

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

1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101

Phone (619) 338-2870

Fax (619) 338-2298

SSAB Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2011

Members Present

Bob Brandenburg
Philip Thalheimer
Linda Blair Forth
Rev. John Hughes
Sandy Pugliese
Donald Stump
Bruce M. Adams

Staff Present

Kim Forrester, HHSA
Sylvia Melena, HHSA
Marsha Munoz, HHSA
David Hopkins
Vicky Padilla, DA's Office

Guests

Joni Halpern, Hilda Chan, Maria Stacy, Jennifer
Tracy, Marjorie Larson, Bill Oswald

Members Absent

1. Chairman Phil Thalheimer called the meeting to order at 9:28 a.m.
2. Motion was made by Sandy Pugliese to approve the June 9, 2011 minutes. Ms. Linda Blair Forth seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **Public Comments on Items on the Agenda:**
 - i. Marjorie Larson, representing Supportive Parents Information Network, (SPIN) reported one family's predicament resulting from what she termed a problem with the system regarding timely filing of QR7. Ms. Larson outlined the State-mandated requirements for notifying a client when the QR7 is not received. This includes sending a Notice of Action attempting a Balderas contact by phone or face to face and sending another reminder notice that the case will close. Even after these steps, the client may reopen the case by appearing at the office on the first working day of the following month and submit their QR7. The County is then required to make a good cause determination about the reason the QR7 was late. Ms. Larson said this family did not receive the first Notice of Action or a Balderas phone call. Currently, the County is employing an automated system to make this mandated call and the system does not record whether the client was actually reached. On June 22, when the family received the final Notice of Action stating their case was to be closed, they went to the office the following day and filed a QR7, for which they were given a receipt. On July 1, when their EBT card had no credit available, the family began to make numerous efforts to contact the call center over a period of five days, during which they were placed on hold for extended periods of time and heard an announcement that call volume was heavy and to call back later. On July 7, they were told the QR7 was incomplete due to no date attached to the signature and the case was closed. It was not clear whether a good cause determination was made. Ms. Larson said the family depends on the food stamps to supplement the modest income the father provides for his wife and two children, and that the father was afraid he may lose his job because of the amount of time he took away from his work to put into attempting to rectify the situation.
 - ii. Bill Osborn, Caring Council, raised the issue of the evaluation of data being used to determine the success of the food stamp program. He suggested that participation and timeliness are inadequate measures of the effectiveness of the program. Mr. Osborn presented graphs and a chart that show San Diego has a significantly higher rate of pending cases than other counties in California with a population over 2 million. He suggested that how the pending status affects the clock in regards to compliance is critical to understanding the variety of circumstances that lead to a case remaining in pending longer than 30 days. At the request of the Chair, Kim Forrester explained all applications start and remain in

- pending status until the County takes action to grant and she provided examples of circumstances that keep a case pending. The Board requested further details on the application process and pending cases at next month's meeting.
- iii. Marjorie Larson, a representative of SPIN, voiced a concern that when SPIN and other advocacy groups present individual cases illustrative of systemic problems with the application of regulations concerning aid, there does not seem to be a system in place that identifies where the breakdown occurred and what is being done to prevent further problems of the same nature. She also said SPIN would like to obtain rosters of case workers at the FRCs so they could attempt to resolve cases as client advocates. At the request of the Chair, Kim Forrester indicated that the County examined the two individual cases presented last month and found actions were appropriately applied in one and not the other. The Board agreed that providing the individual case situations for research prior to the Board meetings will allow for prompt feedback while meeting the confidentiality requirements. Board members discussed the importance of setting up a feedback loop in order to identify where there are systemic procedural deficiencies.
- iv. Hilda Chan, representing SPIN, addressed the board concerning the issue of Domestic Violence Waivers that, when applied according to State regulations, allow for an extension of the time limit for receiving aid to victims of domestic violence. She reminded the Board that data show 1/4 of aid recipients have been a victim of domestic violence in the last year and 2/3 of aid recipients have been a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime. Yet, data for the San Diego County reveal just three domestic violence cases currently receiving benefits. She inquired as to what domestic violence services are provided in these three cases. Ms. Chan then reported a recent case of a father who had been a victim of documented domestic violence and who encountered seven staff including three supervisors at two county facilities who were unaware of the Domestic Violence Waiver. Ms. Chan requested that county employees be trained in the importance and proper application of the Domestic Violence waiver.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. **Information Item:** The board welcomed new member Bruce Abrams representing Supervisorial District 4, appointed by Supervisor Roberts. Mr. Abrams introduced himself by saying he is the Chair of the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission, and provided brief synopsis of his occupation.
5. **Discussion Item:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Work Group Update: Marsha Munoz, Health & Human Services Administrator; Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS): Ms. Munoz gave a power point presentation entitled "Improving Access to CalFresh". She pointed out participation in the program is steadily increasing and is now at over 231,000 clients. Applications were also up in the month of June at over 13,000. There are currently 114 applications pending over 30 days and 96% of applications were processed timely. Ms. Munoz provided progress updates on some of the recommendations.
- Meetings have been held with the Office of Eligibility Improvement to develop the framework for a handbook that will include information and instructions that cross all county assistance programs and be accessible on the County website and linked with program regulations. Board members emphasized the importance of getting regulations and procedures correct in the handbook and the necessity to delete those that are obsolete. Chair Philip Thalheimer asked if the new handbook would have a search feature for key words in its internet edition and that is unknown at this time.
 - Staff is reviewing the forms again before publishing as some forms impact both CalWORKs and Medi-Cal.
 - Work on the Customer Service/Complaint process continues. Draft policy developed and determining how best to advertise in FRCs and on the website. Evaluating Customer Service Statement suggested to be included with annual performance evaluation.

- Work continues with the subcommittee on poverty training for employees. A recommendation has been made to conduct 3-4 hours of training, which will include an activity exercises, including one on poverty simulation. The recommendations regarding case monitoring and imaging systems were then discussed.
- A Customer Relations Management System will enable the county to monitor staff workload, tasks. This could be used to track a variety of activities and identify patterns.
- IT has been given a final template for a plan to maintain a standard for proper and complete case notes.
- A new verification desk aid is now in place and included in the program guide which was the last specifically identified desk aid in the recommendations. Desk aids and reminders are always going to issued and updated as needed and with new regulations.
- InTelegy is in place and has begun work on the assessment. They are conducting observations and reviewing many data items provided.
- The Mail Imaging Center has processed over 100,000 images since it began operations on May 20 and is currently processing US Mail for Lemon Grove, Metro and ACCESS, and will begin processing Southeast and Centre City on July 15.
- The recommendation entitled "Total Quality Management" has moved from the status of "in progress" to "ongoing" as of July 13. With this tool, management will be able to acquire measurable, relevant, and comparable data to assist in timely processing of caseload management.

Ms. Forrester provided a handout regarding the June 29, 2011 power point presentation given to FRC and ACCESS managers by InTelegy in which they elaborated upon their Client Services Improvement project which is related to the recommendation to improve ACCESS operations. There are four phases of this project leading toward a goal of improved customer service and employee satisfaction. The first two project phases are Assessment and Strategy and Plan, which will take place June through November. The County is providing InTelegy with data regarding the client's experience reaching the ACCESS Center and the lobby experience for intake and continuing clients. Within the strategy and plan phase, InTelegy is expected to recommend solutions to overcome impediments to achieving these goals.

Don Stump suggested the County look into requesting a waiver to grant presumptive food stamps to those families with an emergent need. Ms. Munoz indicated that the expedited services program appears to be that program. Ms. Forrester was asked to include information on the Expedited Service process next month.

6. **Action Item:** Health and Human Services Agency Administrative Code Update - General Relief: David Hopkins, Program Specialist II, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHS): Mr. Hopkins presented a draft board letter for consideration that includes updates to the Administrative Code concerning General Relief. This board letter has been prepared to ensure that obsolete policies and Code provisions are deleted, and remaining Code provisions reflect current standards and policies. This is the first step of the approval process to amend the Administrative Code, Article XV-C, General Relief. The second reading and adoption of the ordinance will occur September 13, 2011. After he read the revisions to the Code, Sandy Pugliese made the motion for approval, Bob Brandenburg seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
7. **Information Item:** Fraud & Integrity Report: Vicky Padilla and Carmen Luu, District Attorney's Office, Public Assistance Fraud (PAF): Ms. Padilla updated the board on the District Attorney's office early fraud prevention efforts for the period of January 2011 through June 2011. Over 20,000 referrals were completed resulting in a cost avoidance to fraud of over \$3.6 million. Their long-term fraud criminal investigations of IHSS and Child Care revealed over \$661,000 in overpayments. Ms. Padilla reported on progress being made to form a county taskforce working group consisting of staff from PAF, In-Home Supportive Services, Adult Protective Services, and SPOS to coordinate efforts to avoid elder and disabled abuse as they relate to fraud by staff, caregivers, relatives, or consumers. She said the taskforce is currently waiting on a response from County Counsel to guide them on the confidentiality

guidelines within HHSA. Ms. Padilla said the DA's office is researching the cost of using independent vendors for interpretation services necessary to conduct investigations when communicating with non-English speaking clients. As a last note, HHSA will be providing two initial training classes for 40 new HHS workers. The trainees will go for a ride-along in order to gain a better understanding of fraud so they can make appropriate referrals when needed to the DA's office for Public Assistance Fraud.

8. **Information Item:** Agency Updates: Kim Forrester, Assistant Deputy Director, Strategic Planning & Operational Support, Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA): Ms. Forrester reported that 40 new Medi-Cal and CalWORKs eligibility workers will begin training mid July and another class is planned following this group. Patti King, Agency Staff Officer, has announced her retirement. Cynthia Paes, Agency Staff Officer, has transferred to another department. Jill Monroe, former Policy Advisor to Supervisor Slater-Price, is one of our new staff officers. Marie Brown-Mercadel has replaced Tale Halse as Assistant Deputy Director at East County.

9. **Information Item:** Post CalWORKs Services Discussion: This item will be dropped beginning with the August agenda.

ADJOURNMENT/SET NEXT MEETING:

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

The next regular meeting will be held on **August 11, 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.