

**STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, August 4, 2011

Presiding: Steve Barber, Chairman

Present: Robin Rau
Stuart Tedders
Jennie Wren Denmark
Gregory Dent
Ajay Gehlot
Ann Addison (Webinar)

Absent: David Zammit
LaDon Toole
O.J. Booker
Sandra Daniel
Grace Newsome

SORH Staff: Charles Owens, Ex-Officio
Sheryl McCoy, Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary
Patsy Whaley, Director, Hospital Services
Brittany Brown, Program Operations Specialist/Hospital Services

Visitors: Sarah Peterson, Coordinator of the Office of Student Services/Jiann-Ping Hsu
College of Public Health/Georgia Southern University

Opening Remarks:

The regular scheduled meeting of the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) Advisory Board was held at Community Health Works, Macon, Georgia, Thursday, August 4, 2011. The meeting convened at 10:40am. Steve Barber called the meeting to order and welcomed the Board members and visitors.

Chairman Barber asked Stuart Tedders, Assistant Professor, Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH), Center for Rural Health & Research, to share his presentation.

Stuart Tedders introduced Sarah Peterson, Coordinator of the Office of Student Services, to give the presentation on the Master of Public Health degrees available at Georgia Southern University. Ms. Peterson works in marketing and promoting of the college. The JPHCOPH Graduate Degrees offered are:

- Master of Public Health (M.P.H.)
 - Biostatistics
 - Community Health
 - Environmental Health Sciences
 - Epidemiology
- Master of Healthcare Administration (M.H.A.)
- Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.)
 - Biostatistics
 - Community Health Behavior and Education
 - Public Health Leadership

Ms. Peterson shared that many of the students are already working in Public Health. All courses are on-line one to two days a month.

JPHCOPH recently received Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) Accreditation. They are one of 48 colleges or schools of Public Health worldwide to receive this designation.

Career opportunities for Community Health include:

- Federal, state and local health departments
- Health and human services
- Private or professional health organizations

Research emphasis graduates will have mastered:

- Research techniques
- Statistics
- Current research concepts in key areas of public health and community health
 - Research on rural health disparities
 - Underserved populations
 - Assessments of rural health indicators

Below are a number of various careers that may be obtained upon completion of these degrees:

- Public Health Departments on federal, state and local levels
- Human Service Agencies
- Private and professional health organizations
- Clinics and health districts
- Hospitals, long-term care facilities and managed care organizations
- Home Health Agencies
- Research and data collection agencies
- Environmental health agencies

Ms. Peterson explained they work diligently to find practice sites for the students. The students can be valuable to health care facilities and organizations with research and data collection. The research students want to emphasize the rural area aspect of their projects.

The school philosophy is to be the “College of Public Health for Georgia”. A complete PowerPoint presentation will be attached to the minutes.

Charles Owens asked how many students were enrolled.

Ms. Peterson stated 128 students were enrolled in the spring and 40 students graduated. This was the college’s largest graduating class.

Stuart Tedders remarked that the college doesn’t have an undergraduate program, only graduate. Their goal is to enroll 200 students. The 200 number is important because of the faculty/student ratio that the accreditation requires.

Charles Owens asked what areas the graduates obtained jobs and how many still need jobs.

Ms. Peterson responded that about half of the most recent graduates are presently employed. It takes about three to six months to acquire a job. Some of the graduates from all five disciplines of study probably still need a job.

Charles Owens offered assistance from the SORH office in disseminating contact information for the students who need jobs. He remarked that most of the students are from Georgia and we would like to keep them working in Georgia.

Greg Dent shared that when Community Health Works (CHW) has needed an intern, the students are not available for internship at that time. Mr. Dent inquired as to how their schedules can be coordinated so that they coincide with the curriculum of the students.

Stuart Tedders stated there are several reasons the coordination of the two is so difficult. One is that the students' life is built around semesters with certain areas of study during that time frame. Another issue involves finding the intern an opportunity congruent with his professional interest and geographic location. It may not be feasible for an intern to go to a specific area if he/she has no place to live and no way to provide basic resources while training. He encouraged those who want to work with the interns to build a relationship with the school faculty and keep them informed of their needs.

Ann Addison joined the meeting by Webinar. New technology recently installed at CHW made this possible.

Cindy Dupree, Draffin & Tucker, gave a presentation to inform the Board about the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) Leadership Training funded by FLEX program grant funds. For three years all the CAH hospitals were offered the opportunity to have a financial analysis. She reported that 32 of the 34 CAH hospitals participated in the project. They found all the facilities were unique and structured differently, but they all had a common need to educate the staff regarding the operations of their Critical Access Hospital.

The training began in May 2011 and was completed in August 2011. The training provided CAH leadership with the knowledge, tools and skills necessary for effective management. The training was designed to start with basic financial information that could be taught to all staff. The success measurement was determined by pre-testing, post-testing and retention testing. The training was based on Quint Studer's recent book, *Straight A Leadership*. Some of the topics covered were:

- Basics of being a leader
- Basics of CAH finances
- Basics of charge capture, coding billing and the CDM
- Exploring the basics of the cost report
- Diversification and clarification

The program focused on accountability for the staff and leadership. With a better understanding of the operations of a CAH hospital, trust could be built between staff and leadership.

The training will continue in FY2012 with a focus based on the feedback from prior training.

Patsy Whaley commented the training was valuable to all staff who participated. For example, knowledge of the hospital's operational structure gave the Dietary and Maintenance staff a greater insight into the importance of accurate records.

Ms. Whaley explained there is \$45,000 carry-over money that will be used for Draffin & Tucker to provide education to the community. They will encourage the community to use the local hospital.

Steve Barber stated there is a huge disconnect between the hospital and the consumer. The consumer does not understand the cost and cash flow in the operation of a hospital. Education in that area is a definite need.

SORH Advisory Board Minutes:

Chairman Barber asked for approval of the August 4, 2011 minutes. The minutes of the meeting was approved as submitted.

Jennie Wren Denmark gave a brief report on the Migrant Sub-Committee. The Migrant Advisory Board has begun reviewing each site's budget and work plan. New Immigration laws continue to affect the harvesting of the crops in Georgia. The migrant workers are scared and are returning home or to other areas with lesser Immigration laws. Each migrant site has been asked to send a report to reflect how the new laws are affecting their service area.

Ajay Gehlot remarked there is a huge decrease in number of migrants in Wilcox and Crisp counties. Manufacturing has also been affected.

Charles Owens gave a report on the SORH office. He commended Greg Dent and his staff at Community Health Works (CHW) on the impact their Rural Health Network is making in their community. Recently the Macon Telegraph printed an article that featured the many facets of their network.

Greg Dent shared that an ambulance has been donated to CHW. They will use the vehicle to pick up fresh food at the Farmers Market, take it to the Housing Authority to be distributed in needy neighborhoods. They are promoting healthy eating for better health.

Mr. Owens introduced Brittany Brown, a new employee at SORH, working with Patsy in the Hospital Services program. He also shared that SORH has another new employee. David Glass has been hired to work in the Primary Care Office (PCO) with the J-1 Visa program, National Health Service Corps and 3RNet recruitment and retention programs. He announced that Donna Crews, Director of PCO, will be moving to Florida in the next few weeks which will leave another vacancy.

Mr. Owens shared that Commissioner Cook visited the SORH office last week. He was very personable and interested in the work the SORH does for Georgia's underserved communities. The Commissioner visited Crisp Regional Hospital and listened to their concerns about the budget cuts.

Mr. Owens commented on the progress being made to re-define the HPSA designations by the Rulemakers committee. They hope to complete the process by the October meeting.

The SORH grants are moving forward. The Migrant Grant was awarded \$2,751,000. They have not received an announcement on the new service area for Wayne and Appling, nor expanded services.

The ER Diversion grant has closed. Recently a Webinar was held with the participants of the grant to discuss the problems and issues with the program. The main issue is related to the sustainability of the project. Ajah Gehlot's project is the only one that remained open. It was determined that many of the sites' indigent population was too large to create enough revenue to continue services. The indigent numbers ranged from 25% to a high 90%. Mr. Gehlot chose to serve a diverse population as opposed to serving only those qualified for the ER Diversion project. Mr. Gehlot's project has been chosen for a HRSA pilot program for the next three years. On the positive side, all the patients seen at the sites while operating received quality care at a reduced price.

Mr. Owens commented the FY 12 grant funds for the FQHCs have been released from OPB and are moving forward.

The HPSA designations are due in December. The time frame has been shortened to 6 months rather than 12 months. The shortening of the period is in anticipation of the new rules coming out and the need to install a new data base. A plan is in place to complete within the timeframe.

Mr. Owens explained the Rulemakers work group is diligently working to establish a new rule that is in an understandable format.

The PCO continues to work utilizing the 3RNet. There are 157 vacancies and 67 providers posted in 3RNet. Mr. Owens thanked Donna Crews, Director, PCO, for her hard work to accomplish that number.

Mr. Owens commented that several people have asked about the Medical Fair usually held in Atlanta each year. Since the SMEB funding was pulled out of the budget, there will need to be some restructuring of the event. He explained there will be a conference call soon. They will discuss the kind of event needed and ways to provide funds.

The JI Visa program had 20 applicants this year. The increase in number is attributed to the flexibility of the program that is now available. After 6 months, the program accepts applications from specialist. There are now twelve specialist and eight primary care physicians in the JI program.

Mr. Owens complimented the presentation given earlier in the meeting about the FLEX program and their accomplishments this year. The presentation provided the Board with much knowledge and understanding of the projects in place for the hospitals through the FLEX funding. FLEX and SHIP grants are providing long overdue education for CAH Hospitals. The knowledge gained from these projects will make the health systems stronger and more sustainable. He asked Patsy Whaley if she had any comments.

Ms. Whaley stated the SHIP program has 61 grantees this year. The SHIP focus is on education. CAH hospitals can sign up for several consortiums provided by the Georgia Hospital Association, Draffin & Tucker or HomeTown Health. She also shared they have a project with GA Southern University, GAEMS Association. Russ Toal and Courtney Terwilliger will work to develop a curriculum to train EMS Directors. Next year they will offer the pilot training program.

Mr. Owens stated he has been asked to submit 2%, 4% and 6% budget reductions. He explained he will try to reduce funding in areas where it will not affect the outcome of projects as originally intended on the appropriation.

Mr. Owens thanked everyone for coming and thanked Greg for allowing us to meet at Community Health Works. The next meeting will be held on November 3, 2011 at Community Health Works in the conference room. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully,

Steve Barber, Chairman/Date

Sheryl McCoy, Recording Secretary/Date

Stuart Tedders, Secretary