

ANNUAL REPORT
January through December 2002

COMMITTEE NAME: Health and Human Services Advisory Council

CHAIR: Ellen S. Walden (January 2002 through May 2002)
Frances Neelands (June 2002 through December 2002)

STAFF SUPPORT: Gloria Benischeck
Ellen S. Walden (June 2002 through December 2002)

BCC LIAISON: Commissioner James Bryant

BRIEF HISTORY OF COMMITTEE:

In 1997 the Health and Human Services Advisory Committee and the Mental Health Substance Abuse Advisory Committee were combined to form the Health and Human Services Advisory Council to the Board of County Commissioners. The Council evaluates human services programs in the community. Assists in determining the effectiveness or program, reduce duplication of services and assure the health and human services needs of the residents of St. Johns County are met. They review applications requesting County funding for programs that provide health, mental health, substance abuse and social services and submit recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. The Council performs its functions and duties without regard or condition as to the race, religion, gender or national origin of any affected person.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The health and well being of a Community is a function of its quality of life, including the delivery of health and human services supported by public policy and funding those in need of such services. Our mission is to be responsive to those needs and to recommend funding programs worthy of public support for citizens of St. Johns County.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2002:

The Health and Human Services Advisory Council has its own web page now, thanks to the help of Frances Neelands, Ellen Walden, Gloria Benischeck. and Rhea Lovan the County's Webmaster. The web page contains a wealth of information regarding meeting dates, agendas, membership contact information, in addition to funding charts containing financial and program information. You may view it at the following web site:
<http://www.co.st-johns.fl.us/BCC/Public-Health/HHSAC/index.htm> .

In January 2002, the Council was requested to recommend funding to St. Johns County for the "Choose Life" License Plate Funds. These funds were to be distributed to only non-governmental not-for-profit agencies providing services limited to counseling and

meeting the physical needs of pregnant women already committed to placing their children for adoption. No funds were permitted distribution to any agency involved or associated with abortion activities, including counseling or referrals to abortion clinics. Nor were funds permitted to be distributed to any agency that charged women for services received. After much deliberation over the applications, the Council made a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to split the available funds between St. Gerard Campus, Inc. and Alpha-Omega Miracle Home. One other agency applied; ARK Youth Ministries, but the Council felt only agencies serving St. Johns County would be eligible. The Council is confident that this funding source will continue in the years to come.

Also in January 2002, the Council received “letters of intent” for funding from 20 agencies serving the county. All agencies were sent applications.

That same month, the Council expanded their responsibilities in their By-Laws by becoming advocates for the needs of the community, rather than the needs of the applying agencies. The revised funding application was used for FY 2002-2003 and the 5-point system was set up for the Council’s review later on in the spring of 2002, which delineated a better distribution of funds for the needy in our County. The initial funding requested by the Independent Agencies was \$1,707,793.11, an increase over last year of \$591,925.11. A workshop was held to provide technical assistance to the agencies in an effort to provide a forum for the agencies to ask questions related to the proposals and to exhibit the council’s desire to work with the agencies. This effort would eliminate the adversarial nature that of the HHSAC meetings with the independent agency representatives during the budget review process..

An update on the Hastings Clinic by Dr. S.S. Marathe revealed that the patient numbers were increasing and that physicians would be increasing the hours at the clinic to 40-48 hours weekly. Discussion also indicated the need and vision to expand the primary health care services in Hastings and to establish a one-stop center for health care. This would include dialysis diagnostic imaging center, dental, and urgent care. They are looking into the purchase of some land in the Hastings area and are applying for federal grants to become a “FQHC”, Federal Qualified Health Clinic.

Throughout the spring and late summer the review process moved forward towards the conclusion of the Council appearing before the BCC on May 14, 2002 with Chair Walden, Vice Chair Neelands and Council member M. Wilson. On May 22, 2002 Chair Walden, Vice Chair Neelands and Gloria Benischeck, Community Services Manager of the SJC Social Services Department, spoke during the Budget Process at the County Complex. Some County Commissioners as well as County Staff were thoroughly briefed on the Council’s application process, questions were answered and it was a well-attended meeting. All representatives of the requesting agencies present spoke during the hearing.

In the fall of 2002, the Council heard a report by Dr. Maria Colavito, Director of the SJC Mental Health Dept., outlining the strategy and step process of the state’s change to privatization in the delivery of foster care and related services, as Community Based

Care. The legislative plan for implementing privatization includes contracting with an eligible single lead provider, and that SJC would apply for the Lead Agency position, as designated by vote in the BCC meeting of August 14, 2001. It is a possibility that the HHS would be involved in the process, since all the agencies receiving funding from the BCC cover the necessary deliveries of health care required by the Lead Agency initiative. **These categories would include, but not limited to, community health, supportive housing/living, economic opportunity, and activities for youth, and basic assistance.** Within all five of our broad categories appear the necessary elements to participate in the Community Based Care Program such as physical & mental health, adults and children, homeless, elderly and residents of rural areas, job skills to become self supporting and self sufficient, school age at risk youth, and more.

The Council reviewed the “Strategic Plan”, a product of the SJC Visioning Committee. It appeared that many of the areas of concern mentioned in the plan were already being addressed by the HHSAC and recommendations passed by the BCC have documented their commitment to improving the quality of life for the citizens of St. Johns County.

As the legislative plan for privatization continues, counties will begin seeing a shift in the management and administration of funding for service provision, that has traditionally been done at a state level, but will now be realized at the local level.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

As 2002 comes to an end, the road to be traveled by the Council, will be laden with many challenges as well as opportunities and the Council is up to the test. The Council is clearly committed to, has met and will continue to meet the **goals** outlined in the Resolution that created it.

They are as follows:

- (1) *to encourage efficient and effective delivery of quality health and human services to the residents of this county;*
- (2) *to fulfill the purposes, function and services of the Council without regard or condition as to the race, religion, gender or national origin of any affected person*
- (3) *to concentrate on evaluating health and human services available, assessing unmet needs, and to fund and establish services to improve the overall welfare of St. Johns county residents; and lastly*
- (4) *To plan, promote and monitor for an effective health and human service delivery system within St. Johns County.*