

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101
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**SSAB Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2012**

Members Present

Bob Brandenburg
Philip Thalheimer
Bruce M. Abrams
Jennifer Tinsley

Members Absent

Linda Blair Forth
Sandy Pugliese
Charles L. Borra
Rev. John Hughes
Donald Stump

Staff Present

Rick Wanne, Deputy Director Eligibility Operations
Jeannie Hufford, HHSA
Suzette St. Pierre, HHSA
Laura Hernandez, HHSA
Carolyn Noble, HHSA
Anabel Poole, HHSA
Charlene Khoury, HHSA
Terra Wallace, HHSA
Jolie Ramage, HHSA
Mark Silvia, HHSA
Petros Alemeselassie, HHSA
Anita Rodgers, HHSA
Stephanie Gioia, BOS

Guests

Minnie Low, Mary Alcook, Amanda Schultz, Hilda Chau, Marjorie Larson, Derek Staats, Daniel Benson, Traci DelPurgatono, Joyce Abrams, Jennifer Tracy, Daniella Solano, Don Davis, Ilene Davis, Angela Diaz de Leon, Jennifer Seneor, Maria Aceves

1. Chairman Philip Thalheimer called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.
2. The November 08, 2012 minutes were not approved due to lack of a quorum. They will be set for approval at the next meeting on January 10, 2013.
3. **Public Comments on Items not listed on the Agenda:**
 - Dan Meyer, representing Caring Council commented on need for CalFresh program eligibility requirements to be more accessible. He asked when a report would be available on the 69 recommendations for improving the CalFresh program which would identify if and how 69 recommendations are helping and if they were put into practice. He also asked who would be working on the report. Philip Thalheimer replied report would be available March 2013.
 - Hilda Chan, representing SPIN commented SPIN recommends that Eligibility Operations Review Team updates include timeliness of CalFresh Expedited Services applications in addition to regular Calfresh applications timeliness. Ms. Chan said CalFresh Expedited Services eligible applicants are not being issued expedited services within the 3 day timeframe rule. When these cases are taken to a hearing it is found that the worker held the case up requiring documentation that could take longer than 3 days to provide.
 - Renae Monette, Calfresh recipient represented by Feeding America San Diego, commented that without an advocate, she would not be getting Calfresh benefits. She shared two main issues she has encountered: she doesn't receive forms and the workers don't seem to know how to handle a self employed recipient case. Ms. Monette feels the process is convoluted and difficult.

- Minnie Low, an AmeriCorps VISTA, represented by Feeding America San Diego commented on her experience as a CalFresh applicant. She shared her experience and described it as frustrating and now owe's \$296.00 dollars in over issuances to San Diego County Auditor & Controller Office of Revenue and Recovery as this amount was placed on EBT card she never used. She stated the issues were inconsistency with what FRC workes and ACCESS worker say, misunderstanding of regulations and wait time to speak to a worker at ACCESS.
- Jennifer Seneor, CalFresh Outreach Manager representing Feeding America San Diego, reiterated the difficulties Ms. Monette and Ms. Low experienced while trying to apply for or maintain CalFresh benefits. She explained Ms. Low's status as an AmeriCorps VISTA member as a division of AmeriCorps and as part of that division not eligible to CalFresh, because she is a household of one and her income is included unlike other divisions of Americorps where income is excluded. Ms. Seneor shared inconsistencies in paperwork and communication with workers and stated that she hopes that by Ms. Monette and Ms. Low sharing their experience it is better understood how difficult it is to apply and maintain CalFresh case and how important it is to find solutions quickly.
- Tom Vanderbeck, CalFresh recipient represented by San Diego Hunger Coalition, commented on his experience as a CalFresh recipient. He has been receiving CalFresh benefits for over two years. Recently, he was notified his benefits would terminate, because he had been found to be an SSI recipient. Mr. Vanderbeck attempted to clarify the misunderstanding as he was not an SSI recipient and tried to provide proof of clarifying with Social Security Administration office to the FRC. He described his experience at the FRC as frustrating because he felt no one is accountable and there seems to be a distinct lack of leadership.
- Amanda Shultz, representing San Diego Hunger Coalition, thanked SSAB Board members for listening to the speakers and for reviewing the information presented to them. She said finding great eligibility workers should not be hard. Ms. Shultz stated that focusing on strategies to creating a strong, competent and empowered workforce that has all the necessary tools to be able to resolve case issues willingly and with accountability, is important. She added that the amount of time spent by applicants, advocates and eligibility workers to resolve case issues is a concern to advocates and community partners because these issues should be resolved immediately and feels it should also be a concern to HHSA.
She also shared San Diego Hunger Coalition had a productive meeting with Rick Wanne, Director of Eligibility Operations. San Diego Hunger Coalition submitted over 90 cases identified in the past two months where issues were identified. Next steps were discussed along with opportunities to collaborate. Ms. Shultz appreciated seeing genuine concern for these case issues. A plan was discussed where HHSA will be reviewing each complaint submitted by Hunger Coalition, which is a first in collaboration between San Diego Hunger Coalition and HHSA, therefore San Diego Hunger Coalition is very appreciative. She feels optimistic in identifying causes and bringing forth suggestions for improvement. Ms. Shultz stated she feels SSAB is the effective venue to voice concerns.
- Maria Aceves, representing SPIN, thanked SSAB board members and all present for listening to her speak and wished all happy holidays.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. **Information Item:** HHSa Eligibility Operations Review Team Update: Charline Khoury, Mark Silvia, and Terra Wallace, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSa). Terra Wallace discussed facility improvements, video interviews, the Lobby Core Team. Charlene Khoury discussed the FRC pilot projects for new applications and Mark Silvia discussed FRC pilot for continuing eligibility.
- Jennifer Tinsley asked if client will have an assigned eligibility worker through the continuing eligibility pilot. Mark Silvia stated there will not be an assigned worker, but instead as a worker starts a renewal or status report, worker will process any other mail received for that case in that month.
 - Bob Brandenburg asked when the administrative error rate will reach zero. Rick Wanne said reaching zero administrative error is a goal for HHSa and the approach that is being piloted now will facilitate the ability to assess and diagnose the issues, then follow up and address them resulting in more accountability and improved customer service.
 - Mr. Brandenburg asked how the cause of administrative error is being analytically assessed. Charlene Khoury responded and said what will reduce the over issuances is processing the cases by notice cutoff. Mr. Brandenburg stated that this does not eliminate problem of an erroneous change. Ms. Khoury stated that additional training elements to be evaluated and if status reports are processed by notice cutoff over issuances will be tremendously reduced.
 - Mr. Brandenburg stated an analytical assessment is needed to determine why administrative errors are occurring. He stated the assessment will track where the errors occur so that it can be corrected and result in zero errors. Anabel Poole, Special Projects Manager with HHSa Executive Office, explained that the solution regarding timeliness is being worked on. She added that the federal government has set a tolerance error rate in CalFresh program of about 8% and federal rules that are complicated must be identified so that change can be addressed by HHSa at the legislative process. She said finding where the rules are inconsistent, which create errors, is related to differences between state and federal regulations. Mr. Brandenburg stated Ms. Poole outlined the structure of the problem. However, the fact that an administrative error occurs and is detected and client is notified via a Notice of Action implies the cause of the error was found. So what is then needed is an analytical team tasked to go through each administrative error and find out why it occurred then go back to the operating instructions and fix it. Ms. Poole stated she agreed.
 - Philip Thalheimer asked if HHSa has the tools to address training issues. Rick Wanne replied saying HHSa has the tools needed to address training issues and enhancements will continue. He added that going to a more hybrid system model and moving away from task based model will reduce errors because fewer workers will be touching a case and customer service will improve.
 - Mr. Thalheimer asked what enhanced training meant. Mr. Wanne explained that extensive front end training has been discussed where errors will be addressed immediately in a variety of different formats so that if a worker is repeating the same error it is quickly addressed. Upcoming changes to the system model will facilitate identify workers who need a particular type of training.
 - Mr. Brandenburg requested a periodic update be provided on analysis of entire structure and analysis on each case an administrative error has occurred.

5. **Information Item:** Presentation on My Benefits CalWIN: Carolyn Noble, Eligibility Operations, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA): Carolyn Noble presented on My Benefits CalWIN discussing how to navigate My Benefits CalWIN to submit an application.
- Bruce Abrams asked if a person can apply in a different language. Ms. Noble replied and stated available languages are English, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.
 - Philip Thalheimer asked about the scanning piece of submitting with application via My Benefits CalWIN. Mr. Thalheimer asked if an applicant can scan and send a document through My Benefits CalWIN by taking a picture with mobile phone as it is currently possible to make a bank deposit by scanning a picture taken from phone of a check. Ms. Noble replied and said there is not an app currently available but anticipates there will be one in the future.
 - Mr. Thalheimer asked if narrative corrections are made by worker receiving applications. Ms. Noble replied that corrections to narrative provided by applicants with mistakes like formatting are clarified by worker receiving My Benefits CalWIN application.
 - Bruce Adams asked if applicant can call ACCESS for assistance with application submitted through My Benefits CalWIN. Ms. Noble replied and said yes they can.
6. **Information Item:** HHSA Eligibility Operations Updates: Rick Wanne, Deputy Director, Eligibility Operations, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). Rick Wanne shared that in March 2013 there will be an update of annual report on the 69 recommendations. He also shared update on review of CalFresh Program Guide by Legal Aid Society. One hundred eighteen sections were reviewed. Currently, seven sections had no change required. Thirteen sections have been updated, completed and republished. Thirty two sections are in the signoff stage for publishing. Sixty six sections are currently reviewed are being rewritten. Goal for final publishing is March 2013. Mr. Wanne shared a handout on statistics for eligibility for applications and case processing and stated an update will be provided monthly. At Eligibility Stakeholders Community Forum (ESCF) meeting a presentation on Healthy Families to Medi-Cal Transition was given and hand outs from ESCF have also been provided to SSAB meeting attendees. WTW program update in terms of State legislation which is changing the CalWORKs program as of January 2013 regarding new 24 month time clock. Finally, Mr. Wanne shared that there is now a Google search available on all program guides.
7. **Information Item:** 2013 SSAB Retreat: January 10, 2013: All: Rick Wanne informed SSAB board SSAB Retreat will be held after a short break after SSAB meeting adjourns January 10, 2013.

ADJOURNMENT/SET NEXT MEETING:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40am

The next regular meeting will be held on January 10, 2013 at Health Services Complex, 3851 Rosecrans Street, San Diego, 921110 in San Diego Room from 9:30am to 11:30am

The SSAB Minutes were written and submitted by Mariana Soler.