

**STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, June 16, 2010

- Presiding:** Charles Owens, SORH Ex-Officio
- Present:** Ann Addison (via telephone)
Sandra Daniel
Ajay Gehlot
Jennie Wren Denmark (via telephone)
Greg Dent
Steve Barber
David Zammit
Grace Newsome
- Absent:** Robin Rau
Stuart Tedders
O.J. Booker
LaDon Toole
- SORH Staff:** Tony Brown, Deputy Director
Sheryl McCoy, Recording Secretary
Tina Orrick, Director, Primary Care Office
- Visitors:** Rhett Partin, Georgia Hospital Association (GHA)
Courtney Terwilliger, GA Association of EMS
James Coughlin, Floyd Medical Center

Opening Remarks:

Due to IT problems, the webinar scheduled for March 10, 2010 was cancelled.

The regular scheduled meeting of the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) Advisory Board meeting was held at Community Health Works, Macon, Georgia, Wednesday, June 16, 2010. The meeting convened at 10:35 a.m.

SORH Advisory Board Minutes:

The minutes of the December 2, 2010, meeting was approved as submitted.

Charles Owens welcomed LaDon Toole as a new member of the Advisory Board and explained Mr. Toole was unable to attend today's meeting, but will be introduced at the next meeting. Mr. Owens also acknowledged that Jennie Wren-Denmark was reappointed to another term of service on the Board and expressed appreciation for her continued service.

Mr. Owens gave an update on the SORH. The SORH has a new Migrant Director, Melanie Kimball. The SORH federal grant funds increased \$30k this year to total \$180,000. The SORH grant funds supplement salaries, office supplies and a small amount will supplement network grants. The increase in funds will be used to increase network grant funding.

The FY10 amended budget was passed. See below for the SORH program reduction data:

- Chatham Co. Board of Health reduced \$55,000 (reduction ~25% of their budget)
- Georgia Rural Health Association reduced \$10,000 (reduction ~30% of their budget)
- Area Health and Education Centers (AHEC) reduced \$156,000 (~25% of their budget)
- Southeastern Firefighters reduced \$62,000 (reduction ~25% of their budget)
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) reduced by original allocation of 2M (1M for Behavioral Health and 1M for New Start). \$250,000 was added from Tobacco Funding in the FY 2010 amended budget New Start FQHCs.

As a matter of interest, Georgia Partnership for Caring was reduced by \$75,000. SORH does not manage that program, but it is associated with health improvement.

Listed below are some items of interest from the recently signed FY11 budget:

- Chatham County Board of Health Homeless Project in Savannah eliminated – \$223,602
- GRHA was eliminated – \$30,000
- Georgia Partnership for Caring was eliminated - \$150,000
- SE Firefighters was eliminated - \$250,000
- AHEC reduced by \$191,000
- St. Joseph Mercy Care reduced by approximately \$14,000

David Zammit commented that a tracking system of the programs reductions would be helpful to see how they continue to fund their work.

Charles Owens said Chatham County has Federal funding that will provide for a Nurse Practitioner and further advancement of the program. The State funding is only a portion of the funds they receive.

David Zammit asked if any of the programs are totally closed.

Charles Owens stated that everyone is moving forward. The burn foundation, a 501C3 organization, assists patients and families of burn victims and is now operating on private donations. After the sugar factory explosion, their work became magnified and the legislature began to fund the program. Because of the current budget crisis, funds are no longer available. The GRHA will also continue to look for funding to continue their work, as well as the other projects mentioned.

Mr. Owens continued his report of the SORH beginning with the Migrant program. He shared that Melanie Kimball and Tony Brown submitted the Migrant grant and received an increase for expenses to total slightly over \$2.5M. The increase was distributed fairly to the Migrant sites. The allocation was based on the number of encounters. The process is consistent with the formula drafted for all the SORH grants. The ARRA grants are moving forward. Both the Increased Demand for Service (IDS) and the Capitol Improvement Program (CIP) have 9 months left. Mr. Owens referenced that Jennie Wren, East Georgia Health Care, and Decatur site have entered into a contract to purchase a mobile unit with their funding. Colquitt County has completed their solicitation and is now ready to enter into an agreement. The Migrant Farmworker Clinic is the fourth grantee and the only grantee with a grant labeled construction. They have received approval from Health Resources Services Administration) HRSA to go forward with a modular unit.

Mr. Owens shared that the PCO data will be explained later by Tina Orrick, PCO Director, who will be presenting later in the program. The ER Diversion Grant will be ending in 2011. It is exciting to see the work of the program complete and positioned to move forward to a new phase.

Mr. Owens reported on the Hospital Services program. At the last meeting, the SORH Board spent some time discussing issues they felt should be included in the FLEX application for the coming year. The grant was submitted in April. The comments from the meeting were compiled and those submitted were:

- Sustainability with a focus on education
- Quality improvement – Critical Access eligible hospitals will now be able to participate in the quality improvement initiative – Proposed for eight hospitals to be funded to participate in the initiative
- Networks

Historically, the FLEX grant has received approximately \$480,000. This year the Hospital Services program requested the maximum allowed for application of \$750,000 to expand the FLEX program.

Mr. Owens gave kudos to the Georgia Hospital Association and Patsy Whaley, Director, Hospital Services, for the Quality Improvement (QI) program. The FLEX monitoring team, a resource team funded by HRSA, published a report to provide resources for the program called “*Models for Quality Improvement*”. We are proud to report Georgia is one of eight states named in the document. They are trying to develop partnerships between states. Patsy Whaley, Director Hospital Services, Vi Naylor, GHA, and Lorna Martin, GHA, are working with Idaho at present. They are sharing how Georgia began and the intricate details of the administration and functionality of the QI program.

The funding request for SHIP increased also this year. Funding for the SHIP grant is based on SHIP eligible hospitals. After review, we were excited to see that the number of eligible hospitals has increased by nine. The eligibility is based on the hospitals cost report and it must show they have 49 staffed beds or less. The request for funding for SHIP was \$549k for 61 hospitals. New hospitals qualifying are:

1. Cobb
2. Hart
3. Donalsonville
4. Dorminey
5. Dodge
6. Elbert
7. Adel
8. Phoebe Sumter
9. Piedmont Mountainside

The Hospital Services program just completed a grant called the *FLEX Veterans Access Grant* to assist rural veterans with access to health care, particularly Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. One of the best ways to deliver the care is through telehealth. The SORH will partner with Georgia Partnership for Telehealth (GPTH) to develop 10 mental health sites. The sites can be located in clinics, hospitals, FQHCs, Public Health Departments, Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), CAHs, and rural hospitals. Once funding is received, site locations will be determined according to veteran population.

Steve Barber asked if nursing homes are included.

Charles Owens answered that nursing homes are included because veterans are sometimes placed in nursing homes.

David Zammit stated he will be participating in meetings with the VA within the next two weeks. VA has expressed the need for assistance from other health care groups to accommodate the heavy patient load, particularly with substance abuse and suicidal issues. Mr. Zammit suggested the SORH office attend those meetings.

Charles Owens informed the Board that Paula Guy from GPTH is reaching out to our neighboring states, Florida, South Carolina and Alabama to offer technical assistance. GPTH will help them explore the possibilities of developing a statewide telehealth system.

Charles Owens explained the need to change the day for the regular SORH Advisory Board quarterly meeting. After an email survey, it seems that the second Thursday of the month is the most convenient time for most Board members to meet. The scheduled meeting dates for the remainder of this year and 2011 are:

- October 14, 2010
- January 13, 2011
- April 14, 2011
- July 14, 2011
- October 13, 2011

After discussion, the Board felt the Community Health Works location was a central convenient location and expressed desire to hold future meetings at Mr. Dent's location.

Mr. Owens reminded the Board that the offices of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are vacant. After some discussion, David Zammit volunteered for Vice-Chair. Steve Barber made a motion that we accept David Zammit as Vice-Chair and Greg Dent seconded the motion. The members voted by oral response and the motion was carried. The members of the Board will vote for Chairperson by email.

Charles Owens gave a presentation titled "A Best Value for Georgia". Tina Orrick continued the presentation with an overview of the various programs/projects of the Primary Care Office (PCO). A copy of the presentation is attached.

David Zammit discussed difficulties he encountered with the 3RNet program. He suggested that more education be available to health care facilities about the 3RNet and its capabilities.

Tina Orrick explained that the SORH PCO office staff is always available to instruct and give personal attention to anyone having problems.

Steve Barber shared some points of interest concerning the history of the SORH. He complimented Charles Owens, Executive Director of the SORH office and the staff for making tremendous strides since 2005.

Charles Owens thanked Mr. Dent and his staff at Community Health Works for hosting the meeting. There being no further business or public comment, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,

Charles Owens, Ex-Officio

Sheryl McCoy, Recording Secretary/Date

Stuart Tedders, Secretary/Date