

**HOMELESS POLICY GROUP MEETING
PINELLAS COUNTY**

March 4, 2005

Present: Kenneth T. Welch Commissioner, Pinellas County
Virginia Littrell City Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
James Bennett City Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
Carlen Petersen City Councilmember, City of Clearwater
John Doran City Councilmember, City of Clearwater
Ron Dickman Executive Director, Religious Community Services
Gary MacMath President, Boley Centers for Behavioral Health Care, Inc.
Sandra Lyth PCCH, YWCA of Tampa Bay
Bonnie Collins Consumer
Kathy Haynes Director, Sec. 8, Pinellas County/Dunedin Housing Auth.
Elizabeth Gunderson Vice-President, Comm Impact, United Way/Tampa Bay
Joanne Olvera Lighter President/CEO, Allegany Franciscan Foundation
Janet Clark Pinellas County School Board – District One
Virginia Rowell At-Large Member

Absent: Ronnie Duncan Commissioner, Pinellas County
Patricia Gerard Vice Mayor, City of Largo
Jean Halvorsen Commissioner, City of Largo
Beverley Billiris Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs
Patricia L Bailey-Snook City Councilmember, City of Pinellas Park
Don Shea President/CEO St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, Inc.
Beth Coleman President, Clearwater Chamber of Commerce
Rev. Louis Murphy Mt. Zion Progressive Baptist Church
Sid Klein Police Chief, City of Clearwater
Dr. Teresa Bradley Vice President, Medical Affairs, St. Anthony's Hospital
Patricia Mabe President/CEO Community Health Centers of Pinellas, Inc.
Bob Dillinger Juvenile Welfare Board, Public Defender's Office
Catherine Alexander-Ponder Homeless Program Coordinator/Bay Pines/VA
Karl Nurse President, SP Council of Neighborhood Associations
Duke Tieman Pres., South Clearwater Citizens for Progressive Action

Also
Present: Herb Marlowe Consultant, Facilitator
Cliff Smith Staff, Assistant Director, Pinellas County Human Services
S. Jean Vleming Staff, Program Analyst, Pinellas County Human Services
Beth Eschenfelder Staff, Manager, Social Svc. Program, City of St. Pete
Howie Carroll Staff, Assistant Housing Director, City of Clearwater
Patricia O. Sullivan Staff, Board Reporter, City of Clearwater
Jeff Parker Citizen
David Vaughn Citizen
Marcel O. Charpentier Liaison to Field Director, U.S Housing & Urban Dev.
Okey Ryan Apex Lending
Carole Shafner ACTS
Doug Leonard Westcare
Lisa Hughes Neighborhood/Affordable Housing Adv. Board – CLW

Herb Marlowe called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. at the Area Agency on Aging, 9887 4th Street North, Suite 100, St. Petersburg, Florida.

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

2 – Adoption of Agenda Items

Member Rowell moved to adopt the submitted agenda items. The **motion** was duly seconded and **approved** without objection.

3 – Approval of Meeting Notes – February 4, 2005

Member Petersen moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 4, 2005, as submitted in written summation to each board member. The **motion** was duly seconded and **approved** without objection.

4 – Presentation of Broward County HHOPE ACT Team – Camille Franzoni

Camille Franzoni, of the Broward County HHOPE (Housing & Health Options Provide Empowerment) ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) Team, reviewed that county's efforts to help end chronic homelessness. The program to serve the chronically homeless population, awarded a three-year federal grant in September 2003, began operations in March 2004. The target population may have severe mental illness and could abuse substances or have other health care issues. The program was designed to mirror the homeless population, with a specific number of slots reserved for veterans. Broward County's local half-cent gas tax, dedicated to qualified road programs, frees funds that are used for homeless services. Results of federal evaluations of program protocols may not be available for up to two years.

Collaborating federal partners include: 1) SAMHSA (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration) – funds supportive behavioral health care services; 2) US HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) – provides 51 Shelter Plus Care housing vouchers; 3) HRSA (Health Resource Services Administration) – funds ACT Team health care positions; and 4) VA (Veterans Administration) – funds one ACT Team Social Worker and conducts national standardized evaluation. Nine funded collaborative partners include the Broward County Homeless Initiative Partnership Administration, which services as Lead Agency, the housing authority, addiction recovery and mental health centers, VA hospital, university, etc. Twelve mainstream collaborative partners include the Social Security Administration, Workforce One, Florida Department of Children and Families, Salvation Army, legal aid and elderly services, outreach centers, Broward County, etc. The 13 member, multi-agency ACT team includes a psychiatrist, clinical social worker, team leader, administrative aide, two employment specialists, two treatment specials, two peer mentors, three intensive case managers, and a nurse.

Implementing the multidisciplinary multi-agency ACT team was complex and included a steering committee comprised of funded partners, which agreed to relinquish day-to-day authority over team members, and supervisory support from the funded partners. Ms. Franzoni said the program's philosophy is based on New York's Pathways to Housing "Housing First" model, and does not require participants to be "clean and sober" immediately. The program first provides housing, then the treatment team helps stabilize individuals and reduce the use of drugs and alcohol, with abstention a goal. Policy is to not expel anyone from the program.

Major accomplishments of the effort include: 1) development of a cohesive multidisciplinary, multi-agency ACT team, 2) 34 participants housed and two now selecting apartments; 3) refinement of funded partner relationships; 4) use of specific funded partner expertise and resources; 5) staff and community training; 6) ongoing consultation and support by Pathways to Housing and Dr. Sam Tsemberis and Dr. Robert Paulson; and 7) establishment of relationships with broad array of community providers.

The program's objective is for participants to sustain themselves in the community through VA disability awards or work efforts. Participants are trained in budgeting techniques. Ms. Franzoni said while most ACT teams serve 100 clients, depending on the severity of illness, the program only has 51 available Section 8 housing vouchers. Affordable housing is a national problem.

A major advantage of the multi-disciplinary, multi-agency teams is the ability to identify barriers to providing services and ways to resolve issues and concerns. For example, federal legislation is required to amend current laws prohibiting the use of VA staff and vehicles to serve non-veteran participants. The program supports greater housing voucher flexibility to accommodate changes in participants' lives and is working with US HUD and the housing authority to obtain vouchers for larger apartments. Ms. Franzoni said inclusion of family members in a household often improves a participant's stability. Future challenges include the project's sustainability. She reviewed efforts to discuss future funding from Medicaid and the State's managed care for behavior health services.

Ms. Franzoni said prevention is important, recommending the community develop a solid plan and work with the criminal justice system to provide case managers in jails and with hospitals so that the system does not release people without housing and contribute to community homelessness. She said shelter plus care requires supportive systems, estimating ACT teams cost \$1-million annually. She suggested future Federal agency collaborations appoint a lead Federal agency to organize efforts.

5 – Developing the 10-Year Plan

Format/Outline/Table of Contents

Ms. Eschenfelder reviewed a sample format that could be used for the draft of a 10-year County plan to end homelessness. She recommended including an introduction describing the current situation of the increasing homeless population and a review of community responses and goals to end homelessness. She suggested each goal detail related challenges and solutions and an action plan identifying current needs, action steps, committed partners, time-lines, strategies, and measurable objectives. The plan could include also assumptions agreed to by the Homeless Policy Group.

Ms. Eschenfelder offered to take the lead in developing the plan. She recommended group members with specialized expertise, in affordable housing for example, assume the leadership role when considering related issues. Howie Carroll, Assistant Director- Clearwater Economic Development and Housing Department, will lead next month's discussion.

Group feedback

Discussion ensued with recommendations that goals be established before action steps are determined, that the goal statement be clarified, that measurements be established for accountability, and that the plan address homeless women and children. Staff will post links on the Pinellas County web site for examples of other plans. It was recommended that the group consider a goal statement format at the April meeting.

Consensus was for Members Littrell, MacMath, Gunderson and Haynes to review proposed affordable housing goals prior to a group discussion in April. Staff support for this component will include Howie Carroll coordinating with Joshua Johnson from the City of St. Petersburg and Anthony Jones from the County.

6 – Report from February 17, 2005, Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

Health and Mental Health Issues – Key Gaps and Initial Recommendations

Facilitator Marlowe reviewed an analysis of the current situation at area shelters, which provide housing only, and lack discharge planning, do not offer medications, and do not provide trained staff for mental health issues, exam rooms, residential housing, outpatient care, or a place to go for care. Shelters are not set up to cope with behavior issues. Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of a mental health system.

Recommendations include increased access to residential treatment and outpatient services, more preventative medication, combined teams that include the temporary assignment of a hospital nurse, improved collaboration between mental health providers and shelters, and various levels of supervision.

Recommended new service models include a family team, faith based/recovery, mobile vans, increased stabilization services, prevention programs in schools that teach life skills, drug avoidance, and provide early treatment, stigma reduction, early intervention, special population services, and integration of the faith community.

Outreach recommendations include ambulatory detox, in-home services, street outreach (system now difficult to maneuver) with interdisciplinary outreach teams with dedicated funding streams and a combined police/mental health team, drop in center for mental health clients, and increased “family” services.

Housing recommendations include scattered sites for transitional housing, acceptance that many people have ongoing issues that require services similar to those provided by the Boley Centers for Behavioral Health Care, long-term housing resources for those who will not get better, stronger partnerships between mental health and housing providers, and the expansion of housing options for individuals who are dually diagnosed.

Policy recommendations include formalizing an understanding of roles via memorandum, prioritizing access to services, developing a stronger community alliance and continuum of care to include mentoring throughout process, breaking down residency/immigration barriers to health care access, and providing transportation and instant access programs at one site, and enhancing bridges by improving policies that create barriers.

Facilitator Marlowe said the community does not meet current needs related to homelessness nor have the capacity to meet future needs. The lack of resources needs to be addressed.

April 1, 2005 Meeting

April meeting attendees are asked to assemble at Clearwater Main Library, 100 N. Osceola Avenue, at 12:45 p.m. for a 1:00 p.m. site visit to HEP (Homeless Emergency Project), CHIP (Clearwater Homeless Intervention Project), and Pinellas County Mobile Medical Van, followed by 2:30 p.m. meeting and light snack at the library.

Comments

Marcel Charpentier, representing U.S. Housing & Urban Development, distributed information related to chronic homelessness, including a definition. He reported federal funding to address the problem will increase next year. He reviewed registration requirements for online Federal grant applications and HUD homeless assistance programs.

Members were invited to attend a nearby open house at Benedict Haven for a residential program that serves mentally ill men.

Concerns were expressed regarding anticipated reductions to local Medicaid funding. It was also suggested that the JWB (Juvenile Welfare Board) consider funding for homeless services for youth.

7 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.