

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101
Phone (619) 338-2870
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**SSAB Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2012**

Members Present

Bob Brandenburg
Philip Thalheimer
Linda Blair Forth
Sandy Pugliese
Jennifer Tinsley

Members Absent

Don Stump
John Hughes
Charles Borra
Bruce Abrams

Guests

Claire Oksayan, Sean Karafin, Derek
Staats, Marjorie Larson, Mary Alcook, Hilda
Chan, Melissa DuBois, Steve Hadley,
Jennifer Seneor, Amanda Schultz, Jennifer
Tracy, Maria Aceves, Ilene Davis, Melissa
DuBois, Monette Renae,
Daniel Benson

Staff Present

Dale Fleming, Deputy Director SPOS
Anabel Poole, HHSA
Craig Sturak, HHSA
Kim Forrester, HHSA
Marie Brown-Mercadel, HHSA
Maggie Ramsberger, HHSA
Jolie Ramage, HHSA
Terra Wallace, HHSA
Roxanne Hernandez, HHSA
Rick Vicedo, HHSA
Tami Gaines, HHSA
Nadia Privara, HHSA
Alison Boyer, HHSA
Nora Cortez, HHSA
Carmen Lopez, HHSA
Adriana Ramirez, HHSA
Sylvia Melena, HHSA
Roxanne Buetel, HHSA
Thai Sukraztan, HHSA

1. Chairman Phil Thalheimer called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.
2. Linda Blair-Forth motioned to approve the August minutes. Sandy Pugliese seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Public Comments on Items not listed on the Agenda:**
 - Jennifer Tracy, representing the San Diego Hunger Coalition stated that SDHC along with a number of community agencies are promoting and participating in the CalFresh Challenge. She mentioned that there are over 56 members of the community who joined the challenge and they are sharing their experiences on a public blog. She encouraged SSAB as well as those attending the meeting to visit the blog site at CalFreshChallengeSD.wordpress.com to read the stories and excerpts from their experiences and be reminded of the importance of the work they are doing in ensuring the program is available for people, and that they work to strengthen the CalFresh program on a local, state and national level.
 - Marjorie Larson, representing SPIN called attention to the fact that the plight of low-income children is becoming more serious. She discussed that at SPIN they are seeing youth that are suffering frequent hunger, who don't have enough money to take a bus to school, who are not sure where they are going to sleep, and who cannot see doctors, dentists or ophthalmologists when they need them. Ms. Larson stated that over the past few years, she has seen issues presented get worsened by budget cuts. She and those at SPIN are concerned for the well being of the children of the community not only at this vulnerable time of childhood, but for all their lives as they struggle to make up lost ground. She expressed that SPIN is asking the SSAB to step up and awaken the public to the loss and insecurity low-income housing children are experiencing. She asked that the Board stand up and correct the record when media erroneously represent families on public assistance as fraudulent and deceitful. She

said to ask the Human Services Agency if that is true, and they themselves must tell you it is not, for they proudly consider themselves the most vigilant in the state in eradicating fraud among participants. She stated that they are to solve the problems that affect the lives and health of the children in the community and SSAB needs to stand up and defend the children. She expressed the importance of speaking in defense of children's rights to gain access to subsistence aid, CalFresh, health care and education.

- Derek Staats, representing the Caring Council stated that in the June 2012 meeting, Bill Oswald raised an issue regarding the number of pending applications and that San Diego County's numbers were higher than those of Los Angeles County. Mr. Staats understood that Mr. Bob Brandenburg requested a report on the pending applications. Mr. Staats asked if the report had been received and if so, what was learned from the report.
- Jennifer Seneor, CalFresh Outreach Manager, speaking on behalf of Feeding America San Diego, helps people apply for CalFresh and complete applications. She distributed handouts to the SSAB regarding a specific recertification case she was going to address. The sheet that she shared provided a timeline of the actions she had to take to assist the client with the case. She stated that the client was denied three different times in the month of August before her deadline of turning in her paperwork for which the client had proof she provided in a timely manner. Now that the case has been approved, the client is facing overissuance even though paperwork was submitted timely. Ms. Seneor stated that the client received five different Notices of Action in the month of August and four different manual checklists all with different due dates. She stated that it was extremely confusing and almost impossible for the client to apply without assistance. Ms. Seneor wanted to reiterate the difficulties and barriers that clients are finding when applying for CalFresh.
- Monette Renae, representing herself, showed the audience the paperwork that she had received in the month of August which she claimed took approximately 50 hours of her time. She stated that this addresses the salient problem for her. She stated that in order to comply with the paperwork she would have to be unemployed, she has a job and is completing the paperwork in her off-time. She stated that her life would be much easier if she had a schedule and back-up forms. She feels as if the way the process is structured, it is intended to be dehumanizing. She expressed that without the help of Feeding America she would not have gotten anywhere.
- Amanda Schultz, representing the San Diego Hunger Coalition, called attention to the issues raised by Ms. Seneor and Ms. Renae, where both the client and CBO struggled in getting one person access to CalFresh. While she'd like to say this case is an exception to the rule, it's not. She stated that this case goes back to strengthen some issues that she brought to the Board the previous month about the inconsistencies in the ways in which clients interact with the CalFresh system. She stated that CalFresh prides itself that there is no wrong door and there are multiple ways for a client to get information about their case or receive benefits. In this case, each "door" this client went to she was given a different answer. She received five different Notices of Action during the month giving her different timelines and due dates that affected the way she was trying to interact while having a job. She stated that this goes back to the pending cases. She feels that if the entire list of pending cases was provided and why the cases are pending would greatly help in identifying the trends and systemic issues that are allowing the discrepancies and inconsistencies to occur. She expressed concern with Notices of Action and this may be an area that needs to be investigated further.
- Maria Aceves, representing SPIN expressed her concerns about the Nutrition Security Task Force meetings. She discussed that she and others show up thinking they are supposed to represent the concerns of the community, but they feel as if the community does not count. She shared an example from the last meeting that the person in charge did not know what had been done in the last three years. She

discussed that there is no consistency in those that hold the meetings. She mentioned that the person in charge of the new County Nutrition Action Plan comes very late to the meetings, and does not know what issues have been raised by the community. Ms. Aceves stated that she feels as if planning is finished before the meetings start and that the County does not consider what the community says. She feels as if the County wants to do what they want and not what the community needs. She expressed that nutrition education is not a substitute for sufficient income to buy food and many people in the community do not have a sufficient income to buy food.

- Ilene Davis, representing SPIN, called attention to an issue that was discussed in earlier SSAB meetings. The question was why overpayments and overissuances of public benefits and food stamps cannot be forgiven by the County when they were caused by the County's own error. Ms. Davis provided a short summary based on the current law for the Board to review. She stated that essentially the summary says that the County has legal obligation to collect overpayments and overissuances even when they caused the problem. In the case of Food Stamps, there is basically no forgiveness of the overissuance. In CalWORKs, there is a rare exception for extreme hardship, but she said it was extremely hard to achieve that exception. She explained that SPIN is urging this Board to pay close attention to what is happening in BPR processes that delay caseworker actions, cause documents to stay in the imaging system without being processed, or that allow incorrect processing of information without caseworker oversight. She stated that these are the causes of overpayments and overissuances to rise into the thousands of dollars. She stated that it makes public assistance one of the most dangerous sources of new debt for struggling families. She encouraged the SSAB to be vigilant about seeking remedies for these processes.
- Hilda Chan, speaking on behalf of SPIN expressed her concerns regarding the Channel 10 news report that aired two days prior to the meeting. She stated that the reporter implied that the HHSA and District Attorney's Office are guilty of lax enforcement of welfare rules. Ms. Chan expressed that we know this is not true. On the contrary, we know and care that it's sometimes incredibly difficult for families in crisis to get the help they need. For years now, the SSAB has been working to remove these obstacles to access aid. Many of these obstacles exist because some have allowed the goal of fraud prevention to eclipse the responsibility to protect the most vulnerable. She expressed that SPIN wants to caution all to question the characterizations made in the news report. She encouraged the SSAB as well as community groups to write letters to 10 News in response to the irresponsible reporting. She stated that those characterizations made to the public at large are detrimental to all in the important work of improving access to safety net programs.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. **Information Item:** Eligibility Operations Review Team Update: Anabel Poole, Special Projects Manager, Executive Office, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) and Craig Sturak, SPOS, Health & Human Services Agency. Mr. Sturak presented some of the findings from three of the Tiger Teams: Communications, Operations Oversight, and Hiring and Training. He reminded the SSAB that there are ten teams and they are providing monthly updates as part of the process. When they started this process they wanted to make sure all of the team leads were cognizant of the four pillars of defining the *Live Well, San Diego!* strategy and that the recommendations from the teams align to those. As they are going through the process they want to make sure they are capturing the voice of the customer, meaning not only those coming through the doors in the Eligibility system but also those that are coming to work at the County in different parts of the system to provide benefits and services. He stressed on the fact that they really wanted to focus on data, focusing on what we know rather than perceptions. He explained that this has been a discovery process and they did not go into this process with preconceived conclusions that they were going to try to reach. They asked what the issues were and can we come up with solutions or recommendations based on that. Mr. Sturak discussed the voice of the customer and discussed

internally and externally talking with employees and customers engaged in the system as well as other counties and states to find similarities, and other items we may be able to implement here. He also expressed the importance of an ongoing dialog between the County, community organizations and community members, specifically in the Eligibility Stakeholders meeting held each month prior to SSAB. A survey was conducted in Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and he provided a copy of the results to all attendees. There were 381 total surveys submitted and the surveys were conducted during the beginning and end of the month as these are the busiest times in the FRCs. They were able to collect approximately 40 surveys from each office. The teams interviewed in groups of three and asked people as they were leaving if they were done with their visit. If the persons indicated they were done, they were asked if they wanted to voluntarily and anonymously participate in the survey. Mr. Sturak explained that they wanted to improve customer service and wanted customer feedback. Some results included: 60% of the people reported their business for the day was done in an hour or less; 91% agreed or strongly agreed that the staff person who assisted them was courteous; 89% agreed that the staff who assisted them were knowledgeable; 79% agreed that the office was professional and welcoming; and 83% agreed that they were satisfied with their experience for that day. He discussed that they see these results as a benchmark, but ultimately an opportunity to improve. He mentioned that 73% were able to get the issue they came with resolved that day.

Mr. Sturak then went on to discuss recommendations that had come from the three teams previously discussed. He stated that this process has created a routine dialog across the departments as well as external dialog. The openness needs to continue as we identify the challenges in the system as well as what is working. Many changes are coming and we need to make sure we are maximizing our tools and opportunities to make sure were communicating changes and information to not only clients but the advocates that represent the clients. He said that they are getting web pages out to all staff to relieve pressure on the Managers. He expressed that they are trying to become more proactive rather than reactive. They are anticipating doing this with the Operations Research (OR) positions that are coming in. The OR team will use predictive analytics to help get in front of the issues that have challenged us in the last few years. An item that came up from staff was in regard to enhancing the Program guides. Staff relies on these to do their job and the recommendation was for one place to access the information on the different programs. All program guides are available online. He discussed that they would like to be proactive in development and design and know the issues that are coming down the pipe and prepare for them. He also discussed training based on needs, promoting from within and a proactive approach of getting key players at the table. He also expressed the need for follow up and making sure we are working to hit all the right points.

Ms. Poole then discussed pending applications and that updates will be provided to the Board monthly. She mentioned that 89% of the CalFresh applications had been processed timely within the 30 day timeline from the State, 11% of the applications had not been processed timely. She has been working with the FRCs and giving daily statistics of pending cases to bring the untimely numbers down. Medi-Cal currently has a timely processing rate of 69%, 11% are pending, and 20% do not qualify for Medi-Cal and a package is sent to the State to determine eligibility. She also shared that CalWORKs has a timely processing rate of 95% with a pending application rate of 5%. The goal for the State is 90% and the goal for San Diego is 97%. As targets are achieved, the goal will be moved up. She then shared wait times from the monthly Eligibility Operations Review Tiger Team Overview. The current average ACCESS wait time is just over 22 minutes and took approximately 20,000 more calls while keeping quality of calls. At the next SSAB meeting the team plans to come forward with their final recommendations for ACCESS.

Mr. Brandenburg asked if there is a timeline for hiring the Operations Research analysts. Ms. Poole stated that the Human Resources (HR) department is in the process of finalizing the pay range and minimum qualifications. She should have a copy of the draft report by the end of the month. It is scheduled to go before the BOS in December. The reason for this is in order to meet an October Board meeting it would have needed to be completed and there is no Board meeting scheduled in November. Mr. Brandenburg asked the advertising time. Ms. Poole stated that it is selected by her team and it will be 30 days and depending on the number of applications, it can be

extended for a longer period of time. Mr. Brandenburg then suggested considering local universities in proactively recruiting. Ms. Poole replied that she has asked HR to work with local universities to help with writing the minimum qualifications.

- 5. Information Item:** Agency/Eligibility Stakeholders' Forum Update: Dale Fleming, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Ms. Fleming provided an update on the Eligibility Stakeholder's Community Forum. She thanked everyone for accommodating the change in location space. During the meeting there was good discussion and follow-up on items from previous meetings including seeking consistent messaging for the LIHP program regardless of where one goes to get service, all would know how to operate and assist, materials and desk aides were issued to help. Questions regarding frequently asked questions were discussed and Ms. Fleming requested that questions be directed to her and she will find the right person to educate and help find the right answers. A request to discuss program guide search functionality was discussed. It is expected to have search capabilities back in mid-October. It is currently in the testing phase and it will be available on the World-Wide Web. Training effectiveness was discussed as well. Ms. Fleming discussed training as part of the continuous improvement loop where we can't train once, but continual training is needed. Some time was spent discussing coaching, how it is defined and what it means to the worker and the client as well as how to train that. Ms Fleming stated that staff have an obligation to explain what the rules are, but cannot tell the clients how to respond to the questions that are asked in the application; staff can't tell the clients how to change their circumstances so that they can be eligible--that is coaching. Ms. Fleming stated that there is a difference between coaching and good customer service. An issue that arose out of the coaching discussion will have to be followed up on next month. The question was regarding the Benefits CalWIN application process and research is needed. Ms. Fleming will add it to the list of topics and will have an expert ready at the next month's meeting. Ms. Fleming said that application processing time was briefly discussed, she will be emailing the information they have for the LIHP program to all meeting attendees. Currently LIHP is the only program they have this information for, it is not an automated process, and may require some manual counts for the rest of the programs as they have larger volume. She then discussed a consistent model for liaisons, there is a list, but she wants to make sure there is a consistent process for how these liaisons operate. This will be turned over to the Tiger Teams as consistent processing is one of the things they are looking at. They want to make sure the liaisons are advised appropriately on how they should interact with the community and that people have the experience no matter what office they approach.

Ms. Fleming then addressed the concerns regarding the Nutrition Security Task Force. She explained that the Nutrition Security Task Force (NSTF) was formed in 2008 and was formed before the nutrition education business. Partners got together to plan for outreach and opportunities to improve access to Cal Fresh. Recently, HHS received a federal grant from the state for nutrition education services, part of this grant required the development of a plan. There were originally 3 goals in the Nutrition Security Plan, and the first goal, improving nutrition and health outcomes, is going to be taken over by the Community Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) which is a requirement of the Federal government. This is being lead by the Project Manager who attended the last NSTF meeting. However, they are working now to see what was accomplished by the original Nutrition Security Plan which ended in June 2012. All improvements, accomplishments are currently being tabulated and will be brought forward to NSTF and SSAB next month. In order to receive the Federal funding, the CNAP is required and they do want community input, specifically in education. As this is a partnership between Public Health Services and Eligibility Self-Sufficiency Programs, Ms. Fleming stated that she will talk with the Public Health Officer, about the leadership of the task force and they hope to have some announcements on how that will operate moving forward. They will close out on the Nutrition Security Plan through June 2012 and then they will look forward to how they are going to work together ongoing.

Ms. Blair-Forth asked how the FRCs discussed the previous month are doing with the ambassadors. Ms. Charlie Khoury, Manager, El Cajon FRC, stated that they are still piloting and working to overcome challenges. As far as the pilot for the pending cases, it is working, clients are

able to connect directly with the worker. Additionally, the other pilot will start in November which should help with overpayments and overissuances. They plan on changing how staff is allocated to process and make sure budgets are correct and notices go out allowing for the 10 day notice. The Webcam interview process should officially start October 1.

Mr. Thalheimer asked Ms. Fleming about the Program Search capabilities and how they disappeared. Ms. Fleming replied that the functionality may have been inadvertently discontinued as part of maintenance.

6. **Information Item:** *Live Well, San Diego!* Evaluation Framework: Dale Fleming, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS) and Dr. Wilma Wooten, Public Health Officer, Public Health Services, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Ms. Fleming and Dr. Wooten presented the draft *Live Well, San Diego!* Evaluation Framework. They started developing it purely for the Health Strategy agenda, but realized that health, safety and economic vitality were so interwoven, a siloed approach couldn't be used. This framework not only reflects what the County can do to make a better community but also can capture how partners, schools, CBOs and cities can contribute to improving the overall well being of the community. To bring about change of this scope in the County will require the collective efforts and collective impact of all of us. Ms. Fleming and Dr. Wooten shared a PowerPoint presentation of the framework and how it came into fruition, starting with HHS and then spreading throughout County agencies. Dr. Wooten discussed the evaluation framework which included: the review of local, state and national data and reports; working with HHS subject matter experts and the Executive Team; and contracting with the Center for Community Research. She then shared the guiding principles and best practices. The *Live Well, San Diego!* Evaluation Framework includes 10 leading indicators across five areas of influence that contribute to one vision for healthy, safe and thriving communities. Ms. Fleming then shared the five areas of influence in detail: health, knowledge, standard of living, community and social. Ms. Fleming then discussed Tiers of measures to show actions that are being taken and the amount of years each Tier will take for the population of 3.1 million people. The Tier charts shared included Community Impact and Health Area of Influence examples. A survey of 1300 Community Stakeholders showed strong support for all measures. Forty-three measures have been vetted and they include: 30 recommended to keep as is, 8 with minor modifications, 3 for further discussion in Community Influence, 1 recommended for a lower Tier and 1 recommended to drop. The recommendations all received 66% or higher recommendation and Dr. Wooten stated they feel very comfortable with this. The next steps for the *Live Well, San Diego!* Evaluation Framework include finishing presentations to advisory boards, presenting the evaluation framework to the Board of Supervisors and beginning the implementation of the evaluation framework in November 2012. The PowerPoint presentation was provided to all meeting attendees.

Mr. Brandenburg stated that this is a very impressive plan and asked what the rationale was for relying on the United Nations (UN) for input.

Dr. Wooten stated that they reviewed documents out there that assessed health in a country (the United States) and the UN has a report that was specific to the United States. They obtained evidence based, scientific information from the UN and other areas. Ms. Fleming stated that they did not solely rely on the UN report--they relied on the data.

7. **Information Item:** Restaurant Meals Program Update: Jolie Ramage, Interim CalFresh and Child Care Manager, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Ms. Ramage presented a PowerPoint entitled CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program (RMP). She provided an overview of the program stating that it allows eligible CalFresh participants to purchase meals from participating restaurants. A restaurant is defined as an establishment where meals are sold and served to customers including store delis and food trucks. RMP will be available to over 27,000 CalFresh recipients including those that are elderly, disabled or homeless, eligibility is also extended to the spouse of the elderly or disabled recipient. Restaurant recruitment started in August 2012, flyers have been mailed to 750 restaurants in

targeted areas, and the first of several RMP Forums will be held at the County Operations Center on September 19, 2012, for interested restaurant owners. For the approval process, restaurants will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County, complete an application for certification with Federal Nutrition Services (FNS) approval, and complete an EBT agreement with Xerox as well as obtain equipment prior to serving RMP participants. Ms. Ramage shared the logo that all RMP participants will display in their window for participating clients. She then mentioned that the anticipated timeframe for RMP being available to participants to use in San Diego County will be as early as November 2012.

Ms. Fleming discussed that further Forums will be in partnership with the California Restaurant Association, San Diego Hunger Coalition and Food Justice Momentum Team, to ensure that smaller restaurants have an opportunity to participate.

Ms. Blair-Forth asked if General Relief participants will be able to receive RMP. Ms. Ramage stated that if they are receiving CalFresh and homeless they can.

Ms. Fleming underscored that this is limited to homeless, elderly and disabled. Others will need to purchase non-prepared meals though Farmers Markets and other existing avenues.

ADJOURNMENT/SET NEXT MEETING:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on **October 11, 2012, Health Services Complex , 3851 Rosecrans Street, San Diego, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

The SSAB Minutes were written and submitted by Jessica Francis.