

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

Community Disaster Preparedness Committee

MEETING SUMMARY

June 24, 2005

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cathy Emmett	Senior Friendship Centers
Donna Dunio	Southwest Florida American Red Cross
Inaki Rezola	Southwest Florida American Red Cross
Dr. Kay Glasser	Human Services Advisory Council
Rev. Dr. Tom Pfaff	Goodwill Industries
Bryan Pope	Salvation Army—Sarasota Corps
Dr. Carrie Springer	Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
Chris Stewart	First Step of Sarasota
Miriam Lacher	Bayside Center – Sarasota Memorial Hospital
Aleda Kleckauskas	Hospice of Southwest Florida
Bill Little	Sarasota County Health Department
Mike Bigner	Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice
Kevin McKenney (for L.Johnson)	YMCA of Sarasota
Phil Gorelick	Jewish Family and Children's Services
Harold Williams	Agency for Health Care Administration – Ft. Myers
Cindy Lehman	Agency for Health Care Administration

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Bob Carter	Senior Friendship Centers
Kim Kutch	DCF—Suncoast Region
Lois Natiello	DCF—Suncoast Region
Alex Young	United Way of Sarasota, Chair
Alberto Suarez	United Way 2-1-1 of Manasota
Dennis Stover	Friendship Volunteer Resource Center
Stewart Stearns	Community Foundation of Sarasota County
David J. Stone	Pastor, First Brethren Church
Marion Sortore	FL Conference of the United Methodist Church
Bob Berns	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters
Pauline Tracy	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
James Schulz	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Jamie Mahadeo	Sarasota County Health and Human Services

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kimberly Kipp
Beth Bush

FEMA- Voluntary Agency Liaison Region 4
Southwest Florida American Red Cross

STAFF PRESENT:

Chip Taylor
Cher McGuirk
Jeanne Hodaian
Michael Theall
Dianne Shipley
Pat Jaffe

Sarasota County Health and Human Services
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The Community Alliance's Community Disaster Preparedness Committee (**CDPC**) met on Friday, June 24, 2005 at the Southwest Florida American Red Cross (2001 Cantu Court, Sarasota) at 8:30 a.m. Jeanne Hodaian (Committee Coordinator) welcomed the members and introductions were made to accommodate new participants. Jeanne reviewed the agenda and requested an update on resource-team development from the Strike Team/Task Force Chairs.

Note: After consultation with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the expanded ESF-8 and 15 operations to be located at the County Health and Human Services Business Center (2200 Ringling Blvd.) will officially be called Health and Human Services Operations (**HHS Ops**). All future reference and documents will refer to this as the HHS Ops.

Strike Team/Task Force (Subcommittee) Updates

Mental Health Substance Abuse (MH/SA) Strike Team Update: Miriam Lacher (Bayside Center) reported on behalf of the MH/SA team. During first meeting to discuss resource-team typing (June 14), the three agencies able to attend chose to focus resource team activities on crisis counseling for public and vulnerable behavioral health populations in the affected communities. Three tentative activities identified for the following: crisis counseling resource team include a crisis hotline, outreach informational flyers providing basic information on crisis and mental health resources and numbers to call, and information and referral services. Michael Theall (SCHHSBC) noted that a draft flyer has been developed. Miriam raised the concern that since only a few of the agencies on this Strike Team have been at the last couple of meetings, it hampered the ability to fully develop a resource team mission and specific team activities. At this juncture, full participation of all relevant agencies is important. She requested that all MH/SA agencies make an effort to come to the next planned MH/SA meeting to address this task. Any agency that does not wish to participate please let her know.

Miriam and Carrie Springer (Coastal Behavioral Healthcare) raised concerns about the

capacity of their agencies to provide staff to serve at the HHS Ops as Strike Team Leaders. For more details on those concerns and proposed solutions, please see the *Discussion* section below.

Elder Care Strike Team Update: Cathy Emmett (Senior Friendship Centers) reported for the Elder Care team. At the last meeting (June 21), agencies discussed the core issues for resource team development. Those able to attend the meeting agreed to focus their efforts on the development of resource teams for discharge planning and case management for longer-term recovery activities. It was agreed that the discharge planning resource team will be the primary focus. Discharge planning team activities will be implemented in collaboration with Special Needs Shelters (**SpNS**) – both community-based and hospital based SpNS, serving persons with special needs (**PSN**). The group identified the following four potential activities for the resource team: PSN needs assessment at shelters; coordination of services with outside agencies; assistance in identifying available resources; and assistance in locating available facilities for those unable to return to a home environment or their former residential facility.

Youth and Families at Risk Strike Team Update: Kevin McKenny (YMCA) provided the update in the absence of Lee Johnson (Chair). During a meeting on June 20th, the three agencies at the table agreed to focus resource team development efforts on youth/family safety, addressing immediate service needs after a hurricane event. The agencies proposed the following resource team activities: locating youth clients and others in need; conducting needs assessments; providing case management as appropriate; and identifying safety issues/needs at clients' residences. Kevin noted that the YMCA has identified the personnel and initial material resources needed to achieve the proposed resource team mission (safety of children of high-risk children and families). DCF and other agencies are working on identifying human and material resources needed for their roles on the resource team. Kevin stated that the next important step from their perspective is the actual drills/practice with the EOC and HHS Ops to provide training in how we will all work together within the expanded human services branch activities.

Volunteer Coordination Task Force Update: In the absence of the Chair and Co-Chair, Tom Pfaff (Goodwill Industries) provided an update with regard to the planned recruitment and informational breakfast targeting church leaders. This is scheduled for July 6th at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. This community outreach strategy by the Volunteer Coordination Task Force is an important step in recruiting new volunteer groups/individuals and integrating them into a planned system for volunteer deployment during a hurricane event. In effect, this is an initial resource team effort in a pre-event situation. During the last Volunteer Coordination meeting (June 22), the group began the initial discussions for resource team development. The group started to sketch out a resource team for volunteer deployment and management immediately after a hurricane event (recovery), but this is in the early stages of development.

Chip Taylor also noted that the County is making progress on finalizing the four planned Volunteer Reception Center (**VRC**) sites to be located throughout Sarasota County.

Discussion

The group discussion centered on the issues and concerns identified during the Strike Team and Task Force subcommittee updates, with particular reference to the staffing needs at the HHS Ops and related coordination issues. The proposed HHS Ops staffing plan calls for key collaborating agencies to identify staff to serve as Strike Team Leader(s) within the HHS Ops structure. These are pivotal positions for coordinating field team (resource teams) response and recovery activities. During the MH/SA Strike Team update, Miriam and Carrie raised concerns about the necessity of using their limited professional staff to help staff the MH/SA Strike Team Leader function. Both envisioned that volunteers would serve in these positions rather than their staff. They noted that adherence to their agencies' policies would make it difficult to fit staff into the HHS Ops structure. Bill Little (SCHHSBC) acknowledged the staffing problems identified by some agencies. He stated that the purpose is not to pull from their (agencies) operational need, but to coordinate those through multi-disciplinary and multi-agency response team activities coordinated through the HHS Ops.

The participants discussed other staffing options for agencies that cannot readily designate staff for the proposed HHS Ops Strike Team/Task Force Leader positions. Chip Taylor suggested the possibility of recruiting staff from agencies not likely to have immediate post-disaster responsibilities, such as agencies working in the Healthy Start Coalition. The group discussed the pros and cons of using volunteers in those key positions. Chip and others noted that individuals serving as Strike Team/Task Force Leaders need to be knowledgeable about the agencies and the resource team activities and services in order to appropriately facilitate coordination and communication between the HHS Ops and resource teams in the field under the umbrella of the different Strike Teams and Task Force. With that in mind, Pat Jaffe (Medical Reserve Corps [MRC]) and Donna Dunio (American Red Cross) both suggested that the use of MRC or ARC mental health licensed volunteers may be a workable option. Both noted licensed volunteers could be recruited from the existing volunteers and trained to serve in the MH/SA Strike Team Leader position. Pat and Donna will begin to identify potential candidates to be designated for this function, with a goal of identifying four to six licensed mental health volunteers to serve at the HHS Ops. It was agreed that any volunteers identified would attend MH/SA planning meetings to become acquainted with the collaborating agencies and the resource team activities that are being developed.

Presentation

Cher McGuirk, SCHHSBC's Emergency Operations Planning Coordinator, introduced the proposed staffing plan for the HHS Ops site. Cher distributed a chart highlighting the staffing needs for the Human Services Branch of HHS Ops. This was discussed with an eye to the need for flexibility in deciding who will be acceptable to serve in these roles, as per the discussion on volunteers and staffing issues noted above. Cher explained that the next important task is to identify the staff and/or key agency volunteers who will serve as the Strike Team and Task Force Leaders within the HHS Ops. Both primary and back-up individuals are required for each position. It is essential

that individuals needed for HHS Ops workstations be identified in advance, added to the call-down list for alert, notification and activation, and trained in their roles and responsibilities. Cher noted that the County will be conducting an initial hurricane response exercise to orient individuals to the HHS Ops site and activation protocols in the second or third week of July.

Cher also outlined the process of monitoring situations and addressing primary hurricane response needs. She explained that information with regard to needed response and recovery activities will flow from two directions. Some requests for assistance will come from the community agency representatives in the field, while most will come through the EOC and HHS Ops to the resource teams in the field. Whichever the directional flow of information, HHS Ops Human Services Branch will provide the centralized location for managing the response activities to the vulnerable groups via the resource teams that are currently under planning by the Strike Teams/Task Force.

Announcements

Dianne Shipley (SCHHSBC) requested that CDPC collaborating agencies provide contact information on the designated public spokesperson for their agency. A contact information form was distributed in the meeting and also during the recent Strike Team/Task Force meetings attended by Jeanne. Dianne explained that the requested contact information will facilitate public information coordination between agencies spokespersons and the Sarasota County Health and Human Services Public Information Officer (PIO) in the EOC ESF-14 function during a hurricane event. This completed form can be faxed directly to Dianne at (941) 861-2991; or agencies may return the form to Jeanne or Dianne at the next scheduled CDPC meeting (July 7th).

Miriam Lacher announced that there are still a few places available for the Behavioral Health Awareness Training, which is targeting hospital staff and other healthcare professionals. The two half-day training sessions will be Thursday, June 30, and Friday, July 1. Both will be held at the Sarasota Memorial Hospital in the Mimosa Room.

Mike Bigner (Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice) announced that the Foundation has established a Disaster Fund, providing a loan fund of one million dollars dedicated to assisting in disaster response and recovery. The goal is to be a temporary bridge to help others after disaster events. This fund is for agencies serving affected individuals and groups, not for individual loans to persons affected during a disaster.

Next Steps

Strike Teams/Task Force member agencies will continue to meet to complete the resource team development task. These resource teams provide the foundation for agreed upon collaboration and coordination activities to meet essential needs of vulnerable population groups during and after a disaster.

In addition to Strike Team Leader staff identification, collaborating agencies should begin identifying staff who will serve as the primary and back-up Strike Team Member representative (or Liaison) for coordination with the Strike Team Leader at the HHS Ops. This request applies to agencies who are committing to involvement on a resource team as a function of one of the Strike Teams or Task Force. It is critical to have a designated contact and back-up persons for each collaborating agency to ensure the appropriate execution of coordination and communication protocols. Jeanne will be providing agencies with a contact data form to facilitate this.

Review the job descriptions for Strike Team/Task Force Leaders and Strike Team/Task Force Members distributed by Cher McGuirk during her presentation. The draft job descriptions for the Strike Team/Task Force functions (Leaders and Members) provide guidance on the major roles and responsibilities of HHS Ops staff assigned to workstations or serving as agency "liaisons", so ensuring improved coordination and collaboration during disaster response and recovery activities. The job descriptions also are important in preparing training of HHS Ops staff in these positions, based on expected knowledge and functions. Feedback from CDPC members will ensure that appropriate revisions are made to the job descriptions.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, July 7th, 8:30 a.m. at the Southwest Florida American Red Cross, 2001 Cantu Ct., Sarasota