

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

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SSAB Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2011

<u>Members Present</u> Bob Brandenburg Philip Thalheimer Linda Blair Forth Rev. John Hughes Donald Stump	<u>Staff Present</u> Kim Forrester, HHSA Sylvia Melena, HHSA Patricia Lopez, HHSA Alexander Sandoval, HHSA
<u>Members Absent</u> Sandy Pugliose Bruce Abrams	<u>Guests</u> Joni Halpern, Jennifer Tracy, Marjorie Larson, Bill Oswald, Maria Aceves, Ilene Davis, Trinh Le, Sadie Sponsler

1. Chairman Phil Thalheimer called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.
2. Linda Blair Forth motioned to approve the September 8, 2011 minutes. Mr. Don Stump 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 that CalWORKs caseloads have increased due to the newly poor - persons that have used up assets since being laid off or lack of work. She indicated they are seeing similar barriers to receiving CalWORKs that they had seen with Food Stamps and urged the Board to review. Ms. Halpern also indicated that a problem that she brought up previously about clients being asked for repayments on debts not owed still persists.
 - ii. Ilene Davis, of SPIN, reported a case where a client was unable to get through to ACCESS for 2 weeks. The only time the client was able to get through was if she called two minutes before 8 a.m. She would then be one of the first to call in for the day and assisted immediately. If the client did not call until 8:05 a.m, the wait is 20-40 minutes or a message would play indicating that due to unexpected call volume the call could not be answered. Ms. Davis indicated that nothing is being done to reduce the wait time. She reported that the client left a phone number after answering surveys, but did not get called back. Ms. Davis stated that the wait time in lobbies is 2 or more hours and that issues of long wait times should be addressed.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. **Discussion Item:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Work Group Update: Michael Cargal, Administrative Analyst III; Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support; Sylvia Melena, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support. Mr. Cargal, interim co-manager of CalFresh provided the following updates:
 - Participation in the CalFresh program is now 239, 002 clients
 - Timely processing continues to exceed 90% (93%) percent.Mr. Cargal reviewed the status of the SNAP workgroup recommendations. He indicated that the Customer Relations Management (CRM) tool is in active development a targeted pilot

implementation at the Mail Imaging Center in November 2011 to track documents and tasks. An assessment of the tool will be conducted following the pilot and enhancements/changes, if needed, will be made prior to full implementation. The County's Information Technology vendor is installing the approved Case Comments tool to their test environment. The customer feedback/complaint process has been issued. Mr. Thalheimer asked if there was individual feedback to the clients. Ms. Forrester indicated that option was available to clients.

ACCESS Performance Measures including wait times: Ms. Forrester indicated the InTelegy assessment regarding Client Services Improvement Project is due this month. The current actual average wait time is 37-39 min. Mr. Brandenburg suggested to report the median number for the wait time and compare to the average. First call resolution continues to be a priority and over the last 6-8 months the average number sent for follow-up has dropped to just over 10%. In regards to a busy message-, additional phone lines will allow more staff to be served via self service. Mr. Brandenburg commented there is a proven methodology for determining bandwidth needed to achieve estimated wait times.

SNAP Participation Grant: San Diego County was awarded nearly \$900,000 which will allow the County to enhance technology to scan documents, issue receipts, and track documents. The SNAP grant proposal was submitted in an effort to advance the SNAP Work Group recommendation with community partner input. The enhancements will allow documents that are submitted by e-fax, e-mail, online, or copier to be routed directly to the electronic warehouse and provided a tracking mechanism for documents. An online web portal will allow applicants, recipients and authorized community partners to check case status any from any computer with internet access. The SNAP grant covers a 3 year period. Mr. Cargal stated that we are in the process of working on a project timeline and will keep SSAB posted on progress.

Public Service Announcements: The *Network for a Healthy California* has purchased Spanish-language radio airtime to run CalFresh ads, from September 30 to December 11, 2011.

5. **Information Item:** Increase in Hunger in San Diego County: Jennifer Tracy, San Diego Hunger Coalition (SDHC): Ms. Tracy presented a package of efforts in which the Hunger Coalition is involved. Ms. Tracy stated that the need for food and programs is increasing and there is less help available. San Diego Hunger Coalition's mission is to build a successful anti-hunger network that eliminates food insecurity in San Diego County and programs offered by SDHC. SDHC provides:

- Training and support to over 40 active organizations and also assists participants in enrolling into the CalFresh program and have helped an estimated 35,000 individuals enroll.
- School meals and summer lunch assistance - an example was Cajon Valley School District which provided free lunch to nearly 6,000 students and the local Food System where SDHC Connected local farmers to schools with high free & reduced meals

Ms. Tracy discussed food deserts in San Diego and pointed out that small farmers are struggling to grow and sell their food. Ms. Tracy also mentioned that food banks are at a record demand right now. Currently, 32.8 million pounds are distributed by the food banks. Six million of these pounds of food are on the line. The wrap around services are stretched and overall donation of food for families is down by 66 percent. Ms. Tracy presented areas of unprecedented hunger. Ms. Tracy gave a snapshot of anti-hunger work and recommendations to augment and maintain it. Ms. Tracy presented specific status updates and recommendations in five areas highlighting how the County and community partners could work together: 1) CalFresh participation. 2) Food bank statistics to sustain vital funding to safety net programs 3) Leveraging Federal Programs at Schools 4) Policy work in collaboration 5) Food Work System including deregulating food growing and selling.

Ms. Tracy discussed that next year is the reauthorization of the Farm Bill. There will be an info-session held on November 9, 2011. The meeting will discuss the bill and why it matters to us. SDHC is hoping to get a unified voice in support.

6. **Information Item:** *Ready, Set, WORK! (RSW!)* CalWORKs Diversion Demonstration Project Evaluation. Ms. Melena provided an update on *RSW!* which is an innovative CalWORKs diversion program that allows the County to offer supportive services and intensive job search as an alternative to cash assistance. The County received a three-year State waiver through 2013 to pilot *RSW!* and provide a one-time payment to address an episode of need, followed by performance based diversion payments to move participants towards work. Ms. Melena noted that Stage 1 Child Care services are not available for traditional diversion participants. Traditional diversion offers an up-front, lump sum payment without incentives to get a job. Effective November 1, 2010, *RSW!* was piloted for 6 months at the North Inland and the Northeast FRCs. Arbor Employment & Training provided the *RSW!* support and employment services and was co-located at the FRCs. They conducted a comprehensive assessment; enrolled appropriate clients; and offered supportive services and intensive job search. An independent, comprehensive evaluation of the *RSW!* Program was conducted. The evaluation found that *RSW!* participants left the program in better financial condition than when they started, found work more quickly than the CalWORKs comparison group, were less likely to need CalWORKs in the future, and if in need of CalWORKs, were on assistance for a shorter period. Ms. Melena indicated that long-term follow-up of *RSW!* participants will help confirm the initial findings. A goal of the *RSW!* Demonstration Project was to identify a more cost-effective assistance model that provides short-term intensive services and prevents long-term dependence on public assistance. *RSW!* is a front-loaded, four month program that provides intense services to reduce dependency on long-term assistance. Families in the comparison group analyzed for this evaluation had been on aid an average of 17.7 months in CalWORKs whereas *RSW!* is limited to 4 months an average savings of \$27,888.34 as of the date of the evaluation.

7. **Action Item:** Board Letter: Health & Human Services Agency: Acceptance of United States Department of Agriculture Funds for CalFresh Community Nutrition Expansion Project and SNAP Participation Grant: Sylvia Melena, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS); Michael Cargal, Administrative Analyst III; Naomi Butler, Public Health Nutrition Manager, Public Health Services. Ms. Butler provided information on the CalFresh Community Nutrition Expansion Project. She explained that the project consists of 22 pilot counties, chosen by the State, starting November 1, 2011, funding in equal amounts to County Welfare Departments (CWD) and Local Health Departments (LHD). Ms. Butler said that the basic goal of the Project is to increase CalFresh participants' consumption of fresh fruits, vegetables, and healthy foods. HHS will receive two grants totaling \$700,000. LHD objectives and mandated activities align with: *Live Well, San Diego!*: Building Better Health, Nutrition Security Plan, Childhood Obesity Plan, Communities Putting Prevention to Work and Community Transformation Grant. Ms. Butler reviewed the specific objectives which include:
 - Provide an avenue for CWDs and LHDs to coordinate efforts to implement community nutrition interventions and educate CalFresh participants on making healthier choices
 - Increase nutrition education services
 - Establish successful and long-lasting partnerships between CWDs and LHDs to promote the Dietary Guidelines, increase fruit and vegetable consumption and increase

physical activity among the CalFresh population.

Ms. Butler stated that this is currently a one year grant, and we want to prove that this is an effective outreach of the two departments and they've been in conversations with First 5 and any other ideas are welcome.

The Board action would allow the County to accept funding for the CalFresh Community Nutrition Expansion Project and SNAP Participation Grant. Linda Blair Forth moved to approve the Board Letter above, Don Stump seconded this motion.

8. **Information Item:** Fraud & Integrity Report: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). No items.
9. **Information Item:** Agency Updates: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Ms. Forrester requested Pat Lopez, Assistant Deputy Director Central Region provide an update on two cases mentioned during public comment last month:
 - The case was resolved on 9/12/11. There had been two out of hearing resolutions that were complied with. The County could not find a record of 6 office visits and the office has eligibility workers at reception to assist the clients.
 - In reference to grant given to client and the school/sanction penalty was not marked on the paperwork. A service ticket is with the state. Workers go in each month and manually enter the benefits.

Staffing: Ms. Forrester reported that 40 additional workers have been hired and are reporting to offices. An additional 60 eligibility workers are targeted to begin training on 10/21/11. The length of training for the programs is as follows: CalFresh- 5 weeks, Medi-Cal- 13 weeks, and CalWorks- 10 weeks.

ADJOURNMENT/SET NEXT MEETING:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on **December 8 , 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 Jessica Francis.