

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY**  
**SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH STAKEHOLDERS'**  
**CONSORTIUM**

**May 17, 2004**

Members Present: Bill Little, Chair  
Ken Alexander  
Dave Beesley  
Kevin Chinault (for Jessica Ventimiglia)  
Chrissie Budd (for Scott Eller)  
Cathy Emmett  
Kirstin Fulkerson  
Sally Graham (for Dale Lux)  
Bob Holm  
Peter Howard  
Linda McKinnon  
Lisa Phillips  
Mark Porter  
Sherri Reynolds  
Stewart Stearns  
Major Bert Tanner  
Jerry Thompson (for Christine Cauffield)  
Jeff Watts (for Debbie Spellman)  
Caroline Zucker (for Rose Chapman)

Members Not Present: Sheriff Bill Balkwill  
Elliott Metcalfe  
Earl Moreland  
Alex Young

Others Present: Maureen Coble  
Phil Gorelick  
Bob Holm  
Susan Nunnally  
Jake Thomas

Staff Present: Becky Oliver  
James Schulz  
Chip Taylor  
Pauline Tracy

## **ACTION ASSIGNMENTS**

- 1. Lisa Phillips – Reconvene a meeting of the Mission/Vision Committee to refine the mission statement and develop a vision statement.**
- 2. Lisa Phillips – Convene the initial meeting of the Planning Committee.**
- 3. Ken Alexander and Jerry Thompson – Prepare a report for next month’s meeting regarding the impact and opportunities resulting from passage of SB 700 which permits judges to mandate outpatient treatment.**
- 4. Chip Taylor – Participate in the South County Baker Act Transportation Committee.**
- 5. Bob Holm and Maureen Coble – Prepare a report for next month’s meeting regarding the formulas used by DCF to allocate funding in the SunCoast Region.**
- 6. Susan Nunnally – Prepare a report for next month’s meeting regarding the impact of the closing of G. Pierce Wood on the mental health system in Sarasota County.**

### **Mission Statement Subcommittee Report**

Lisa Phillips reported that the subcommittee developed the following mission statement:

*To promote, create, enhance, and interconnect mental health and substance abuse services in Sarasota County to improve the quality of life for those in need.*

After some discussion, it was decided that the subcommittee should refine the mission statement and work on a vision statement. It was suggested that we look at best practices in other communities. We need to determine if we are maximizing all available dollars. If more funding became available, there is not a plan currently in place which identifies where additional services are needed.

The purpose of the Consortium was also discussed. The group agreed that there is a need for a community-based strategic plan that addresses specific systems issues for substance abuse and mental health. DCF has a plan that addresses the SunCoast Region, but the community does not “own” the plan. The responsibility for addressing the issues should be with the community. We need a strategic community plan that incorporates the DCF plan. A Planning Committee will be established to begin formulating a plan. Volunteers to serve

on the committee include Jerry Thompson, Ken Alexander, Phil Gorelick, Bert Tanner, Linda McKinnon, Jake Thomas, Dave Beesley, Jeff Watts, Maureen Coble and Lisa Phillips. Lisa Phillips was asked to convene the first Planning Committee meeting. A chairperson will be selected at that meeting.

The Consortium should also be used to take advantage of opportunities to work together and collaborate to address substance abuse and mental health issues that affect the community.

### Baker Act Legislation Update

Jeff Watts provided an update on SB 700 which provides the option of mandating outpatient treatment. DCF is still in the process of reviewing the legislation to determine its impact. Although there was no additional funding provided to DCF by the Legislature, it does offer the community an opportunity to look at other sources of funding to implement the legislation. There is also the potential to reduce inpatient crisis stabilization costs by funding more outpatient services. Sarasota could be a model that would emphasize both inpatient and outpatient services. There is a need to get a feel for the impact of this legislation. Jerry Thompson and Ken Alexander will provide a report on how this legislation will impact their systems. The level of use for the mandated outpatient services may not be that high but we need to start gathering data which can be incorporated into the plan.

### South County Baker Act Issue

Susan Nunnally provided a brief explanation of the issue. Due to the closing of Bon Secours' private receiving facility, some south county Baker Act patients are being transported to the nearest receiving facility (as required by statute), which is Charlotte County Community Mental Health Center in Punta Gorda. The significant increase in the population in south county has also contributed to the increased number of residents who are in need of service. Dr. Jerry Ross, Executive Director of Charlotte County Community Mental Health Center, addressed the Community Alliance Steering Committee last month to make them aware of the issue and to ask if there would be a plan to address the problem. Susan stated there are actually more Sarasota residents going to Lee County than to Charlotte County.

Christine Cauffield and Dr. Ross will be meeting with the City of North Port in June to discuss the issue. A Transportation Exception Plan (TEP) has been used in other counties to address similar problems; however, that might not necessarily be the best solution for this community. Susan stated there is a group that has been meeting to address the problem and invited County participation. Bill asked Chip Taylor to begin attending the meetings. There needs to be ongoing feedback to the Consortium about the progress of the group.

## SAMHSA Grant Update

Jerry Thompson provided an update on the grant application Coastal Behavioral Healthcare is preparing for a SAMHSA grant to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment services for homeless persons. Partners in the project include First Step of Sarasota, the Salvation Army, and Sarasota Memorial Hospital. The grant application is due on May 28.

## DCF Budget Data

Jeff Watts, Maureen Coble and Bob Holm shared mental health and substance abuse provider budget data from DCF. The data represents what is currently funded but does not address the gaps in services. Regional reports are available which indicate the number of people served and outcomes. Phil Gorelick stated it would be helpful if the funding formulas DCF uses could be provided to the Consortium. Bob and Maureen will provide the information at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding how the closure of G. Pierce Wood four years ago has affected the community. It was noted that many funders are under the impression that the closure has had a significant negative impact on the community. This may not necessarily be true, as Sarasota County was never a high user of state hospital beds. DCF tracks each of the clients who were discharged from G. Pierce Wood and the utilization rate of state hospital beds by the county. Susan Nunnally will provide a report at the next meeting on how Sarasota County is faring since the closure (ie., are we better off or worse?) This may be a valuable report to share with the Board of County Commissioners and the Community Alliance at a future meeting.

Peter Howard reported that the Funding Catalyst Work Group is gathering information regarding the various funding streams for mental health and substance abuse services in Sarasota County, including Medicaid dollars.

Bill summarized the action items agreed to in the meeting:

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***The next meeting of the Consortium will be on Monday, June 21, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., The Sarasota County Health Department, 2200 Ringling Blvd, Room 226.***