

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

“Partnering Assets Together for Human Services”

Sarasota School Board chambers, 1980 Landings Blvd.

MEETING SUMMARY

June 20, 2005

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dave Beesley	First Step of Sarasota
Karen Bogues	Community Youth Development
P.J. Brooks	Manasota Safe Children Coalition Advisory Council
Bo Burtek	Manasota 2-1-1 (for Alberto Suarez)
Bob Carter	Senior Friendship Centers
Vanessa Carusone	City of North Port
Tony Cornish	NAACP
Ginny Donovan	Department of Juvenile Justice
Kirstin Fulkerson	Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice
Kay Glasser	Community Planning
Stanley Godleski	Seniors Advisory Council
Sarah Gorman	Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County
Sally Graham	National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (for Dale Lux)
Nancy Hanshaw	Twelfth Judicial Circuit Court
Peter Howard	Florida Center for Child and Family Development
Frank Kovach	School Board of Sarasota County
Kim Kutch	Department of Children and Families – SunCoast Region
Curtis Lavarello	Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse
Christie Lewis	Community Foundation of Sarasota County (for Stewart Stearns)
Bill Little	Sarasota County Health Department
Elliott Metcalfe	Public Defender - Twelfth Judicial Circuit
Capt. Richard Montemagno	Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office
Tom Pfaff	Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity
Sherri Reynolds	Juvenile Justice Council
Dan Schmelzinger	Office of Housing and Community Development
Nancy Shoemaker	Diocese of Venice
Shannon Staub	Sarasota Board of County Commissioners
Beverly Stockton	SunCoast Workforce Development Board
Bert Tanner	Salvation Army--Sarasota Corps
Jessica Ventimiglia	Mental Health Community Centers

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Ken Alexander	Sarasota Memorial Hospital
Luis Baron	<i>Sieté Dias</i>
Steve Brett	United Way of South Sarasota County
Christine Cauffield	Coastal Behavioral Healthcare
Rose Chapman	Jewish Federation of Sarasota and Manatee Counties
Lynore Dickinson	Loveland Center
David English	Continuum of Care Leadership Council
Eva Goodwin	STAR
Janet Kahn	School Readiness Coalition of Sarasota County
Renee McQueen	Vocational Interagency Council
Jim Myers	City of Venice
Millicent Puleo	Hispanic Latino Coalition
Steve Queior	Sarasota Chamber of Commerce
Colleen Reardon	Sarasota County Coalition for the Homeless
Alex Young	United Way of Sarasota County

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bill Broughton	Sarasota County Intergovernmental Relations
Jan Chester	Planned Parenthood
Lois Natiello	DCF - SunCoast Region
Tom Hemphill	Suncoast Center for Independent Living
Gee Dee Kerr	Citizen
Lisa Phillips	Citizen
Dennis Stover	Friendship Volunteer Resource Center

STAFF PRESENT:

Nancy DeLoach	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Kathleen Marie Hall	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
James Schulz	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Chip Taylor	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Michael Theall	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Pauline Tracy	Sarasota County Health and Human Services

The Community Alliance of Sarasota County met on June 20, 2005 at the Sarasota County School Board chambers at 1:30 p.m.

Vice-Chair Elliott Metcalfe welcomed the members of the Steering Committee and guests, and introductions were made.

Presentation on DCF's ESS Modernization Plan

Lois Natiello of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) gave a PowerPoint presentation on DCF's new business plan that Economic Self Sufficiency (ESS) has initiated called "ACCESS Florida." ACCESS Florida stands for **A**utomated **C**ommunity **C**onnection to **E**conomic **S**elf **S**ufficiency. This business plan will enhance the Medicaid, food stamps, temporary cash assistance for needy families (TANF) and refugee assistance programs. Lois explained that Sarasota County is part of the SunCoast region that serves six counties and, within Sarasota County, DCF serves over 22,000 individuals.

ACCESS Florida is the ESS project to implement a modernized business model for public assistance service delivery. The goal is to have a more responsive and cost effective model using enhanced technology, streamlined eligibility processes, and community partnerships. ESS has accomplished this over the last 18 months using the following technologies:

- Automated ACCESS Information Line: Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) provides automated phone service for customers, including benefit information and case status.
- Web Application – Customers are able to apply using the internet (www.myflorida.com/accessflorida).
- Improved document management of case file information using digital scanning technology.

A comparison of the previous system and modernized system includes:

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Services only available at ESS offices	Services available at many community access points – DCF and community partner sites
Long waits for customers in crowded offices	Fast, convenient service in community settings
Long waits for customers in crowded offices	Assisted customer self-service available by phone or internet
Mountains of files and paper-intensive process for customers and staff.	Paperless environment using digital document management

Presently, there are three major customer call centers in Florida (in Tampa, Miami and Jacksonville) where clients can call and get information on the status of their eligibility or to report any changes to their information. Medical providers also have access to these call centers.

DCF will still maintain the core eligibility benefit functions in determining eligibility for public assistance. ACCESS Florida will provide multiple access opportunities within the community for individuals applying for assistance through community partners.

The community partners will act as “storefront” operations and will offer an opportunity to expand access within the local communities. The services offered by the partners will be in addition to what DCF is already doing, not a replacement of existing ESS services. The number of DCF storefronts will be dependent upon the scope of the community partnership and the number of complex cases with hard-to-serve customers. A community partner can be a public or private agency, such Workforce Development one stop centers, county public health units, hospitals, food banks, aging resource centers, community centers, faith-based organizations, homeless organizations, public schools, social service agencies, domestic violence centers, libraries, and independent living centers. DCF plans to establish the initial network by June 30, 2005 by identifying partners, agreeing on the scope of services, executing agreements, developing implementation plans, and providing access locations to key stakeholders. The plan is to fully implement the network by December 31, 2005.

Voluntary community partners will determine the level of service that they are comfortable with. The service level will be agreed upon in their partnership agreement with DCF and will include safeguarding of the customer information. Community partners will be able to take advantage of training initiatives, work with DCF to identify opportunities for service quality improvement, use funding and resources as agreed to in the partnership agreement, and designate a point of contact for DCF.

Community partners are not required to “advertise” to the general community as a site for public assistance applications, determine eligibility for public assistance, or screen public assistance applicants for potential eligibility.

The community partner will choose from four ACCESS Levels in their agreement:

- **Partner Level**
 - Paper application pick-up point
- **Bronze Level** – Partner Level plus the following
 - Access to computers to apply for assistance on-line
 - Access to telephone to call DCF Customer Call Center / Automated ACCESS Information Line (1-866-76-ACCESS or 1-866-762-2237)
- **Silver Level** – Bronze Level plus the following
 - Paper application drop-off point
 - Access to printer to print application summary from web application
 - Verify identity of applicant (making copy of I.D)
- **Gold Level** – Silver Level plus the following
 - Access to fax machine to fax DCF application and/or other required documentation
 - Access to copy machine to copy required documentation for DCF
 - Provide general assistance in explaining the application process

Questions raised by Steering Committee members included:

- *When will the program begin?* Lois stated that the program began informally 18 months ago. Now it is time to formalize the program and ask the community how

they want DCF to operate. They will do this by showing evidence of the level community partners would like to get involved in this project.

- *It seems evident that DCF is getting smaller - is DCF asking the community to pick up the pieces by having partnership agreements?* Lois stated that the business plan of the department is to work more efficiently and more cost effectively. DCF's face is going to change and the agency needs input on how it should change. In other words, DCF wants to know what will be best for Sarasota County. This gives the providers a say in what they want and what they do not want. In some circumstances, it will enhance the partners' business as well.
- *Where did the program begin?* Lois stated that the program began in Pinellas County and then moved to Sarasota County. DCF's staff has been reduced by 40%, but the accuracy rate for eligibility determination has increased. DCF is serving 7 –12% more clients, the no-show rate has dropped to 30% (compared with 45-50% prior to this program) and the eligibility process time is now taking approximately 20 days (compared with over 30 days prior to the new program).
- *Are these applications going to be in Spanish?* Lois stated that they are printed in both English and Spanish.

Lois distributed a packet of information on ACCESS Florida, which included a copy of a Community Partnership Agreement, and thanked the Community Alliance for giving her the opportunity to share this program.

COMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP UPDATES

Health Coverage for Uninsured Children Subcommittee

Sarah Gorman reported that the roll back of KidCare access, which began in 2004, was reversed in 2005 and the program is now back to year-round eligibility. Hopefully, the loss in the number of covered children that resulted from the changes will be restored in the year ahead. Virginia Brockman is optimistic about the impact on the local number of covered children.

The HCUC had its first planning meeting for a community forum that will be held the week of November 7. The title of this forum will be "The Best Practices for Local Initiatives" and it will address the needs of the uninsured of all ages. The committee has made some initial inquiries to potential presenters. The intent is to structure this event as a sponsorship opportunity, having 10 to 20 sponsors and therefore no one entity will have to provide all of the resources. The format calls for a presentation in the morning, lunch (provided), and then in the afternoon, facilitated small group discussions to develop action steps for the community. The groups that will be invited to attend include the business sector, employers wanting to know how to provide health coverage for their employees' families, chambers of commerce, health care providers and insurers, parent and family advocates, and the education sector. Sarah asked that anyone who is willing or knows an entity that would be willing to be a sponsor, to let her know. They have already received an acceptance for a presentation from the CEO of JaxCare, a consortium in Duval County which provides health coverage for uninsured

adults. The collaborative partner in putting on this forum is the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP).

Planning and Outcomes Workgroup

Chip Taylor reported that their committee met about two weeks ago to look at the “Communities That Care” data from the survey conducted with high school students in December, 2004. There are now two reports in time that can be measured to determine trends. The key piece of information to be reviewed is whether the protective and risk factors scales have changed. Staff discovered problems with the data that had to be resolved before they could analyze that information. The data problem is now fixed and the bottom line on the protective factor and the risk factor scales shows that the data from the previous survey in 2002 probably was not as bad as it originally appeared because the national norms being used were 5 or 6 years old. The new data still shows that there are some improvements but that they are not as dramatic as first thought. Based on the new information, the committee will need to reconvene and look at the data again. At that point, a determination will be made whether to add to or amend the outcome targets.

The next “Communities That Care” survey for middle school students will be conducted in December, 2005. This will provide two points in time to compare for this younger group of students. The big gap continues to be between the 6th and 8th grades. It is a critical time period where one sees the erosion of protective factors, the slipping away of the supports that kids would have, and obviously as they grow older they have more exposure to risk factors. If we can pinpoint where that occurs, it will help us in the types of intervention that will work best with that age group.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders’ Consortium

Bill Little reported that the Board of County Commissioners approved submitting the grant request to SAMHSA for the Early Childhood Mental Health Project. The board was supportive of the innovation that the grant represented and that it focused on children, in particular those 0 to 8 years old. They also were impressed with the community partnerships developed and were appreciative for this project coming forward. It is a reflection of this Community Alliance, the Stakeholders’ Consortium and other community partners coming together to address human service needs in the county. Elliott Metcalfe stated that we should thank the County Commissioners for supporting the SAMHSA Grant application.

A very similar collaboration is the Community Residential Alternatives Program proposal to create a model Marchman Act facility here in Sarasota County, as well as a model for expanded residential treatment for substance abuse with the Salvation Army, First Step of Sarasota, Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, Jewish Family and Children’s Services, and Jobs, Etc as partners. This will be presented to and hopefully endorsed by the Board of County Commissioners on June 29.

Chip Taylor commented that the Executive Committee approved the proposal and hoped the Steering Committee would also ratify it today. If so, the proposal would then have been approved by the Criminal Justice Commission, the Stakeholder' Consortium, and the Community Alliance.

Bob Carter moved, Sarah Gorman seconded, motion passed unanimously to approve the Community Residential Alternatives Program proposal. Commissioner Shannon Staub abstained.

Nominating and Membership Committee

Sherri Reynolds reported that the Nominating Committee is pleased to nominate someone to fill the Business/Economic Development seat on the Steering Committee that has been vacant for quite awhile. Scott Moore is the Workforce and Project Manager from Economic Development Association from Sarasota County.

Sherri Reynolds moved, Shannon Staub seconded, motion passed unanimously to approve Scott Moore to fill the vacant Business/Economic Development seat on the Steering Committee.

Community Disaster Preparedness Committee

Bill Little reminded Steering Committee members of previous discussions about creating a community-based approach to disaster planning for human services. In response, the Community Alliance created a Community Disaster Preparedness Committee (CDPC), which has been meeting for the past three months. The CDPC has four active task forces:

- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Youth and Families at Risk
- Elder Care
- Volunteers

These task forces have brought people together from a variety of areas to address human service needs as a community during and post disasters. Bill asked Dennis Stover to speak on the activities of the Volunteer Task Force.

Dennis stated that they are planning and getting prepared in advance of a storm, and hope to have a variety of registered volunteers ready to work in volunteer reception centers and in the community in an event of a disaster. The task force is working with many agencies that have disaster-trained volunteers already.

Bill Little asked Tom Pfaff to comment on how the faith-based community is becoming more involved in post-disaster activities. Tom stated that he wanted to thank Chip Taylor, Pauline Tracy, Kathleen Marie Hall and their entire staff for putting together a data base of over 300 faith-based organizations. He also wanted to thank the

Community Foundation, which will be hosting a breakfast on Wednesday, July 6, 2005, where we hope to enroll church leaders and their congregations in our volunteer process. He asked everyone to pray that this project will be a success.

Chip Taylor mentioned that the faith-based community provided a lot of help after last year's storms. They can easily mobilize to provide needed resources and they want to help. On a higher level, getting the faith-based community more involved in the Community Alliance has been an objective for some years. This is a tangible, specific project that they can become involved in which will hopefully lead to many other opportunities with the Alliance.

Bill Little commented on a meeting with Sarasota County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff, who have been briefed on what we are doing and are fully supportive of this event. Bill stated that he did not know of any other community which is taking the approach Sarasota County is in getting the community engaged in disaster preparedness activities.

The Russians are Coming!

Chip Taylor announced that the Executive Committee last week discussed plans for hosting a group of Russian officials who work in human services who will be visiting Sarasota County the week of July 16 - 24. Chip asked everyone to review the handout that was in their folders that gave specifics on their visit. The group is comprised of eight individuals who are being sponsored by an international organization called Friendship Force. They will be here to learn about human services in our country. The Executive Committee thought it would be more beneficial to have an interactive session with the group as the main topic for our July 18 Steering Committee meeting. If needed, there could still be a brief business meeting along with having this unique opportunity for us to include the Russian individuals by explaining what we do here, what the Alliance is all about, how we do things differently than other communities, and an opportunity to address some of the specific issues that they have an interest in.

Community Alliance Satisfaction Survey

Pauline Tracy asked that everyone review the handout on the satisfaction survey results. Pauline stated that the results indicate that members felt the Alliance does a great job. There were very positive comments regarding how the Alliance is working and, in particular, the leadership provided by Stewart in chairing the group. The survey revealed that there are some areas that should be addressed at future meetings, such as "With which objective was the Alliance less successful?" One of the comments in particular states that we should look at countywide priorities. This may give us a direction on which way to go in the future.

Chip Taylor noted that the staff who really support the Alliance and its committees are Pauline Tracy, Kathleen Marie Hall (Becky Oliver prior to her), Nancy DeLoach, James Schulz, Mike Theall, and Jamie Mahedeo. They are the ones who enable this group to

function so well and Chip wanted to say thank you to those folks for making this happen.

NEW BUSINESS

Location of Future Steering Committee Meetings

Pauline reported that her staff checked into potential new locations for meetings of the Steering Committee, including the Fruitville Library, Hospice of S.W. Florida, PGT Industries, and Sarasota Square Mall. In each case, either the room was too small or it was already taken on that particular day and time.

Steering Committee members suggested looking into additional sites, including:

- Robb & Stucky (the room is not large enough)
- The new Catholic church in Osprey (has not been completed yet)
- Bishop Nevins Academy
- Jacaranda Library

It was mentioned again about rotating the meeting place. Elliott Metcalfe and Bill Little both felt that rotation of the meetings was not a good idea because we would lose consistency with the people who come to the meetings. It also can confuse people as to where the meetings are each month. In order to rotate, members would have to commit to attending meetings no matter where in the county they are located.

There was discussion on possibly changing the date and time of the meeting. Elliott suggested that this should be discussed at a future meeting.

Dennis Stover stated that Volunteer Connections has been dissolved and its services are being transferred to the Friendship Volunteer Resource Center, located at Senior Friendship Centers. It will be officially up and running on July 1, 2005.

Bill Little introduced Curt Lavarello of SCOSA as a new member of the Community Alliance and asked him to say a few words. Curt explained that he previously worked as the Executive Director of the National Association of School Resource Officers and that he was looking forward to his new position as the Executive Director at SCOSA and was pleased to be part of our Community Alliance. He thanked Lisa Phillips for all her support during the transition to his new position.

Elliott Metcalfe introduced two other new members, Daniel Schmelzinger of the Office of Housing and Community Development and Tony Cornish, Jr. of NAACP.

Daniel noted that his agency is in the final stages of getting its consolidated five-year plan completed. This plan will need to be approved by both the county and city commissions. Once the plan is approved, they will then send it on to HUD for approval and this will give them the additional funding to complement the programs that already receive funds from the State of Florida. Tony Cornish reported that he is still feeling his

way through the process and sees many familiar faces that he has served with on other committees.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING:

July 18, 2005, 1:30 p.m. The meeting will be at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, 2635 Fruitville Road.