

Pinellas County Department of Health and Human Services

Maureen A. Freaney, Director

<http://pinellascounty.org/humanservices/default.htm>



Health and Human Services Department

Mission

To improve the quality of life for all residents of Pinellas County by providing, coordinating and advocating for health care and essential human services for those most in need in our community.

Key Areas

- **Health Services**
- **Homeless Prevention and Self-Sufficiency**
- **Community Funding**
- **Coordination of Services**

Overview of Reductions

Reductions totaling \$10.75M (19%) and elimination of 14 positions

Health Services

- Evening shift of the Mobile Medical Unit-served 1,200 uninsured working poor
- Specialty care services
- Payments to local hospitals by 50%

Homelessness Prevention and Self-Sufficiency

- Financial Assistance 3-Track System implemented-savings of \$2.2 M
- One-time funding of Pinellas Hope (\$770,000)-Replaced with a one-time allocation of \$1,000,000 for all homeless services countywide (\$900,000 for homeless services/\$100,000 technology)
- Employment Case Management Program
- Staffing for STARS program

Community Funding

- 30% reduction in funding of community non-profit organizations

Key Programs & Service Levels

Health Services

- Pinellas County Health Plan (PCHP)-providing medical care to over 11,000 low income, uninsured residents in 15 medical homes
 - Primary/specialty care, dental, prescriptions, hospitalization, behavioral health
- Mobile Medical unit-providing medical care for over 2,000 homeless residents annually
- State mandated Health Care Responsibility Act-payment for emergent out of county hospitalizations
- State mandated Medicaid payments-nursing home patients and in-patient hospitalizations

Key Programs & Service Levels

Homelessness Prevention and Self-Sufficiency

- Financial Assistance -1,150 disabled residents per month
- Emergency Assistance to Families -73 families per month
- Disability advocacy to help clients obtain Supplemental Security Income, Supplemental Security Disability and Medicaid – 54% of Financial Assistance Clients
- Homeless Street Outreach - 1,240 unduplicated residents annually

Key Programs & Service Levels

STARS

- Attitudinal training/career readiness/job placement for hard-core unemployed and under-employed
- 241 Clients Enrolled (2009)
- Graduation rate 80% / Two year job retention rate – 70%

Veterans Services

- Assistance to eligible veterans and their families in obtaining VA benefits
- Over 7,000 claims actions annually
- Generate over \$8 million in VA revenue annually

Indigent Funeral Program

- State mandated program providing funeral care
- 650 cremations/internments annually

Key Programs & Service Levels

Community Funding and Coordination of Services

- Social Action/Homeless Initiative/1x Homeless Funding
 - Support for 39 non-profit human service organizations and 48 programs
- Domestic Violence Funding
 - Support for shelters serving 5,000 victims of domestic abuse annually
- State Mandated Community Mental Health Funding
 - Support for non-profit mental health providers serving 12,260 clients
- Traveler's Aid
 - served 398 clients in FY 2009
- Summer Food Program-Grant Funded
 - providing over 111,900 lunches and 117,800 snacks to over 2,500 children each summer

Impacts to the Public

Health Services

- Limitations on covered services
 - e.g., no coverage for metastasized cancers and Hepatitis C treatments; significant limitations on types of back surgeries
- Narcotics for pain management removed from the formulary
 - Increased complaints from clients/Positive feedback from Providers/Pharmacies
- Utilization Management assures that dollars available for PCHP are used wisely
 - Denial of services has caused some complaints

Impacts to the Public

Homelessness Prevention/Self-Sufficiency

Negative impacts

- Reduction in rent voucher amount has made it difficult for clients to locate safe, decent housing
- Increased complaints from landlords re: insufficient amounts for rent

Positive Impacts

- 3-Track System has resulted in an increased accountability for Financial Assistance clients
- Disability Advocacy cases have a 98 % Social Security Administration approval rating
 - Averaging 64 approvals per month
 - Project \$3.2 M in reimbursements in FY 10

Impacts to the Public

STARS

- Reduced time available to provide case management, job coaching and placement
- Future uncertain-STARS to be spun-off as a non-profit

Operational Changes

Health Services

- Higher scrutiny of requests for specialty care, medications, other services resulting in significant savings to program
 - Savings allow resources to focus on primary care, prevention and disease case management
- Maximizing use of compassionate drug programs to obtain medications for free whenever available
- Strengthening and initiating greater partnerships with a wide range of Pinellas County Healthcare Agencies and Providers

Operational Changes

Homelessness Prevention and Self-Sufficiency

- 3-Track system has transformed the focus of the program from primarily financial assistance to self-sufficiency
 - Enhanced case management services
 - Strengthened collaborative partnerships with PTEC and DVR
 - Mandatory consultative exams with drug and alcohol screenings to confirm disability for all FA clients
 - Restructured staffing units
 - Auto Phone System

Unintended Consequences

(Or Unexpected Result)

- Loss of Diversity on HHS Management Team
- Success of FA clients placed in Vocational Training
- Level of enrolled PCHP clients higher than expected
- Continued Hospital engagement

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Challenges

- Staff shortages - minimal back-up for absences and added workload
- Client complaints regarding service reductions/strategy changes
- Complete revamping of largest HHS programs, coupled with implementation of new CHEDAS Computer System continues to stress all resources
- Continued poor economy
- Impact of economy on non-profit providers
- Communication of fast paced operational changes to HHS staff and partners
- Stabilizing and strengthening the new “Medical Home” model, including full continuum of care in the face of on going budget cuts

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Challenges Continued

- Administration of Homelessness Prevention Rapid Re-Housing federal stimulus program
- STARS successful spin-off to a non-profit agency
- Ensuring strategic funding of non-profit agencies
- Coordination with the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless and the HLN on a shared HMIS data system

Lessons Learned

- Opportunity for planning significant changes to programs preferable to assure smoother transitions