

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD**

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SSAB Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2012

<p><u>Members Present</u> Bob Brandenburg Philip Thalheimer Nancy Rorbaugh Linda Blair Forth John Hughes</p>	<p><u>Staff Present</u> Kim Forrester, HHSA Dale Fleming, Director SPOS Stephanie Gioia, BOS 4 Pat Lopez, HHSA Anabel Poole, HHSA Sylvia Melena, HHSA Andrew Pease, Assistant Finance Director Patti Groulx, Craig Sturak, AA III</p>
<p><u>Members Absent</u> Don Stump Bruce Abrams Jennifer Tinsley Sandy Pugliese</p>	<p><u>Guests</u> Joni Halpern, Maria Aceves, Andy Hall, Shaina Gross, Bill York, John Ohanian, Terra Wallace, Jolie Ramage, Jennifer Tracy, Marjorie Larson, Joyce Abrams, Amanda Schultz, Ramona Berry, Paula Perry, Lindsey Wade, Gregory Knoll, Bill Oswald</p>

1. Chairman Phil Thalheimer called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.
2. Bob Brandenburg motioned to approve the April 12, 2012 minutes. John Hughes seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Public Comments on Items not listed on the Agenda:**
 - Joyce Abrams, on behalf of the Human Relations Commission from the City of San Diego and herself, asked if there was a representative from the Board of Supervisors present. Stephanie Gioia responded she was present and representing Chairman Ron Roberts. Ms. Abrams thanked staff for forwarding a list of the SNAP workgroup recommendations and reiterated her request for the agency to create a matrix of the recommendations. She recommended an application within WORD called Table that would make it easy to see the progress being made on each recommendation. She asked if the board had seen the letter dated April 16th from the Human Relations Commission. Phil Thalheimer responded they had.
 - Maria Aceves, of SPIN, reminded the board she had spoken to them many times about the difficulties clients experience with processing their food stamps applications including lost documents and mistakes by workers. This month she wanted to relay the consequences to clients who encounter unnecessary delays due to mistaken advice from agency workers. Ms. Aceves indicated some SPIN clients who are being forced to choose between food and shelter - go hungry or become homeless. SPIN workers often speak to clients who have not eaten for two to three days, have filed up to four applications, and are still waiting after months for food assistance. She referred to these difficulties as a public health problem and said this needs to be addressed.
 - Joni Halpern, representing SPIN, said that SPIN and its representatives will continue to report what they see as the facts on the ground and they will not be happy facts. She recognized that as the state budget reductions continue to affect programs, the need for public assistances will be greater and the means for addressing the problems will be diminished. She thanked Dale Fleming for her considerable efforts in maintaining a dialogue concerning agency policies and their implementation. Ms. Halpern commented that she would like to see some solution to lessen the pain during the 4-6 hours clients often spend waiting at the FRC.

The two large TV screens at the Oxford Street FRC, visible from all parts of the lobby with the volume turned down and no subtitles, does not meet that.

- Marjorie Larson, from SPIN, expressed concern regarding the absence of oversight of case outcomes by individual case workers that are not reflected in the timely processing rate. She indicated that clients are required to make multiple applications for food stamps. Ms. Larsen shared an example of a client that had to apply three times. The first time the client was told they could not get food stamps, the second time that the required papers were not submitted even though the client had a receipt. Another client was told she needed to produce her children's birth certificates even though they were born in San Diego County and said she could not afford to obtain them. Another client interviewed commented on the unreliability of information and advice given by agency workers and the frustration caused by a client's inability to contact ACCESS by telephone, resulting in the client now going to the FRC in person. Ms. Larson feels the system is not working effectively partially because there is no single person responsible for the outcome of the processing of each application.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. **Action Item: Live Well, San Diego! Living Safely:** Social Services Advisory Board input to Living Safely survey: Dale Fleming, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Ms. Fleming addressed the board concerning the Living Safely initiative of *Live Well, San Diego!* The initiative will focus on helping San Diegans to be connected and live safely in their own homes and communities. The agency is asking each of its advisory boards to provide their collective input as a body as to what they think the agency should be focusing on to help people live safer. Board members Phil Thalheimer, Linda Blair Forth and Bob Brandenburg provided feedback. Ms. Fleming then summed up the consensus of the board which stressed the importance of getting systems in place to "assist the low-income population in receiving the benefits to which they are entitled in a timely and consistent manner in a way that protects their dignity and in a way that prevents them from falling between the cracks and in a transparent way and that should be our number one priority." Ms. Blair Forth said she would like to see a roving team in the FRC lobbies to help individual applicants on a one-on-one basis. The board reached consensus on this suggestion. Mr. Brandenburg asked if the agency could respond to the repeated reports of lost paperwork that clients have said they submitted and often have receipts for documenting that fact. Kim Forrester suggested that specific examples would help to identify the cause. Dale Fleming said she will follow up about any flow issues and report to the board. Mr. Brandenburg said the problems may not necessarily be a flow issue and either the flow is wrong, or the flow has been correctly constructed but is not working properly. Phil Thalheimer suggested the client who is told their documents are lost when the system shows the paperwork has been received should have a special processing. Ms. Blair Forth had questions regarding the report of the applicant who was told their application could not be processed for lack of their San Diego born children's birth certificates. Pat Lopez, Assistant Deputy Director for Central Region, explained there is a process to obtain these records in each office.
5. **Action Item: Forum for Community Input on Eligibility – Subcommittee Formation:** Dale Fleming, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Ms. Fleming addressed the suggestion made at the April SSAB Meeting of a community meeting at which the stakeholders could bring forward concerns about current or upcoming eligibility items and give input on changes to the eligibility system in an open dialogue with SSAB members and staff. Ms. Fleming indicated in order to do that the board must create an official subcommittee. For that reason it is listed as an action item. Mr. Thalheimer indicated that certain Brown Act provisions would now allow all board members to participate in the subcommittee and proposed an alternative recommendation. He suggested that agency staff run this taskforce in an open forum and report back to the board who would be responsible to insure follow through on the recommendations. Bob Brandenburg concurred. He said the limited time for the meeting and the open-ended agenda would not work. He endorsed the idea of stakeholders meeting with agency staff. Any forthcoming recommendations would then be presented in a standing agenda item for

the SSAB Meeting.

Linda Blair Forth made a motion for stakeholders to meet with the staff at a convenient time and location set up by the staff and for the staff to report their recommendations back to the board. Mr. Thalheimer suggested an amendment to the motion to include that SSAB will establish an agenda item for this report at each of its meetings, much like they have done for SNAP. Bob Brandenburg seconded the amended motion, which carried unanimously.

6. **Information Item:** Community Nutrition Expansion Project Update/SNAP Participation Grant Update: Dale Fleming, Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). Dale Fleming provided the Board with an update on two grants the Agency has received in the past year to support CalFresh efforts. The SNAP Participation Grant provided by the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service is intended to increase participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California. In September of 2011, the county was awarded \$898,913 to help the agency improve timely processing, reduce churning of paperwork and create additional pathways for low income families and individuals to access and maintain CalFresh benefits and better nutrition. Project goals include automating the submission and tracking of documents, improving processing timelines for applications, annual re-certifications and status reports, and reducing the incidence of lost documents. These goals align with several of the SNAP workgroup recommendations. Specifically, the agency will use this grant to more efficiently process the more than 11,000 documents received daily. When in place, this technology will include automated imaging of applications and documentation at their point of entry that will securely capture, import and route that information directly to our document system, thereby reducing the incidence of lost documents and reducing processing time. Community partners will then be able to confidently promote electronic filings among clients and clients will not need to frequently visit the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) or mail in documents. The grant will also be used for the Customer Relations Management tool to automate document tracking and assignment of documents to eligibility workers for processing. The agency will also implement an online web portal for clients and their authorized representatives to track case status. The agency plans to pilot the automated task tracking tool at the Lemon Grove FRC and at the Mail Imaging Center (MIC) this summer. The agency projects by fall of 2012, it will be capable of imaging applications and documentation at their point of entry and eligibility task tracking to be expanded to ACCESS by winter 2012. As the technology evolves, management reports that show where work is being distributed and performed will be available in summer of 2013 and the web portal will roll out in the fall 2013. When in place, these new technologies should result in reduced document processing times, reduced ACCESS call volume, wait time, and abandoned calls, reduced incidence of lost documents, and reduced postage costs for clients. Ms. Fleming concluded by thanking the SSAB for its leadership in creating the SNAP workgroup and the members of the community who contributed to the creation of the workgroup recommendations. Phil Thalheimer asked why technology similar to what the agency is employing at the MIC cannot be employed at the FRCs sooner than the projected two years outlined in the technology project report. Anabel Poole, Special Projects Manager, responded that the new technology will be available at the front end of the FRC and the automated task tracking tool will replace excel spreadsheets and email for assignment of work to eligibility workers that is currently used. Ms. Fleming provided an update on the Community Nutrition Education Project (CNEP) a program funded by the California Department of Social Services and Department of Health by a \$700,000 grant divided equally to San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency and Public Health. The goal of CNEP is to promote the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans through educating CalFresh recipients, the population that is likely eligible to CalFresh benefits, and those living in areas adjacent to CalFresh offices, public housing, food banks, and other similar facilities, about the value of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity. Ms. Fleming elaborated specific prescribed programs and requirements the agency must consider. In addition, the agency will utilize certain discretionary funds to launch a media campaign aimed at educating the targeted population about CalFresh eligibility.

Bob Brandenburg asked for and received reassurance the goal of the grant project is to improve SNAP participation and eliminate lost documents. He also inquired about the technology the agency is acquiring for use as the Customer Relations Management tool and urged the agency to be very careful in validating software adjustments between the off-the-shelf software and the CalWIN county information system. He requested Ms. Fleming to provide him with the technical documentation. Nancy Rorbaugh inquired if the implementation could be expedited. Anabel Poole indicated the agency is working with its information technology contractor on the integration of the Customer Relations Management tool with the staffing software that assigns documents to eligibility workers. She said the agency is now in the testing phase and will pilot the new tool for about two months starting in mid-June. The pilot phase will help inform the agency as to the specific training required for workers before the full implementation in the FRCs. Linda Blair Forth asked for an explanation of references that were made to training of applicants and marketing of online eligibility documentation tools. Ms. Fleming explained in order to assure clients that online tools will be confidential and effective, it is necessary to inform, involve, and train clients to encourage them to use this new technology.

7. **Information Item:** FY 2012-13 Operational Plan: Andrew Pease, Assistant Finance Director, Patti Groulx, Revenue & Budget Manager, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Mr. Pease provided two handouts regarding FY 2010-13 Proposed Operational Plan. He shared the key economic indicators that show very slow growth in the local economy since the end of the recession in 2009. He reminded the board it is generally understood that county governments are generally the last hit by a recession and the last to recover. He discussed the state budget uncertainties. As the state budget gap approaches \$12 billion, trigger cuts and program realignment are inevitable without voter approved tax increases. Mr. Pease said there is very little information available at this time concerning the proposed redesign of the CalWORKs program. The proposed state budget will shift responsibility for child care from the California Department of Education to counties. There are many unknowns in the dual-eligibility pilot for Medicaid/Medicare clients to receive a managed care program from San Diego health plans which will impact clients in our In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. Additional uncertainties are in the effects of AB109 and how the release of low level offenders from the state to the counties will affect the county budget. Mr. Pease elaborated key assumptions to covering costs including continued state realignment proposals, sales tax growth, vehicle license fees and state program changes and cuts. More uncertainties that have been considered include anticipated Supreme Court decisions, the Presidential election, the ongoing economic situation, and state policy. He then elaborated specific program changes and contract changes affecting the agency. Recognizing the continued growth in CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal programs, the agency plan calls for staffing increases for the first time since fiscal year '08-'09. Proposed staffing increases will support FRCs and ACCESS operations, the Office of Business Intelligence (OBI) and Quality Control. Mr. Pease provided pie charts demonstrating the 1.9 billion dollar proposed budget expenditures and revenues. He reiterated the agency's key initiatives, including the continued implementation of *Live Well, San Diego!* and provided a schedule of presentations, hearings, statements, deliberations and eventual approval of the Agency Operational Plan.
8. **Information Item:** Eligibility Operations Review Team Update: Anabel Poole, Special Projects Manager, Director's Office, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS): Ms. Poole provided an update concerning agency changes emerging from the Tiger Team, which include the addition of 176 new positions to the agency. Effective July 1, the agency will be consolidating the ACCESS Call Center and the Processing Center under the leadership of Central Region General Manager, Barbara Jimenez and Pat Lopez. She then introduced Leslie Ray, Senior Epidemiologist from Public Health Services, who has been recruited to provide data that will be helpful to the operations research team. Ms. Ray said she examined the Food Research and Action Center data (FRAC) which produced estimates of local access for 22 of the largest cities (using county data). The most recent data based on three-year individual poverty estimates for the period 2006-2008 ranked San Diego County last on local access at 40%. Ms. Ray discussed particular

aspects of the FRAC report methodology that required the authors to make estimates and assumptions concerning income, household size, and assets. Although these estimates are stipulated in the report, they have the potential to produce measurement error or bias in the report. After replicating the 40% local access indicator (LAI) published by the FRAC Center, Ms. Ray ran the data for December 2010 and arrived at 64% LAI. Using February 2012 recipient data, she determined the LAI should be 79%, which represents a significant improvement. Reviewing data from the top five ranked counties and the lowest five counties revealed all of the lowest ranked are located in the West, and more importantly, all five had a much greater percentage foreign born of the total population. She discussed the California Health Interview Survey (2009) of individuals in households with household incomes less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) who were asked if they were currently receiving SNAP benefits. 4.7% of adults, 8.6% of adolescents and 15.4% of children were. After examining San Diego county population by percent of FPL and estimating 130% of poverty by household, Ms. Ray estimated the eligible population for benefits in 2009 to be 180,000 individuals and 60,000 eligible households. Utilizing population and household data from sub-regional areas (SRA) and poverty data interpolated from the US Census Bureau, Ms. Ray and her staff produced a map of San Diego county illustrating the percent of households with income below 130% of the FPL by SRA. She suggested this map and the data used to produce it may be useful in determining where the Agency may find opportunities to focus efforts to encourage enrollment. Ms. Ray presented data on San Diego households below 130% FPL by citizenship and presence of children. In an effort to determine if there are individuals or households who might refrain from applying for SNAP benefits because the level of benefits do not seem to them to be worth the effort of applying, Ms. Ray examined the American Community Survey and concluded that 50% of households receiving SNAP in the previous 12 months had incomes equal to or greater than the FPL. Ms. Ray summarized her conclusions by stating while there may be systematic error in the FRAC methodology resulting from the necessity to employ estimates, if one utilizes the same methodology between 2008 and 2010, the county has a 60% increase in local access and between 2008 and 2012, an estimated 98% increase in local access. She said using 2010 census data and local demographic estimates systematic error can be reduced to identify a more refined estimate of potentially eligible residents; and areas within the county with higher percentages of potentially eligible residents can be identified for outreach efforts. Bob Brandenburg congratulated Ms. Ray for presenting a beautiful piece of analysis. He emphasized the importance of keeping this methodology rolling utilizing data to reduce errors in estimates of local access and stressed the importance of physically locating and reaching out to the estimated 20% of those who are eligible that are not yet receiving SNAP benefits. Linda Blair Forth asked Ms. Ray what the data revealed to be the average family size, to which Ms. Ray answered 2.98. Ms. Blair Forth asked for the source of the data regarding the poverty rate for households within the Sweetwater Union High School District. Ms. Ray replied the data is from the three-year ACS average from 2007 to 2009. Ms. Blair Forth noted the poverty rate in South County as reported in the ACS data seems inconsistent with the rate suggested by the approximately 60% participation rate for subsidized school lunches. Ms. Ray said while average family size and gross income data are available, it is impossible to report net income without interviews of individuals. She further pointed out information from the census concerning average family size and income is available for each region and sub-region of the county on the web at www.sdhealthstatistics.com. John Hughes applauded Ms. Ray's efforts and echoed Bob Brandenburg's statement that as the county moves forward with implementation of changes to improve agency performance it is critical to continue to closely examine data as this analysis has done. Phil Thalheimer commented this data analysis should prove helpful to the Board of Supervisors. Bob Brandenburg said when data of this nature is available to the operations research team, the county will better anticipate customer demand and have the ability to plan ahead. When data analysis of leading indicators is constantly reviewed using such sophisticated methodology, the agency will better anticipate customer demand, have a greater ability to plan ahead and will run more smooth. Nancy Rorbaugh thanked staff for providing the more detailed information the board has requested.

9. **Information Item:** Agency Updates: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA): Ms. Forrester provided personnel updates. Chuck Matthews, Public Health Administrator has been selected as the Regional General Manager for North Regions. Jessica Newmeyer is the new Assistant Deputy Director for South Region. A board member received an inquiry about the processing times for CalWORKs applications. Ms. Forrester indicated there are key differences in the CalWORKs application process, including a requirement for face-to-face interview with parents and the time allotted to process is 45 days. She provided a handout entitled, "Timely Processing of CalWORKs Applications and CalFresh Applications" which reflects 98% timely processing for CalWORKs.

ADJOURNMENT/SET NEXT MEETING:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on **June 14, 2012, Mills Building, 10th Floor MTS Conference Room, 1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

The SSAB Minutes were written and submitted by Sandee Stewart.