

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

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SSAB Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2011

<u>Members Present</u> Bob Brandenburg Philip Thalheimer Linda Blair Forth Rev. John Hughes Bruce Abrams	<u>Staff Present</u> Kim Forrester, HHSA Sylvia Melena, HHSA Juana Duenas, HHSA Patricia Lopez, HHSA Danny Melgoza, BOS/Greg Cox Stephanie Goia, BOS/Ron Roberts Andy Hall, PCG
<u>Members Absent</u> Donald Stump Sandy Pugliose	<u>Guests</u> Joni Halpern, Jennifer Tracy, Marjorie Larson, Bill Oswald, Maria Aceves, Ilene Davis, Trinh Le, Derek Staats

1. Chairman Phil Thalheimer called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.
2. Bob Brandenburg motioned to approve the July 14, 2011 minutes. Ms. Linda Blair Forth seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Bob Brandenburg made a motion to approve the August 11, 2011 minutes. Mr. John Hughes seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Public Comments on Items on the Agenda:

- i. Joni Halpern, representing Supportive Parents Information Network (SPIN), reported a case in which a woman struggled to inform the County that her anticipated income should not be estimated as she had been laid off. She appeared at a Family Resource Center (FRC) office five times and waited between two and four hours each time before being told she could not be seen. On her sixth visit, an employee agreed to help her by inputting her information into the system. However, this didn't change the outcome on her cash aid. The client also reported difficulties in reaching ACCESS. She requested a hearing and a conditional withdrawal was signed August 1, 2011. Nothing has been resolved as of today, September 8th. As the client has no income and cannot borrow from anyone, she will be evicted as of October 1st. Ms. Halpern feels that the consistent problem with long wait times in communicating with ACCESS indicates the offices are understaffed.
- ii. Ilene Davis, speaking on behalf SPIN, reported an example of the difficulty in resolving errors in CalWIN. In July, 2011, a mother of six minor children contacted ACCESS to inquire as to why her benefit was cut by nearly \$400. She was instructed to go to the FRC where she waited three hours before being told the cut was due to the failure to submit the verification of school attendance for her children. The mother said she had submitted the verifications and, after being told to produce copies, she returned to the FRC three times--on each occasion waiting up to two and a half hours. Though she was told that a computer error had occurred and would be remedied, she again found her August benefits had been reduced by the same amount. After multiple visits to the FRC during which she was told the county would correct the error, she was granted a hearing at which the appeals representative determined the mistake was caused by a box on the form that had been improperly checked. Although the appeals representative agreed to fix the problem, the client's September benefits still reflect the same cut. The County has several more days

under the terms of conditional withdrawal to fix the problem. This reduction in benefits has had a great impact on the client. Ms. Davis presented this client's story to point out once a mistake is made, it can be incredibly hard to correct it.

Board Member Bob Brandenburg observed there is a common thread in these two cases that he said represents a serious breakdown of the error correction process. Philip Thalheimer asked for a report at the next board meeting addressing how these errors happen and what the County is doing to fix them.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. **Discussion Item:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Work Group Update: Juana Duenas, Health & Human Services Administrator; Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA): Ms. Forrester announced that Marsha Munoz has transferred to Healthcare Policy Administration. Juana Duenas, manager of the Community Action Partnership (CAP), and Michael Cargal will temporarily fill in until someone is hired to fill the CalFresh Program Manager position. Ms. Duenas gave a power point presentation entitled "Improving Access to CalFresh". She pointed out participation in the CalFresh program is steadily increasing and is now at over 236,714 clients. Ms. Forrester added the County is expecting an increase in the CalFresh allocation. As a result of the increase, the County will initiate its first HSS initial training for CalFresh eligibility workers and will be hiring an additional 60 staff in CaWORKs, Medi-Cal and CalFresh. Ms. Duenas stated that August applications for CalFresh were at over 14,000, which is a new record high. Data for timely processing of CalFresh applications is expected to be available by September 10 and will be provided at the next meeting. Ms. Forrester pointed out that the preliminary estimate is still over the 90% for timely processing, and the number of cases pending over 30 days has dropped from 300 to 211. Ms. Duenas reviewed the SNAP workgroup "in progress" recommendations. With regard to recommendations concerning the program guide review, special notices have been incorporated into the CalFresh Program Guide Q&A chapter, sections relating to Drug and Alcohol Authorized Representatives, and the Customer Service and Complaint Section are in the process of being signed off. Updating what has been referred to as the generic handbook, the work group has identified the site to place eligibility operations policies within the program guides for easier access. Forms are being reviewed in English and Spanish translations and are being edited. Ms. Duenas indicated she will update the Board with target dates for completion of the Eligibility Operations Policies forms review and Legal Aid sections of the Program Guide in the next meeting. Board Member John Hughes initiated a discussion among the Board Members present regarding the dramatic increase in food insecurity and hunger in San Diego. After discussing the effect that the current economic downturn and impending federal and state cuts to food bank funding, Board Members decided to accept the offer made by Jennifer Tracy from Hunger Coalition to draft a letter to the Board of Supervisors urging them to appeal to Washington, D.C. to protect and expand existing programs that fight hunger. Ms. Tracy agreed to give a presentation to the Board next month from Hunger Coalition. Ms. Forrester announced as of September 10, all US Postal Service mail for the FRCs will be sent to the Mail Imaging Center (MIC) and scanned within 24 hours. In the ongoing effort to reduce ACCESS wait time, County partner InTelegy continues to work on developing a staffing tool and will be providing their assessment the end of September/ beginning of October. Ms. Duenas commented on the recommendation concerning customer service training. She said The Knowledge Center is currently reviewing a rough draft. The workgroup anticipates completing a report on Total Quality Management to acquire measureable, relevant, and comparable data by October 1, 2011. Also, by October 1, the workgroup will develop post SNAP processed performance data for online ready access by the public.
5. **Information Item:** Community Nutrition Expansion Project: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA): Ms. Forrester reported the County Departments of Health and Human Services and the Department of Public Health have received a \$700,000 grant to be equally shared from the State of California Nutrition Grants to implement outreach education training and demonstrations regarding nutrition. When funded, the program will run from October 2011 through June 2012.

6. **Information Item:** Fraud & Integrity Report: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA): Ms. Forrester reported the Agency is continuing to work with In-Home Supportive Services and the State on the unannounced home visit protocol. These visits have found both potentially over and under assessed services requiring reassessment. She will provide a report that shows what some of the potential overpayments are at the October meeting.
7. **Information Item:** Agency Updates: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA): Ms. Forrester announced The Office of Health Systems Integration and the Low Income Health Program are reporting to Dale Fleming now. There will be a LHP presentation next month.

ADJOURNMENT/SET NEXT MEETING:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on **November 10, 2011, Mills Building, 4th Floor, Room 436 A/B, 1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

The SSAB Minutes were written and submitted by Sandee Stewart.

