



**STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
October 5, 2017**

Present: Jennie Wren-Denmark, Chairperson
Carla Belcher, Member
Robin Rau, Member
Ann Addison, Member
Sheila Ramer, Member
LaDon Toole, Member
Joe Robinson, Member
Damien Scott, Member

Absent: O.J. Booker, Member
Ajay Gehlot, Member
Stuart Tedders, Member

SORH Staff: Patsy Whaley, SORH Executive Director, Ex-Officio
Dawn Waldrip, Substitute Board Recording Secretary
Lisa Carhuff, SORH
David Glass, SORH
Nita Ham, SORH
Beth Walker, SORH
Cynthia Stubbs, SORH
Tiffany Hardin, SORH

Visitors: Linda McKnight, Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation
Erin Gallucci, Family-Patient Liaison SE Firefighters Burn Foundation
Lisa Walker, CFO Georgia Department of Community Health

Opening Remarks:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jennie Wren-Denmark who noted there wasn't enough members present to consist of a quorum. Members Robin Rau and Carla Belcher immediately arrived, making a quorum, the meeting was then called to order.

Jennie asked for the approval of the minutes, after a motion by Damien Scott and second by Sheila Ramer, the minutes were approved as submitted. Patsy Whaley announced that member Kay Floyd has resigned from her position on the board. Patsy told the board that she has submitted a candidate for the open position and is waiting for approval from DCH. She declined to reveal the candidate's



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name until the candidate is approved and notified. Jennie then asked for introductions of members and visitors.

Tiffany Hardin and Jennie Wren-Denmark reported the results of the HRSA Operational Site Visit for the Georgia Farmworker Health Program (GFHP) conducted in August. Jennie serves as President of the GFHP Board and Tiffany is the SORH Director of GFHP. Jennie reported that of the 19 HRSA requirements, they missed only five.

Tiffany and Jennie briefly reviewed each of the findings and shared their tactics for correction and resubmission where necessary. Jennie said most of the findings could be corrected and resubmitted by editing or changing a policy but one finding that spurred much discussion related to the requirement of having a farmworker board comprised of 51% farm workers. Jennie said this is difficult to achieve due to geography. The large program area, southwest to east Georgia, makes it difficult to find board members that meet the criteria who are willing to take a whole day from work at their expense to attend a meeting. Program regulations won't allow travel reimbursements and she believes it is a disservice to board members to have them participate via phone conference. She said they will have to work on a solution. Jennie said that they have a waiver in place for this regulation but the auditors still found them non-compliant.

Both Ann Addison and Carla Belcher said they both have served as auditors and were perplexed as to why there was an audit finding after having been granted a waiver for this requirement. Patsy Whaley asked Ann and Carla if they could explain why the waiver was not considered. Neither could offer an explanation although Ann suggested that in future site visits, they should pin down the reviewer to get a better explanation of the audit finding. Jennie said she and Tiffany were very pleased with the overall improvement of the program. At the last audit 11 requirements were not met.

Nita Ham introduced Linda McKnight, President and CEO of the Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation. Nita has 10 years' experience as a trainer at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. She said when she first read what a positive impact the Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation grant dollars make in Georgia, she cried. Linda McKnight then presented a very informative overview of the many services provided through the foundation in coordination with Doctor's Hospital in Augusta, the Joseph M. Still Burn Center, the Jeffery Vaden Chavis house, Shirley Badke Retreat, and several churches and businesses in the Augusta area.

Grant funds along with donations take away barriers for burn victims and their families by providing needed essentials including transportation, food, medicine, anti-scarring garments and any other need the families suffering burn injuries and recovery may have.

Linda reported that 25% of all burns are children which has led the foundation to recently update the Chavis house to accommodate children and their families. Linda said the operating budget for



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the burn foundation is \$1,004,054 which comes from grants, contributions, fund raising events and aluminum can recycling. Jersey Mike's Subs and the Imperial Sugar Refinery are just two of the large fund raisers supporting the foundation noting that Jersey Mike's Subs raises over \$20,000 annually and the sugar refinery annually sponsors a golf tournament fund raiser.

Linda said the newest fundraising project two years in the making is the "Thank a Lineman" Project. This is an auto tag project depicting a lineman silhouette and the words "Thank a Lineman". The tags go on sale October 18, 2017 for \$35 each with the first 1,000 sale proceeds going to the foundation. She said linemen are like first responders and are often patients of the burn center due to the nature of their work.

Linda added that the majority of all contributions to the foundation are used for the patients with 77% of all funds collected going to projects, 14% for fundraising and only 9% for management.

Linda introduced Erin Gallucci, Family-Patient Liaison for the foundation, who holds a degree in social work and grief counseling. She shared some of her experiences working with the burn victims and their families and stressed the importance of how forming bonds with other patients sharing the same experience helps patients and families deal with burn injuries. Linda said the foundation strives to become a full service entity to include rural areas as well as the Augusta area. The complete Power Point is available upon request.

Lisa Walker, CFO and Deputy Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Health, explained the State of Georgia Budget Process to the board. Before coming to DCH December 1, 2016, Lisa served the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) serving under Governor Nathan Deal. Her first order of business at DCH was to change the way the DCH budget is submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. She has been working to streamline the processes to avoid delays in submission and to improve communication. She provided a diagram and explained each of the entire budget cycle processes and the timeline involved for each process.

Lisa also shared an example of a newly implemented Budget Comparison Report designed to inform each business owner of the real time status of each grant. Patsy said that this report will be very beneficial to the SORH commenting, "how do we (at SORH) know what we can do if we don't know what we have?" and that this report alone will help the SORH better plan the utilization of grant dollars in Georgia.

Lisa said there also has been changes within personnel at the department, "to put the right people in the right place". Robin Rau asked Lisa since she came from OPB, does she feel that the changes she has made so far at DCH have made the department more transparent. Lisa said yes, that no one likes surprises and that the legislators stress it is important to know where you are financially at all times. She added that the changes made since her and Commissioner Barry's tenure in office so far are



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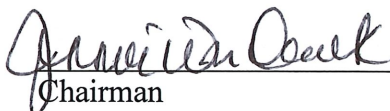
moving in the right direction to be more transparent. Lisa said the department is striving day by day to make improvements.

Lisa commented that she strives to get her staff outside of Two Peachtree to better understand rural versus metro issues which prompted the committee into discussion about the pitfalls of rural versus metro areas in regards to transportation, impacts of public health, hospitals and hospital closings. Lisa's complete Power Point is available upon request.

Committee members continued to discuss the struggles of rural hospitals and the problems that arise from lack of board education. Patsy gave the example of Clinch Memorial Hospital that is struggling financially. Unfortunately, Patsy said many of its hospital board members are farmers who have refused educational opportunities SORH has offered because they "don't have time". The consensus was that without proper hospital board training, the board members unfortunately will be to blame for not making the right decisions to save struggling hospitals from closure. Robin Rau agreed to participate in a mentoring program for rural hospital CEOs if needed and LaDon Toole commented that he doesn't know "how much time we have before small rural hospitals will have to close if we don't find some sort of model like hub and spoke that works for rural communities".

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectively,


Chairman


Secretary


Recording Secretary