

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

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SSAB Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2012

<p><u>Members Present</u> Bob Brandenburg Philip Thalheimer Nancy Rorbaugh Sandy Pugliese Bruce Abrams</p>	<p><u>Staff Present</u> Kim Forrester, HHSA Pat Lopez, HHSA Adrienne Yancey, HHSA Michael Cargal Carmen Luu, DA's Office Cynthia Stewart, DA's Office Anabel Poole, HASA</p>
<p><u>Members Absent</u> Jennifer Tinsley Linda Blair Forth John Hughes</p>	<p><u>Guests</u> Newt Ferris, Derek Staats, Maria Aceves, Ilene Davis, Claire Oksayan, Marjorie Larson, Bill Oswald, Melinda Redding, Joni Halpern</p>

1. Chairman Phil Thalheimer called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.
2. Bob Brandenburg motioned to approve the December 8, 2011 minutes. Bruce Abrams seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **Public Comments on Items not listed on the Agenda:**
 - Newt Ferris, representing Caring Council, spoke to the board to express disappointment in the lack of progress made on the 69 Recommendations to improve the SNAP performance. He said he does not know why people have to wait as long as they do on the phone and in line when applying for benefits. He stated that although the number of recipients has consistently grown, the number of people eligible has also increased so the percentage of people receiving benefits is essentially the same. According to Mr. Ferris, San Diego County's performance in this area is one of the worst of any of the large counties in the country.
 - Ilene Davis, representing Supportive Parents Information Network (SPIN), said for several months members of SPIN have been invested in the belief that the SSAB is vitally interested in the problems that people face in gaining access to public assistance. She indicated families are more desperate than ever in the 11 years since SPIN has been in operation. They are seeing more people who are unable to resolve problems with accessing public assistance using county systems that she says are not working. She said people wait too long to speak with a worker on ACCESS lines and often cannot resolve the issues they call about. This forces them to wait in line for hours, day after day at the FRC. It is Ms. Davis' opinion that ACCESS and BPR are not working and that access to a live worker is essential *to effective delivery of services*.
 - Maria Aceves, speaking on behalf of SPIN, went to the El Cajon FRC with a client because the client could not get through to ACCESS. She noted people began waiting at 6:30 a.m. to get in with no place to sit and no access to a bathroom. Some people found they had waited in the wrong line and had to return another day because they had missed their orientation. Ms. Aceves said an applicant asked for help in filling out her application because she could not read, and the worker could not help with the application. She said SPIN has been telling the board for months that the system is not working. She has observed that the workers are tired and the clients are hungry and need medical care. She expressed concern that SSAB hears the reports and nothing changes.
 - Bill Oswald, representing Caring Council, addressed the Board to indicate the Caring Council is not seeing improvements on the ground as a result of the SNAP recommendations as they were

accepted one year ago. He said the County is, at best, just keeping pace with demand, and the participation rate is well below 50% compared with the national average of 65%. With regard to the ACCESS line, he said half the callers wait 25-45 minutes and the other half of the callers do not get through at all. Mr. Oswald stated we cannot take on faith that actions will have a positive impact. He requested the board allow SPIN and Caring Counsel to present on an evaluation framework within the context of the workgroup, the plan, and the 69 recommendations and that SSAB have a discussion on an evaluation plan on the impact of the work group implementation on the agenda next month.

- Marjorie Larson, representing SPIN, concurred with previous speakers and pointed out there are more people in poverty in 2010 than any other time since 1959 when the government began keeping figures on the poverty rate. She said she believes the increase in participation in County programs is due to the increase in unemployment and poverty in general. Ms. Larson characterized the current situation as a crisis and said she doesn't see much being done.
- Don Davis, speaking on behalf of Caring Council, said 12 years ago he started Caring Council after meeting with Joni Halpern, Bill Oswald, and Dr. Robert Buck from San Diego State who educated him with regard to the situation facing those who live in poverty. He stated the situation for those in the "poor pool" is worse today. Mr. Davis said he has been asked to network with leaders in the ministerial profession in Spring Valley and La Mesa School District to share information provided in board reports and to get their feedback regarding what they see in their community.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. **Discussion Item:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Work Group Update "Improving Access to CalFresh": Adrienne Collins Yancey, Senior Program Manager, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS): Ms. Yancey stated as of December 2011, the number of CalFresh recipients was 244,644, up .9% from last month. CalFresh applications in December numbered 11,465 an increase of 11.6% from December of last year. Timely processing of CalFresh applications remains at 90%. Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director with Strategic Planning and Operational Support, pointed out timely processing traditionally dips in the months of November and December due to holidays. Ms. Yancey said the County has hired additional staff and some staff are in training. This should help with timely processing of applications. SNAP Recommendations related to training called for the County to implement skills-based training and regular trainings focused on issues related to poverty. The Agency's Knowledge Center has scheduled their next meeting for January 26 in which the draft training material will be reviewed and finalized before being implemented at the Family Resource Centers (FRCs). She said organizations participating in the development of these materials include SPIN, Caring Council, Feeding America, SD Food Bank and the Hunger Coalition. With the full implementation of the Electronic Inter-County Transfer (eICT) process in July 2011, the County addressed the workgroup item concerning what had been a burdensome requirement for food stamp recipients to reapply for SNAP benefits when moving from one California county to another. Ms. Yancey reported the progress the Agency has made in increasing mobile enrollment and case service for clients, the Community Action Partnership (CAP) through the FSS contractor worked with the Chula Vista Community Collaborative to conduct application assistance for CalFresh benefits through video conferencing at the South Region FRC and is in the planning stages to expand to National City. She stated the comprehensive overhaul of the program training and guidance materials the Agency has conducted with the Legal Aid Society of San Diego continues and includes review of new material. The workgroup recommendations aimed at improving ACCESS wait times and reducing abandoned calls are being addressed in cooperation with inTelegy, an independent consultant. Ms. Forrester reported that there were some staff reassigned to ACCESS in late November which reduced the average wait time 35 minutes to 25 minutes. Ms. Yancey reported in the month of December, ACCESS received 100,376 calls. 11,265 callers utilized the self-service option and 1,450 emails were received.

Ms. Forrester presented a handout regarding a "Summary of Findings & Recommendations for the Client Services Improvement Project". She indicated InTelegy's assessment consisted of directed observations of operations and a review of data. Data provided for review included the number of calls received, the number of calls abandoned, the number of busy signals received by callers, and wait times. They reviewed the number of trunk lines and staff available to determine the phone lines needed to accommodate calls and the number of staff to support, answer, and resolve callers' needs. InTelegy looked at the volume of applications received, the total County caseload by program and staffing of ACCESS and the Family Resource Centers (FRCs). They reviewed the processes and operations of ACCESS and the FRCs to determine how they positively and negatively impact the ACCESS Center. This led to a number of assessment findings: Client satisfaction surveys indicate clients want to use ACCESS due to convenience, quality of service, a "no wrong door" policy, and multiple access points. ACCESS currently has insufficient trunk lines, staffing, and technology. Family Resource Centers lack a centralized robust tracking tool. Too many clients are unintentionally encouraged to go to a FRC, hence lobby lines are long. Agency efficiency is reduced by case hand-offs from worker to worker. Imaging delays and receipt requirements at the FRCs encourage clients to call, email, and make return visits. InTelegy's assessment led to a number of high level recommendations including: resolving all items at the first point of contact, additional technology to increase efficiency, a unified electronic case management tool, document imaging at the point of entry, an email management system, and an improved workforce management tool for phone staff scheduling. InTelegy recommended an increase in staff with workers trained to handle flexible work assignments based on customer need. In the future, more customers will be steered toward non face-to-face channels and will use self-help technologies. Beginning in March 2012, new staff will be assigned to start working at the ACCESS Center and add phone lines needed.

Board member Bob Brandenburg responded to the InTelegy findings by stating every large organization employs an operations research group, and it is his opinion the County needs a unit of full time analysts on HHSA staff to conduct the kind of research performed by InTelegy on an ongoing basis. Board member Philip Thalheimer commented that a custom task management system is likely to be cost prohibitive and said there are off the shelf products available that can do the job of task tracking management.

5. **Information Item:** Fraud & Integrity Report—PAFD Quarterly Report: Carmen Luu, PAF Manager; Cynthia Stewart, Supervisor, Fraud & Integrity, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA): Ms. Luu provided the Board with a summary of the division's fraud efforts during 2011. The Early Fraud Unit handled over 26,000 cases resulting in a cost avoidance to fraud of over \$5.5 million. The Full Field Units, which included investigative support for CalFresh, CalWORKs, Child Care, and the In Home Supportive Services Program, closed 287 investigations and identified over-payments totaling nearly \$1.5 million. The Paralegals Unit responded to over 7,000 Child Protective Services requests for criminal history checks prior to placement, and reviewed and closed 4700 requests in response to data matches received from the State, including Fleeing Felon, Nationwide Prisoner and Deceased Person matches. The Fraud Hotline received 2200 calls and generated 460 fraud referrals. With the Civil Rights requirements to provide interpretation services, the division has contracted with Language Line, an independent vendor. Cindy Stewart updated the Board on the Fraud Division's ride along for the new HSS training class.
6. **Information Item:** Agency Updates: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA): Ms. Forrester announced the departure of René Santiago, Regional General Manager of Central and South Regions who will be leaving the Agency on January 26th to assume his new role as a Deputy Director for Santa Clara County. The new Regional General Manager for Central and South Regions will be Barbara Jimenez, who currently serves the Agency as Regional General Manager of North Region.

ADJOURNMENT/SET NEXT MEETING:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on **February 9, 2012, 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.