

Health and Human Services Committee

Minutes

June 6, 2005

The Health and Human Services Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, June 6, 2005 @ 5:30p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Robert Rosemier called the meeting to order. Members present were Julia Fullerton, Sally DeFauw, Eileen Dubin, Eric Johnson and Ruth Anne Tobias. Ms. Allen was absent. Others present were Liz Carney, Mary Olson, Joy Gulotta, Diane Strand, Michael Flora, Sue Plote and Paul White.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Ms. Tobias, seconded by Ms. DeFauw, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Ms. Fullerton, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from May 2005.

JOY GULOTTA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS COOPERATIVE EXTENTION UNIT – SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

Ms. Joy Gulotta, Executive Director of the DeKalb County Cooperative Extension Unit gave her semi-annual report to the committee with a power point presentation. She also mentioned to the committee that she would be retiring at the end of July of this year after 13 years of service.

Ms. Gulotta explained to the committee what her office does in the county. She said that they have statewide structure of instruction. There are five regions in the State of Illinois and DeKalb County lies in the Northwest Region of the State. They have extension centers in Northern Illinois, Rockford and Moline. The extension centers house all of the educators and all the different subject matters. When they need expertise in a certain area, they will contact them. Every county in the State of Illinois has an extension center. Some counties will have two counties that go together and therefore, there will be one unit leader for those two counties.

Their programs are divided up into four different categories. Those are, 4H and Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Consumer and Family Nutrition, and Community Development. It's up to every county in the State to determine which program they want to focus on. DeKalb County's highest demand program is the 4H and Youth Development Program and then the second most in demand is the Agriculture and Natural Resources Program.

The primary organizations that fund them are: The Farm Bureau, Sycamore Farmers (next year they will not be able to fund them), Forest Preserve, Soil & Water District, Health Department, 4H Foundation, 4H Federation, Homemakers Education Association, The DeKalb County Board, State of Illinois Agri-business donors,

townships, and personal donations. The County Board funds their organization with the amount of \$22,000.00.

There are 15 4H Clubs in DeKalb County for ages 8 – 18. There are 9 Cloverbuds Clubs in the County for ages 5-7. They learn leadership skills and they enroll in doing various projects. The Agriculture program produces a bi-monthly newsletter. Natural Resources focuses on youth and The Master Gardener's have 46 volunteers in the County currently. The Family Nutrition Program receives some of their funds from Food Stamps. Some of the money from food stamps go to all states for education. The Consumer and Families portion, Joy Gulotta teaches money management to low-income families.

REVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE COUNTY

Chairman Rosemier said that he invited the guests this evening to explain what they do and then collectively to discuss how well they feel the mental health needs in the county are being met. Chairman Rosemier then introduced the four guests that are present this evening; Liz Carney, Executive Director of the 708 Mental Health Board, Sue Plote, Executive Director, of the Family Service Agency, Paul White, Clinical Director of the Youth Services Bureau and Michael Flora, President of the Ben Gordon Center.

Ms. Carney explained that the allocations that they do are based on the goal with the assessment of the community needs and then how those translate into services. They are always alert for duplication of services, she continued. Historically, mental health services were underfunded in the State of Illinois anyway, and it's just a bad situation getting worse. Ms. Carney handed out a report from the University of Illinois that was requested by the Illinois General Assembly about the adequacies of the state's payments to the state's community based mental health agencies and agencies that help the developmentally disabled. They noted that there has been a disproportionate amount of money going to these services. What that means is that there are persons living in institutions that would not have to if community supported mental health. Secondly, there aren't appropriate dollars going to community-based services, said Ms. Carney. Even when money is going to services provided by community agencies, in many cases it does not come close to full reimbursement for the cost of provision of the funded services. That is very important for two reasons, she said. First of all that it's recognized and secondly, it means that it is important for people to be looking for funding elsewhere.

In terms of the implications for the future of mental health services in the State, mental health services and developmentally disabled services are very labor intensive, technology will not change that, said Ms. Carney. When you are talking about good quality services, you are talking about services provided by knowledgeable, competent people to help the client. Where do you look for other monies? Asked Ms. Carney. The report says that you can look to charitable organizations, but that's not going to cover your operating costs. They do mention local government and the importance of the funding that's provided by local government. There are federal funds that they talk about called Medicaid match programs and her board is looking at that for DeKalb County. Any additional dollars that can be obtained for mental health services is "catch up" dollars, they are not extra dollars, she further explained.

Ms. Carney said, through this committee the County Board provides very substantial support to the family case management program at the Health Department. The County provides about 60% of the funding to that program. In terms of economics, providing services to low-income pregnant women and infants and high-risk children. In

the year 2000 the Department of Human Services did a study and for infants whose mothers were in WIC (nutrition program) and the case management program for that infant's first twelve months their medical expenses were about \$5,000 that Medicaid was paying for. If you compare that to infants who are on Medicaid whose mothers were not in WIC and case management pre-natal program for the first twelve months, the cost was for \$10,000, continued, Ms. Carney. She is sure that is one of the reasons that the State Legislature continues to fund that program. It's money up front that is saving you money.

Mr. Rosemier asked Ms. Carney, if the 708 Board funds these three mental health agencies here tonight. What data on what percentage of clients are Medicaid eligible? Who is being treated? He feels that is something that this committee would need to know. Ms. Carney said that Medicaid will pay for mental health treatment, but there are a lot of services that Medicaid does not pay for that are needed. Chairman Rosemier said that we are approaching our budget process and he doesn't know if they will get into the specifics about how much is going to go to Ben Gordon, etc. He would like to see some numbers of how you distribute your funds.

Ms. Carney said, that Medicaid is for health care, which includes mental health services, but your services that you receive at Opportunity House are not covered by Medicaid.

Chairman Rosemier said that what he is looking for, as an example, is if Ben Gordon is treating 100 clients and 80% of them are Medicaid eligible, then he would like to know that.

Chairman Rosemier then asked Ms. Carney what kind of dollars do you receive from the County? Ms. Carney said that the Mental Health Board currently received 11% of the property tax dollars. They don't get sales tax dollars. Historically, a while back, they did receive some State grants. At the end of the summer when it is the budget process, Ms. Carney will be requesting the approval of their levy.

Ms. Dubin said that everyone recognizes that there is not enough money to go around to fund all of the services that are being demanded. One of the things that she had brought up is trying to help all of the agencies in the county to help to identify a variety of grants that will help whether they are government grants, federal grants or foundation grants. She would be willing to help people to write grants in her own profession, she understands that no one ever has enough funds. The other point is that you are all coming here and telling us who you serve, what you do, what your needs are, but we are the ones who are going to have to fight for the budget dollars. What we will need from you is the ammunition to go after those dollars.

Chairman Rosemier then introduced Ms. Sue Plote, Executive Director of the Family Service Agency. Their mission is to support families and individuals throughout the life cycle. They have five departments; Big Brothers/Big Sisters, school based programs, Center for Counseling, Generational Care, Assisted Living program to help keep seniors in their homes, and Child Welfare Programs. They have the Senior Services Center and they partner with Voluntary Action Center for the lunch site and the Elderly Care services.

They have a new program called the Children's Advocacy Center, which is for sexually and physically abused cases, where children are involved. They try to provide the best investigation, bring about the best charges and then the best prosecution on these cases. They have an agency agreement with Edwards Hospital in Naperville, Illinois, for these cases, which is funded by the Attorney General's Office. They have

been able in some cases to increase the charges to Felony X cases through this program. Family Services will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary this year.

Chairman Rosemier then introduced Mr. Paul White, Clinical Director, at the DeKalb County Youth Services Bureau. Mr. White handed out a sheet (attached to these minutes) explaining what services they offer to the community. It is a non-for-profit agency serving DeKalb county youth ages 8 –18 and their families. They offer a Youth and Family Counseling program. They have master leveled counselors and they provide counseling assessments for the courts.

They also offer a Crossroads Program for ages 10 –17 where youths who have never been arrested and are at a pivotal point in their lives. They have a Team Reach program for at risk youth, which is offered at the Sycamore schools.

Mr. White also said that they have a Unified Delinquency Intervention Service (UDIS). It is an intensive program for court-involved youth at risk to the Illinois Department of Corrections. Counseling, mentoring, employment education, and service coordination are offered. A team approach is used to prevent the youth from DOC commitment and help them get out of the court system by making positive, successful choices. Youth must be court ordered by the judge into the program.

Chairman Rosemier asked if these same kids in the UDIS program appear in the County's Court Services Report on juveniles? Some of the kids are on the Community Restitution Services Program along with the Court Services Program said Mr. White. He further said that they are on Intensive Probation and that these kids do meet with court services juvenile court services officers about once a month and then there are other court orders that they have to follow, too. It usually lasts about six months, ten hours a day, and is the last chance that these kids get before DOC. They do go to their schools for counseling or at the Family Services Agency's Office.

Mr. White also said that they are now experiencing some space issues. They employ people with Master's degrees, PHD's and psychiatrists.

Mr. Michael Flora, President of the Ben Gordon Center was the last person that Chairman Rosemier introduced. He said that they provide a full continuum of mental health services for women, men and children and families. They offer 24-hour emergency mental health services. He said that every 3 hours someone calls their offices saying that they are suicidal and they receive 350 calls a day. They offer after hours emergency services response. These are Master's trained individuals who go out and provide pre-hospital screening crises intervention at Kishwaukee Community Hospital as well as the suicide hotline. They have a full-time child/adolescent psychiatrist, who is the only eligible child psychiatrist in a 50-mile radius and the only practicing female one in the region. He further stated that they serve every school in DeKalb County for kids with behavioral problems or mental illness. They are in the process of recruiting two full-time adult psychiatrists that will be part of the Ben Gordon Center. They will be replacing full-time psychiatrists. The DeKalb Clinic will not be recruiting any new psychiatrists to the area, he said.

Mr. Flora also said that Ben Gordon's Assertive Community Treatment works with 20 very ill consumers in DeKalb County. This is a new program that they implemented last year through the DeKalb County Community Health Board, which provided funding for this program. It is a modified pact that costs us \$42,000.00 to do this. They are having tremendous outcomes due to the credit of their manager of this program. These 20 people had 21 hospitalizations prior to this program; staying for extended six to eight months stay. Over the last year these 20 people have been

hospital free. They have not been admitted to the state psychiatric hospital for a whole year. Many now are working through their vocational programming.

In the year 2004 they served the following age groups: 34% of ages 30-54, 26% of ages 20-29, 33% of ages 5-19, 1% of ages 0-4 and 6% of ages 55 and older. Thirty-eight percent of those people seen have no ability to pay Ben Gordon. Over the last few years, every April their grant monies dry up and they continue to serve their clients by donating their time. July 1st is the beginning of their new fiscal year. Mr. Flora also mentioned that they have just opened up their new case number 26,463 and they still serve client number 63.

He further stated that they have had a unprecedented demand of services with an increase of over 120%. They saw 4300 people in 2004 with an 1100 monthly caseload and are currently at a 2000 caseload for this year. They receive 65 new referrals a week and offered services to their clients amounting to 26,000 hours of service for the year 2004 and over 50,000 hours of services so far for 2005. On a side note, said Mr. Flora, an interesting statistic is that 1 in 3 people have a severe mental illness.

Mr. Flora then said that just west of us there is a county that has served 4500 clients, but received \$11 million dollars in grant monies to serve them. DeKalb County has seen 4300 clients and only received \$1.2 million dollars. We serve about the same amount of people, have 75 people on staff, 3 interns and get so much less in funding dollars. Mr. Flora said that it is not fair, but that leveling the playing field across the State of Illinois will be the only way to correct this he feels.

Mr. Flora continued by saying that it costs today, \$86.00 for the cost of care for a client and that Medicaid only pays \$35.00 of it. Lobbying legislators that there is a need in this community is one option that they are looking into. He also feels that they need to look at different ways to levy for these services. The funding levels do not meet the care in this community, he stated.

Chairman Rosemier asked, how many people in this community are aware of these numbers? To be able to levy, you will need to get the information out to the community through the press and that. Mr. Flora said that's true.

Ms. Dubin asked how do you educate the legislators about this? Ms. Carney said that the statute for the 708 Board does provide for a tax levy for funding for mental health and developmentally disabled people. But there is also a 377 Board that can co-exist with the 708 Board with the same governmental entities. The 377 Board should really have a tax levy separate for only services for those who are developmentally disabled. Ms. Carney continued by stating that they just passed this in Champaign County in November 2004. What they did was not only earmark the monies for developmentally disabled persons but, of course, that frees up the 708 Board money for mental health services. Now, we are looking at something like that at this point, since we don't receive the full levy currently for the 708 Board, she said. This really will need to come to the mental health board for consideration, Ms. Carney further stated.

Chairman Rosemier asked Ms. Carney if she will come before the committee during the budget process? Ms. Carney said yes to request a tax levy.

The committee thanked everyone this evening in taking part in the discussion on mental health needs in DeKalb County and said that we have to do a better job of lobbying our legislators for these needs.

UPDATE ON GRANT NEEDS SURVEY

Chairman Rosemier updated the committee on the Grant Needs Survey that he has been working on with Ms. Dubin. He said that he has contacted four agencies with the cover letter and survey and received positive responses from all four of them. He said that one agency today made a request to add to the survey a question to ask, “What components of current grant applications are you most comfortable with in preparing your grant? And, “What components are you least comfortable with?” That will help the committee to focus more specifically on anything that we will provide along the lines of what they feel their strengths and weaknesses are. It’s a much more direct way of saying, where do you need the help? That is his report, he will send it out if the committee wants him to or he can wait. He would like to fine-tune the report a little bit more before he sends it out.

Chairman Rosemier informed the committee that he will not be at the August meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. Fullerton, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Rosemier, Chairman

Mary C. Supple, Secretary