-exposed babies. Further exacerbating the situation, at the birth of a substance-exposed baby, doctors are required to verify the report thereby committing themselves to be subpoenaed to testify at any hearings held on the case. This is a deterrent to reporting for most doctors. There is a state-wide group that is working to have the statutory language revised to eliminate the roadblocks preventing mothers and babies from receiving the care they need.

Ms. Rence reported that the Health Department provides follow up to substance abusing mothers and substance-exposed babies by providing treatment and other interventions. Previous to this recent court decision, the Health

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Department received good cooperation from substance abusing mothers in obtaining treatment for themselves and their infants, primarily due to the legal sanctions then in place. The immediate concern arising from this court decision is that substance exposed babies will go home without treatment.

Mr. Taylor advised that Senate Bill 700 pertaining to changes in Baker Act regulations will allow judges to order outpatient treatment in these cases. This issue will be referred to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Committee for further discussion at their next meeting.

Positive Youth Development Indicators

Mr. Taylor distributed a list of the current approved outcome targets. Focusing on positive youth development, he reported that the CTC middle school survey will provide the initial data necessary to develop outcome targets for middle school youth. A high school survey was done in 2003. Since the high school survey will be repeated next January, some comparison of indicators will be possible to see how we fare with regard to this subset of the population.

The committee reviewed the list of PYD outcome targets with the following comments:

- ▶ The graduation rate is a valid measure and has been approved by the school board as well as the BCC. However, the target of 85% may be ambitious.
- ▶ The in-school and out-of-school suspension rates vary from school to school for various reasons (space for the program, preferences of the principal, etc.). It is “nice to know” information, but there is no uniform policy in the district for this process. Because of this, there is some question whether the Community Alliance should establish targets that they have no control over and that are not supported by the school board.
- ▶ The measure of the number of youth engaged in community service has come under scrutiny because there are serious questions about how it is being (or can be) measured. No single agency has the data available. The Volunteer Center only gathers data on students interested in Bright Futures scholarships and for those registered with their agency directly. Other groups in the community, like Teen Court and church groups, gather their own data. The consensus of the committee was that this measure should not be directly tied to a single agency. It needs to be a broad, community-wide measure. Ms. Bogues commented that, last year, a number of excellent targets were not included in the list because there

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was no mechanism to measure them community-wide. It was suggested that the Grants-In-Aid process be used to attract those agencies who have such programs and are willing to work with the Community Alliance to measure their progress toward a mutually agreed target. The committee agreed that this measure should remain in place until the 2004 data is available for comparison purposes.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Friday, September 3, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. in the Health and Human Services Building, Room 2063, 2200 Ringling Boulevard.