

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

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**SSAB Meeting Minutes**

**April 12, 2012**

<p><b><u>Members Present</u></b> Bob Brandenburg Philip Thalheimer Nancy Rorbaugh Linda Blair Forth Bruce Abrams Jennifer Tinsley John Hughes</p>	<p><b><u>Staff Present</u></b> Dale Fleming, HHSA Kim Forrester, HHSA Sylvia Melena, HHSA Marie Brown- Mercadel, HHSA Anabel Poole, HHSA Roxanne Hernandez, HHSA Terra Wallace, HHSA Manuel Castaneda, HHSA Stephanie Gioia, Sup. Roberts Office Maggie Ramsberger, HHSA</p>
<p><b><u>Members Absent</u></b> Sandy Pugliese Don Stump</p>	<p><b><u>Guests</u></b> Maria Aceves, Marjorie Larson, Joni Halpern, , Amanda Schultz, Jennifer Tracy, Daniel Benson. Lindsey Wade, Andy Hall, Derek Staats, Ilene Davis, Mary Alcock, Joyce Abrams</p>

1. Chairman Phil Thalheimer called the meeting to order at 9:33 am.
2. Bob Brandenburg motioned to approve the March 8, 2012 minutes. Ms. Nancy Rorbaugh seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **Public Comments on Items not listed on the Agenda:**
  - Ilene Davis, speaking on behalf of SPIN, thanked the SSAB for keeping their promise of an open forum to hear the community's voice on what is happening with Food Stamps. She mentioned that SPIN still considers it essential to have a useful evaluation of outcomes that will clearly show whether the recommendations being implemented to improve food stamp access are really accomplishing their goal. Ms. Davis commented that the task based system is flawed from the start. She shared experience of clients at SPIN last month who reported lost documents and inability to get through to ACCESS despite several attempts. Ms. Davis indicated that the result for one client when documents were lost and a series of workers were working on her case resulted in a large overpayment due to County error. Ms. Davis suggested of the importance of reaching someone early who is responsible to make sure the problem is resolved the first time. She stated that the tools used for the evaluation of the InTelegy recommendations must address whether the changes implemented terminate client losses at the earliest time.
  - Marjorie Larson, speaking on behalf of SPIN, thanked HHSA's staff at The Knowledge Center for acting on their request to replace the "Bridges Out of Poverty" training with more accurate and helpful information about the causes and consequences of poverty. SPIN has been working closely with Adriana Ramirez and Angie Riley at The Knowledge Center to help create a training tool that accurately speaks to how poverty is created in the United States as well as how staff members can help mitigate the shame and stigma associated with asking for public assistance. On Tuesday of this week, the training team unveiled their product to an appreciative audience. There was truthful information shared with open and honest dialogue. Ms. Larson stated that there is a long way to go but this is a promising start. She also presented and handed out a New York Times article entitled, "Food Stamps Helped Reduce Poverty Rate, Study Finds" dated 4/10/12. Ms. Larson stated that this article shows how important food stamps are during these troubled economic times.

- Maria Aceves, speaking on behalf of SPIN, Ms. Aceves thanked Dale Fleming from the Strategic Planning and Operational Support Division of the Health and Human Services Agency. She expressed that Ms. Fleming listened to SPIN's complaint regarding transportation money being lost due to being put on the EBT card. She was thankful that Ms. Fleming made a change that allows parents to choose if they want their transportation funds paid via check or EBT. She feels that this decision shows respect for the community voice and it is important in changing the culture of the Health and Human Services Agency and hopes this represents a desire to include the community in important policy decisions.
- Joyce Abrams, speaking on behalf of herself and the San Diego Human Relations Commission asked three questions of the Board. 1) Is there a Board of Supervisors (BOS) liaison attending these meetings? 2) She has heard advertisements in KNX1070 in Los Angeles advertising access for Los Angeles residents to get CalFresh benefits, is there something like this available in San Diego? and 3) She asked if it would be possible for the public to receive the 69 Recommendations matrix to see the suggestions, process and progress. Board member Linda Blair Forth indicate that BOS liaisons do at times attend the meetings, Sylvia Melena, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) stated the Network for Healthy California has done some PSAs on some San Diego Spanish radio stations. More information will be provided. Ms. Forrester answered the third question stating that there is a report with the matrix of the 69 recommendations that details the progress..

Ms. Forrester addressed the case situation brought forward by Ms. Davis indicating she'd be happy to receive any specific cases to research. This assists HHSA to identify causes and solutions to prevent similar problems.

**PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

4. **Information Item:** Electronic Benefits Transfer for Welfare to Work Transportation Payments: Dale Fleming, Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). Ms. Fleming wanted to follow up on public comment that occurred last month. Ms. Fleming stated that on March 1, HHSA started paying EBT transportation payments via EBT card rather than a check. The intent was to make it more convenient for clients receiving benefits. During public comment in last month's SSAB meeting, community concerns were expressed about fees and limited numbers of gas stations and vendors accepting EBT and the impact this has on clients. The County has listened to community concerns and has taken action to let participants make a choice on how they wish to receive these payments.. On April 2, a mailing was sent out to about 10,000 participants letting them know that they can opt out of having their benefits issued through EBT. The mailing was issued in English, Spanish, Arabic and Vietnamese, the threshold languages of the larger populations. Eligibility and Welfare-To-Work (WTW) staff were informed of the change and written guidelines were issued to staff. Included is a requirement that Employment Case Managers to go over the choices with participants and the impacts to them. The lesson learned from this is that it would be helpful to get feedback and input from providers as well as community and client/customer standpoint. Dale Fleming and other HHSA staff have met and talked with community members to try out a process for getting broader feedback on changes with major impact. Ms. Fleming will work with her team on the process of draft distribution for community input. She would like to test next month with a new Program Guide material due to come out and start the process from scratch. Another item brought up by the community was the opportunity to dialogue with SSAB. In the current structure required by the Brown Act people can give information, it is then assigned and then addressed a month later. People want an opportunity to say what they are seeing and hear back about solutions considered. Ms. Fleming stated that she wanted to respectfully ask the board if there could be such a convening to allow public dialogue. Chairman Philip Thalheimer offered a motion to create a forum for dialogue with stakeholders from 8:30 to 9:15 before monthly SSAB meetings. Bob Brandenburg seconded the motion and inquired if there was a way to fix the clients not being able to withdraw less than twenty dollars from an ATM. Ms. Fleming is going to look into this as well as complaints regarding locations of where participants are being charged

excessive fees to provide this feedback to the State who has the contract with the vendor.

5. **Information Item:** *Live Well, San Diego! Living Safely: How Can We Support Living Safely?*: Dale Fleming, Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Ms. Fleming presented an overview of a Power Point entitled *Live Well, San Diego! How Can We Support Living Safely?* Ms. Fleming discussed that Living Safely is another component of *Live Well, San Diego!* and provided an overview of why HHS sees the need to act, how they are beginning as well as what role they want from the SSAB and the community. The Agency's vision is to achieve Healthy, Safe and Thriving communities which reflects the County's vision of "A County That Is Safe, Healthy and Thriving". Building Better Health has been adopted by all 43 departments and each department is adopting this in different ways. The second prong to Healthy, Safe and Thriving communities is Living Safely. Ms. Fleming explained that just like on the freeways, we are all going in our own directions and HHS wants to align resources as an agency and a county to move in the same direction. Although, HHS is not a public safety agency, we do a lot with the more vulnerable citizens in the community. Ms. Fleming discussed ways that HHS contributes to the community and to community members Living Safely. It's important to act because too many of our residents are victims of abuse or neglect or experience some type of trauma, which needs immediate action. HHS touches many people in the community with their services and would like to take the opportunity to educate and get the word out, if not actually deliver direct public safety services. She discussed that HHS's goal is to have "Communities where all individuals and families are connected, protected and prepared." Ms. Fleming stated that it is found that those that live in isolation are less safe. People want to feel protected after events occur and that is the goal. HHS wants to make sure community members and vulnerable populations feel protected as well as prepared for disasters that may occur. Ms. Fleming discussed the focus on three key areas: Prevention, Protection, and Preparedness and Response. HHS currently does a lot in the area of prevention with Public Health, Child Welfare Services, Aging and Independent Services, and trying to prevent harm. Protection is when HHS intervenes after the fact. Preparedness and Response focuses on getting ready and prepared in the event of a disaster. Ms. Fleming discussed the handouts provided to both the public and SSAB Board Members. The public attending received a handout that included a link to a SurveyMonkey to provide their input. Ms. Fleming asked the Board to review the questions provided that are in the survey and come together and deliberate and as one body give answers and input on the survey questions. She stated that all 18 executives are going to other citizen advisory boards and asking the same thing, "What do you think HHS should be focusing on in helping people to live safer?" Ms. Fleming requested the public attending the meeting to go on the link to provide their input as well as encourage other community members to provide input as well. She said that the next steps are gathering ideas, encouraging internal employees, stakeholders and the community at large to provide input. The information will then go to the Agency review team to develop a plan. HHS will then approve the plan with the Public Safety Group at the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Fleming clarified that the Public Safety Group is leading the way on the safety agenda, the way that HHS led the way on the health agenda. She said that this would be HHS's contribution to the larger plan. Chairman Philip Thalheimer asked to agenda this item for next month to provide the board time for review.
6. **Information Item:** Eligibility Operations Review Team Update: Anabel Poole, Special Projects Manager, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS). Ms. Poole presented a PowerPoint entitled, "Eligibility Operations Review Team Update". She discussed that she is the Program Manager for the Eligibility Operations Review Team. She stated that the team is now looking at the functions of the eligibility system as a whole. The team is hoping to have employee participation on all committees. Meetings have been held with union leaders and Ms. Poole is hoping to have employee committee members by early next week. Ms. Poole meets with the Tiger Team leads meet every other week. She will be bringing a team lead to each SSAB meeting to present progress. Ms. Poole provided an overview of the handout distributed entitled "Eligibility Operations Review Tiger Team Overview". This handout included updates on Service Delivery, Infrastructure, Oversight, Resources and Next Steps. For

service delivery, an additional service window has been added at the Lemon Grove Family Resource Center that supports document scanning at point of entry. ACCESS self-service was enhanced to allow clients to update personal information and check on status reports, as well as allow social service providers to check case status of more than one client during the same call. Infrastructure, Testing of the Client Relationship Management (CRM) tool will begin May 2012. This tool will be used to assign, track and monitor case tasks. Construction and remodeling of the lobby areas at El Cajon and Escondido Family Resource Centers has begun. Oversight: A communications team is being established to focus on customer feedback trends and improving information exchange on internal and external levels. The Management Operations Reporting Unit is now a stand-alone unit focusing on data analysis and reporting in support of eligibility services. Resources: This includes recruitment and hiring of staff to support public assistance functions. , The Tiger Team is addressing timing, capacity and training of the new staff. The next steps include adding additional service windows at the South Region Family Resource Center, reconfiguring space at the Lemon Grove Family Resource center to allow for additional staff at the Mail Imaging Center, and facility changes to accommodate additional ACCESS Customer Service Call Center Agents. Ms. Poole invited Craig Sturak, Project Lead of the Communications Team to provide a Communication update. He discussed ways that communication is related to the project. The first is internal staff engagement and communication. Twice monthly staff updates are provided to staff on Tiger Team progress. All Supervisors, Managers and Staff Champions receive this information. Mr. Sturak also discussed staff dialogue to keep information flowing. Externally, working with stakeholders, the Tiger Team provides updates and information is being distributed during meetings. Mr. Sturak identified areas of items the team will be looking at. He discussed helping staff communicate effectively with clients they serve, and how HHSA can do a better job when changes occur. The team will be looking at the larger picture, broad view of feedback and the complaint process. The team is also looking into distributing and presenting information to the public and the best ways to present information. They are looking to see if there are other jurisdictions or regions that HHSA can emulate. Ms Poole added that there are now two regional Program Specialists whose goal is to focus on constituent complaints and determine if there are any patterns. They will be looking at a better type of complaint process and how they can strengthen the communication team. Chairman Philip Thalheimer thanked Ms. Poole and said that he is pleased to see tangible progress being made.

7. **Discussion Item:** Future meeting Locations: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). Ms. Forrester announced that at this time we are only able to secure the MTS room on a month to month basis. The newly created public dialogue session will be held at the Mills Building on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor in Conference Room 436 A/B and that we'll confirm that location
  
8. **Information Item:** Agency Updates: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). Ms. Forrester discussed that they have continued to see an increase in CalFresh enrollment. At this time, nearly 248,000 residents are receiving CalFresh benefits. This total is up twelve percent from last year. There were 11,342 applications during the month of March, which is up from last month. Monthly applications consistently exceed the ten to eleven thousand. Timely processing has increased, the rate for February was 93% and March was 94%. The Slope of Enrollment is flattening and Ms. Forrester said they are looking to see what is influencing this trend. Board Member, Linda Blair-Forth asked for the current total enrollment of CalWORKs recipients. Ms Forrester responded that there are approximately 31,000 cases and the average number of people per case averages about 2.5.

**ADJOURNMENT/SET NEXT MEETING:**

Philip Thalheimer adjourned the meeting at 10:31.

The next regular meeting will be held on **May 10, 2012, Mills Building, , 1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

***The SSAB Minutes were written and submitted by Jessica Francis.***