

BOARDS & COMMITTEES ANNUAL REPORT  
2008

DATE: March 6, 2008

COMMITTEE NAME: St. Johns County Health and Human Services Advisory Council

CHAIR: Lynn Brueske-Walton

STAFF SUPPORT: Ann Henry, St. Johns County Social Services

BCC LIAISON (IF ANY): Commissioner Ron Sanchez

**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 of a program, reduces duplication of services and assures 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 2007:** The Council continued refining the Request for Proposals (RFP) process in the conjunction with Health and Human Services staff and the County Purchasing office for its funding recommendations of service agencies to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). The BCC issued a Resolution reducing the Council membership to nine individuals, and the Council Bylaws were changed to reflect the Resolution. Per the Bylaws and Resolution changes, members shall consist of five (5) professionals, preferably one from each of the disciplines of Health, Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Social Services; and four (4) at-large including but not limited to such compatible areas as business, banking and finance, education, law enforcement, religious community leaders, consumers and any other interested parties comprising the general public.

The duties and responsibilities of the Council were continued to include: that the Council participates in the planning process for Health and Human Services; review and evaluate community Health and Human Services programs, needs, services, and special issues; promote a comprehensive and integrated approach to Health and Human Service issues

within the County; serve as a sounding board for a wide base of community response regarding the community's Health and Human Service issues and programs; establish an ongoing program of education and dissemination of information to its own members; and continue to participate in the RFP Process for Health and Human Services through the Health and Human Services Director and make reports and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners and the County Health and Human Services Director and other such bodies as appropriate.

The Council members as of the date of this report include:

Mr. Thomas Myrick, retired from NCR and Bell/Howell. In the past, he has served on the Board of Directors for United Way of St. Johns County and the Early Learning Coalition. He represents District 4.

Mr. Steve Larew is employed as Director at the Gallaudet University Regional Center at Flagler College. He represents District 1.

Ms. Lynn Brueske-Walton is currently serving as Chair of the Council. She is an Assistant Professor in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Programs at Flagler College. She represents District 2.

Dr. Ron Dixon, was recently appointed as Vice Chair of the Council. He has a dental practice in St. Augustine. He represents District 5.

Mr. Stan Gustetic is an Administrator of Related Services at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind. He represents District 4.

Ms. Linda Hood is a Student Services Specialist for the St. Johns County School District, She represents District 2.

New Officers were installed in November 2007. Lynn Brueske-Walton will serve continue to serve Chair and Dr. Ron Dixon will serve as Vice Chair. The month to hold the election was changed as well. The Council voted to hold elections of Officers during the month of May each year after the annual RFP process concludes.

Local agencies gave presentations to the HHSAC in effort to keep the Council informed of the services provided with County funding. In addition, the United Way Director, Ann Breidenstein, gave a presentation on that agency's function and funding process. Agency presentations ended once the timeframe for the Request for Process (RFP) process began to ensure no appearance of impropriety or favoritism on the part of the Council or an agency. The Council will continue with such agency presentations when the RFP process/timeframe ends.

A training/workshop was held on units of service, performance measures and allowing for questions and answers on the RFP process. The workshop was held at the October 2007 HHSAC meeting by Dr. Rex Emerick of the St. Johns County Health and Human

Services Department. The workshop was provided to assist agencies in gaining skills and knowledge so that they may report their accomplishments in a clear and concise manner in the RFP Process and their monthly and bi-annual reporting to the County.

Commissioner Ron Sanchez, BCC Liaison, attended many of the Council meetings. His input and updated information concerning our County provided needed educational information to the Council and assisted the Council in completing its duties. It is hoped that the new BCC Liaison appointed will continue this trend by attending Council meeting when possible.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2009:** Dental therapy access for indigent adults has been identified as a significant problem in St Johns County. Council member, Dr. Ron Dixon, a local dentist, convened an ad hoc committee to tackle this problem. Dr. Dixon also met with and joined the local Good Samaritan group. The Good Samaritan group have an indigent medical clinic and have been the organizing force of a providing a once a month indigent dental clinic. To establish a more permanent presence in the community, the Good Samaritan group is pursuing opening a specific clinic to assist indigent residents with medical and dental care. Land has been essentially donated, the County has facilitated changing the zoning and waiving governmental fees, and a building floor plan has been agreed upon. Currently, the group is working on refining the building plans, fund raising (about \$250,000 is needed), equipment procurement, staffing and clinic organization. So as not to be duplicating efforts on similar goals, the ad hoc committee was put on hold. The committee's efforts have been focused on working with the Good Samaritan program to establish an indigent Dental Clinic.