

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

“Partnering Assets Together for Human Services”

**Sarasota County School Board Chambers
1980 Landings Boulevard**

April 21, 2008

Meeting Summary

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ken Alexander	Sarasota Memorial Hospital
Dave Beesley	First Step of Sarasota
Karen Bogues	Community Youth Development
P.J. Brooks	Manasota Safe Children Coalition Advisory Council
Bob Carter	Senior Friendship Centers
Kevin Chinault	Mental Health Community Centers (for Carolyn Eagen)
Kirstin Fulkerson	Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice
Kay Glasser	Community Planning
Stanley Godleski	Seniors Advisory Council
Peter Howard	Florida Center for Child and Family Development
Janet Kahn	Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County
Curtis Lavarello	Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCOSA)
Chief Terry Lewis	City of North Port
Bill Little	Sarasota County Health Department
Richard Martin	Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
Janice Mee	SCOPE
Elliott Metcalfe	Public Defender - Twelfth Judicial Circuit
Capt. Richard Montemagno	Sarasota County Sheriff's Office
Tom Pfaff	Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity (SURE)
Bryan Pope	The Salvation Army
Mark Porter	Sarasota Family YMCA
Sherri Reynolds	School Health Advisory Council
Stewart Stearns	Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Beverly Stockton	SunCoast Workforce Board
Dennis Stover	Friendship Volunteer Center
Jerry Thompson	Coastal Behavioral Healthcare
Benny Weaver	Loveland Center
Karen Wilkinson	CHIP
Alex Young	United Way of Sarasota County
Caroline Zucker	School Board of Sarasota County

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Kathy Baylis	Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County
Steve Brett	United Way of South Sarasota County
Rose Chapman	Jewish Federation of Sarasota and Manatee Counties
Christine Davis	Office of Housing and Community Development
Ginny Donovan	Department of Juvenile Justice
Cathy Duquette	National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

Sarah Hickey
Jennifer Highland
Lynne Johnston
Anjali Natarajan
Steve Queior
Alberto Suarez
Capt. Paul Sutton
Anita Tambay
Marjorie Tick

Vocational Interagency Council
Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County
Department of Children and Families – SunCoast Region
STAR
Sarasota Chamber of Commerce
Manasota 2-1-1
City of Sarasota
Hispanic Latino Coalition
NAACP

OTHERS PRESENT:

Nick Cox
Kari Ellingstad
Sean McCartney
John Overton
James Schulz
Janet Taylor
Carl Weinrich

Department of Children and Families
CHIP
Community Action Agency Board
Pines of Sarasota
Argosy University – Sarasota Campus
Suncost Partnership to End Homelessness
Sarasota Family YMCA

STAFF PRESENT:

Kathleen Marie Hall
Pam Meunier
Chip Taylor
Pauline Tracy

Sarasota County Health and Human Services
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Welcome and Introductions

The Community Alliance of Sarasota County met on April 21, 2008 at the Sarasota County School Board Chambers, 1980 Landings Boulevard at 1:30 p.m.

Legislative/Budget Reductions Update

- Sarasota County - Bill Little reported that the probable impact on the County's Contracted Human Services program for the next fiscal year will be between \$400,000 to \$1 million. Sarasota County's total reduction in tax revenues will be between \$14 million and \$26 million. Layoffs within the County have occurred, with the likelihood of additional layoffs in the near future.
- Sarasota County Health Department - Bill reported the House is proposing to cut approximately 49% of the Medicaid reimbursement statewide and the Senate is proposing a \$30 million cut. For Sarasota County, this would result in the House reducing the Health Department's budget by \$2.3 million or the Senate by \$1.3 million. In General Revenue, there will be \$11 million in statewide budget reductions. These cuts will have a huge impact on how the State is reimbursed for Medicaid services with extreme reductions in Health Department services inevitable unless other sources of funding can be identified.
- Human Services - Chip Taylor reported that the Human Service Advisory Council has been advised that the budget reductions for Contracted Human Services will be likely

between \$400,000 to \$500,000 (based on the \$14 million cut due to the impact from the Property Tax Reform). There is a possibility that this reduction could increase to \$800,000 to \$900,000 if the County is faced with a \$22 - \$26 million reduction in property tax revenues. The Board of County Commissioners has asked the Human Service Advisory Council to identify ways that the agencies funded through the Contracted Human Services program could pool administrative expenses across agency lines (such as by pooling health insurance). Many of the Contracted Human Services non-profit agencies are also facing state budget reductions as well.

- Department of Children and Families (DCF) - Nick Cox reported that DCF's Suncoast Region has already faced a 6% administrative budget reduction in advance of the Legislative session and are hoping not to face additional layoffs. The Legislature has warned the Department to prepare for an 11% budget reduction, which will impact many of its current programs and will cause the Community-Based Care program to see a \$25 million reduction statewide. Nick agreed with the suggestion to pool administrative services in order to not duplicate services at the state and local level. Nick noted that the Department is also concerned about the expected loss of federal match dollars and the privatization of the Department's mental health program.
- First Step of Sarasota - Dave Beesley reported that First Step's potential budget reductions include: \$150,000 from the Department of Corrections, \$50,000 from the Contracted Human Services program, \$2.3 million from state sources, and 10% from the Department of Children and Families (causing 55 layoffs and serving approximately 1300 fewer clients). Dave also pointed out that the agency's United Way funding is slated for total elimination, together with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds, which provides substance abuse wraparound services for the child welfare system in the region. Also in question are the "Special Projects" that are up for review and are slated on the House side to be cut by 50% which would basically eliminate many projects. Many programs are now being re-categorized as Special Projects, including the "Mothers and Infants" Program which has been in existence since 1995. The hope is that the Senate version of the budget cuts prevails. Otherwise, elimination of these programs in the County will be a reality. On a final note, the substance abuse and mental health program with the Department of Corrections will be totally eliminated on the House side (\$31.2 million) and the 64 beds allotted for the jail diversion programs (CART Initiative) in the County would be eliminated by these reductions. Dave pointed out that the impact on the proposed budget cuts will eventually flow downstream throughout the entire system. First Step does a great deal of referrals to various agencies and if certain services get eliminated their ability to refer will be significantly reduced.
- Office of the Public Defender – Elliott Metcalfe reported that the local Office of the Public Defender has eliminated 14 positions and is facing 11 more layoffs if the higher level of budget reductions comes into play. This will cause departments to have larger case loads with fewer employees. Elliott noted that the specialty courts (Mental Health Court and Drug Court) will be the first programs to be eliminated in their office.
- Coastal Behavioral Healthcare - Jerry Thompson reported that Coastal's budget reductions will range from \$1 to \$2 million, which would amount to a 10% cut across the board for mental health funding. If the House version passes, their special projects will

be cut 50%; if the Senate version passes, those programs would be funded for the coming year but dollars would be moved from recurring to non-recurring. Jerry stressed that the leaders in the community need to work together in deciding what the absolute essential services are in the community.

A discussion ensued on the budget reductions regarding the need to create some type of financial preparedness assessment for the shortcomings and the sharing of ideas amongst the agencies. Members suggested that the Community Alliance should go to Tallahassee to state their case and take on the responsibility to educate the community on the current economic impact through the creation of a public awareness forum. It was also noted that there should be a focus on positive outcomes such as the "Tapestry" Initiative. Chip Taylor noted that the Community Alliance may end up collaborating collectively to evaluate the current circumstances at a future meeting.

Committee and Work Group Updates

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium

Bill Little reported that there was a [report](#) in the members' packets for review.

Sarasota COAD

Stewart Stearns reported that at the last meeting Ed McCrane, Director of Sarasota County Emergency Management, gave the members an update on emergency services and the expected changes for the upcoming hurricane season in Sarasota County. Stewart explained that Ed understands the role of the Sarasota COAD. It was suggested that a future Community Alliance meeting be dedicated to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) changes and provide a good opportunity for each agency to understand their role in an emergency situation. Stewart noted that Pauline Tracy, Jamie Mahadeo and Marion Sortore will be attending the National Hurricane Conference in May.

Community Information Exchange Update

Chip Taylor reported that there was a [handout](#) in the members' packets with an update on the Tapestry web-based software project that shows the breakdown of the modules and the potential players. Chip explained that the plan is to have the 2-1-1 module in place by September 1 and the disaster assistance platform up and running before September 30. This program will be supported locally by the County IT Department, along with funding from Manatee County, the state Department of Health, and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice.

Strategic Planning Work Group—Next Steps

Dr. Kay Glasser reported on her [observations](#) after reviewing the set of strategic planning work group PowerPoint presentations. Dr. Glasser stated that she has read and reread all the presentations and found no common frame of reference but did find other points of reference:

- Only one work group had criteria to determine whether an area was a priority or not; this included: the magnitude of the problem, seriousness of the consequences of not dealing with the problem, and feasibility of tackling the problem (can it be intervened, treated and is it economically feasible).

- There were many unmet needs in the top priorities but there was a lack of specificity (ex. access and support services but not clear about what type or for what reason).
- The common themes were direct services (child care, housing, respite care, and transportation) and system needs (funding, medical care insurance, access to services, collaboration, and integration of services) but there was no specific type of each need.
- The one area that was unique and is an underlying need that affects the community is the business of aging services (building bridges, creating connections and fostering relationships). This area has to do with civic engagement and will expand the community's capacity to improve the quality of life.

Dr. Glasser pointed out that she served on a task force twelve years ago and the same types of priorities were discussed back then. The question is, "Where does the Community Alliance go from here in order to not ask the same questions ten years from now?" Dr. Glasser's conclusion of the analysis of the presentations was that there was a lack of specificity.

Elliott Metcalfe announced that at the April 16 Executive Committee meeting, it was suggested that the work groups bring their priorities down to a more workable product by focusing on identifying two "low-hanging fruit" (no cost involved) recommendations and one cost associated recommendation. It was also mentioned that the scope of the Children and Youth Strategic Work Group is too broad and when the work group reconvenes it may want to consider splitting into several groups. Elliott noted that the work groups will resume meeting and will rotate with the Community Alliance Steering Committee every other month.

Meeting Schedule

Elliott Metcalfe discussed the upcoming meeting schedule and suggested holding the May 19 meeting at the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). It was also suggested that we invite the CEO's of the different agencies around the table. Members agreed. Elliott noted that the next regular meeting will be on June 16 at the Landings, no meeting in July, and resume the regular schedule beginning with the August 18 meeting.

Bill Little mentioned that Kari Ellingstad will give a brief overview on the recent Health Interactive at a future meeting. Bill mentioned that there were over 200 persons in attendance at this session and the focus was not only on health issues but also on transportation, mental health, and walkable communities.

New Business

None

Next meeting: May 19, 2008, at 1:30 p.m., at the Emergency Operations Center, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sixth Floor.