

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH STAKEHOLDERS' CONSORTIUM

Acute Care Task Force Meeting Summary

February 21, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Ken Alexander	Bayside Center for Behavioral Health
Dennis Berry	Central Florida Behavioral Health Network
Elaine Charyn	First Step of Sarasota
Phil Gorelick	Jewish Family and Children's Service
Sally Graham	SCOPE
Kathleen Houseweart	SCOSA
Cheryl LaFlame	Coastal Behavioral Healthcare
Marlene Minzey	First Step of Sarasota
Don Ottinger	SCOPE
Mary Parrett	SCOSA
Bob Piper	First Step of Sarasota
Heather Sniffen	DCF—SunCoast Region
Debbie Spellman	DCF—SunCoast Region

Staff Present:

Bill Little	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Michael Theall	Sarasota County Health and Human Services

The meeting was called to order by Michael Theall.

Update on Coordination of Baker and Marchman Acts

The rough draft copies of the decision tree for both Baker and Marchman Acts were distributed to members of the committee. The information has been updated and separate cards will be used for the Baker and Marchman Acts. The members of the committee were asked to review the material and e-mail any changes to Michael Theall.

Changes to the previous cards that are presently in use include adding material related to the transportation provider and information related to the Transportation Exception Order which states that all juveniles must be transported to the CSU of JARF at Coastal.

Cheryl LaFlame of Coastal Behavioral stated that there have been instances recently where a Judge has signed a Marchman Act and listed the Coastal CSU

as the receiving facility. They are not contracted to receive Marchman Act clients and this has caused some confusion. It was suggested by Bill Little of the Health Department that this issue be referred to the Criminal Justice Commission for discussion. It was further added that this will most likely be an issue that will be taken care of when the addiction receiving facility opens this summer. The issue will be forwarded to Judge Bennett for discussion among the Judges.

Ken Alexander discussed some issues with decision making by law enforcement related to thinking that Sarasota Memorial Hospital ER is the place to take all Baker and Marchman Acts that need medical care. There have been instances where law enforcement has bypassed the nearest hospital in favor of Sarasota Memorial because there is a belief that Sarasota Memorial, Coastal Behavioral, and First Step handle all of these situations. He requested that information be highlighted on the cards to state that any person needing medical attention or medical clearance be taken to the nearest emergency room rather than just using Sarasota Memorial.

Any additional feedback and corrections to the decision trees should be forwarded to Michael Theall and the final copy will be forwarded to Sgt. Kenniff of the Sheriff's Department for their input. The final copy will also be forwarded to DCF for their approval as well. Once this has been accomplished training will be developed and the information will be distributed to law enforcement.

Baker Act Disposition Review

Ken Alexander of Bayside made a presentation of the dispositions of Baker Act clients that were seen in the emergency room of Sarasota Memorial Hospital. (The handouts from the presentation are attached.) The information whether the disposition of the Baker Acts were upheld or rescinded by a physician for calendar year 2005. The information is useful because it shows the trends as to who is initiating the Baker Acts and the disposition of the cases. This will help with the allocation of resources.

Additional information was shared with regard to the number of Baker Acts that are ending up in Charlotte County and how many are being referred to Manatee Glens. Neither seems to be receiving a high number of Baker Acts from Sarasota County.

Ken informed the committee that there is software available to track the disposition of these cases, but all of the providers would have to agree to participate in the gathering of data. Additionally, there would be a greater sharing of information regarding Baker and Marchman Acts at the time of referral. If there is any interest in researching this or other programs that would gather this information, members were advised to contact Ken.

In terms of next steps, it was recommended by Ken Alexander that discussions continue on the type of information we need to gather. Coastal and First Step will share information that is already being collected so discussions can begin with finding what information would be most helpful and how it can be used most effectively. Ken will forward the information to members of the committee.

CIT Training Update

Sally Graham reported on the current status of Crisis Intervention Team Training for this year. Sally reported that the next class is scheduled for March 6-10, but there are some questions as to how many will be attending the training. The goal was to have 30 participants but at the present there are only 6 officers that have committed to attend. Of these, 3 are from North Port and 3 are from the Sheriff's office. There have been many attempts to stir some interest in the trainings with Venice and Sarasota PD's, but this has not been successful to date. Sally's opinion is that this can only be successful if the law enforcement in the county get behind the program and support it by sending officers to training. Another problem is that there is no monetary support for the program.

Of the officers that have been trained so far, there has been feedback that the program is extremely useful. To date there have been 106 officers trained and the majority have been from the Sheriff's office. The local PD's have not made this the priority that is necessary for the program to be successful. One training had to be canceled last year due to the Sheriff's office's budget restraints and it appears there are still budget issues this year. There was concern expressed for the amount of time spent by many organizations to conduct the training compared to the response received from law enforcement.

Ken Alexander reported that he and other members of the community spoke with representatives from Seminole County who stated the program has been extremely valuable to them. There are questions as to why this is not happening in Sarasota County.

Michael Theall reported that a letter has been drafted by Judge Bennett requesting additional participation by all law enforcement in the county. Sarasota PD posts the flyers announcing the training but do not emphasize to officers that they need this type of training. It was added by Sally Graham that what is needed is for an officer to get enthusiastic about the training and stir up greater participation from within. It was felt this would be more effective coming from within the law enforcement community.

North Port has a desire to increase their participation by providing 5 officers per class by sending one officer from each shift, one School Resource Officer, and one administrative officer to each class.

This issue will be referred back to the Criminal Justice Commission, but they are also limited by the backing of the County and the Sheriff. They must have the motivation to make this a priority. It was asked as to whether or not this should be done at the Training Academy, but this was determined to not be as effective since the officers at the Academy have not been in the field. This training is most effective for officers who have been in the field and can use the class to increase their skills in dealing with mental health and substance abuse situations.

Elaine Charyn of First Step stated that she has had numerous conversations with Law Enforcement that have said that they are eager to have the Addiction Receiving Facility open. Her concern is that if there is not adequate training there will be more confusion about where to send people.

There have been discussions with the Sheriff as to who should be the point person for training. It has been shifted from the Training Academy to Sgt. Kenniff, who is an excellent advocate for the program but since he is a field officer he is unable to provide much support for the program due to time constraints.

In terms of next steps, it was recommended that the Acute Care Task Force continue with their support of CIT training and possibly report the issue back to SCOPE. Additionally, when Judge Bennett endorsed the program there was a boost to support for the program. Members may want to voice their support for the program whenever possible.

Transportation Contract Update

The committee has been chosen to evaluate the only Baker Act Transportation proposal that was received. The process that will be employed will make recommendations as to the appropriateness of the proposal and this will, hopefully, begin negotiations so that the contract can be put into place quickly.

The next meeting of the Acute Care Task Force will be on March 21st, at 9:00 am, in the Auditorium at the Health Department.