Dauphin County Human Services Block Grant Planning and Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

May 27, 2016

In attendance: Scott Burford, Randie Yeager, Sam Priego, Dan Schramm, Jack Wright, Daniel Eisenhauer, Paul Boyer, Fred Lighty, Jennifer Wintermyer, Robert Burns, Todd Singer, Annmarie Kaiser, Cheryl Dondero, Darryl Reinford, Rocco Cambria, Tim Whelan, Ron Sharp, Beth McCallister, Currin Haines-Yoder, Rick Vukmanic, Diane Reed, and Paula Ruane.

Scott Burford, Block Grant Coordinator, chaired the meeting and welcomed all. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the status of the next fiscal year’s Block Grant and to hear from the department directors what items they will be including in the upcoming plan.

Following self-introductions, Scott mentioned that guidelines for the plan were received last week by county officials. He pointed out that July 8, 2016 is the deadline for the submission of next year’s plan and he asked the directors to adhere by that deadline.

HSDF update provided by Randie Yeager:

- Despite the delay in receiving Human Services Development Fund monies for the current fiscal year, it is anticipated that all contracts (Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness, Christian Churches United, CONTACT Helpline, International Service Center, Shalom House) will be spend down by the fiscal year end of June 30th. In all likelihood, contracts for the next fiscal year with these organizations will be at similar levels. New planning guidelines are slightly different than in the past.

- The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank contract has nearly expended its contract. This organization has served to date 1,090 unduplicated clients – its highest figure ever- at the Northern Dauphin Human Service Center Food Pantry. An additional food pantry will soon open in a church in Northern Dauphin.

- Meals on Wheels is currently serving one client. At one point, twelve clients were served. We don’t anticipate this service level to markedly increase.

- During the next fiscal year, we will continue our efforts to offer Family Group Conferences (FGCs) to families that do not involve a child. The number of FGC referrals involving adults has dwindled over the past five or six years partially due to the availability of funding.

- A field trip to Pittsburgh will take place next week in order to determine if we can benefit from Allegheny County’s integrated service system. Particular emphasis will be paid on learning how we can more effectively use data and communicate on a cross-systems basis.
Tim Whelan commented that the Aggregate Gross Income (AGI) levels of individuals using the United Way’s “Money In Your Pocket Campaign” at the Northern Dauphin Human Service Center (NDHSC) was lower in 2015 than 2014. The AGI at the NDHSC was $14,360, the lowest of all sixteen campaign sites.

Children and Youth update provided by Annmarie Kaiser and Currin Haines-Yoder:

- The department is in the process of filling all positions. The director positions will soon be filled and caseworker vacancies are close to being filled.

- The department is looking at all programs and positions to ensure they are included in the upcoming Needs-Based Budget.

- Each program division is examining all active contracts to ensure that the right workers have been assigned to manage them.

- Sadie Kinnarney, the new Program Specialist/Educational Liaison, is moving forward with the Check & Connect program within Rowland School. All county school districts have been invited to a meeting in August regarding the issue of truancy. The Check & Connect program will be introduced at that time. The Central Dauphin School District is very receptive to Sadie making preventive referrals. She is also reaching out to the Magisterial District Judges in order to put a face to Children and Youth.

- The department is doing a better job tracking referrals to Samara House and is examining the issue of what constitutes a successful discharge.

- The Pride Program is a work-in-progress for foster care situations. Additional foster care families are being recruited. An examination is taking place in terms of understanding why kids are in Schaffner Youth Center and in foster care. A departmental goal is to further the usage of foster care as opposed to congregate care.

- A plan is in place to cover Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) cost overruns.

- Departmental spending at the end of the third quarter was 20% higher than at the same period last year as more children are being served.

Drug & Alcohol Services update provided by Cheryl Dondero:

- Two recently held town hall meetings took place and were very well attended.

- Two new Mobile Case Management Specialist positions were added to the department’s personnel roster. Those hired will work in the community, particularly hospital emergency rooms in which patients have overdosed on heroin or other opioids. We are also partnering with Pinnacle Health on this project.
• The Central PA Addictions Conference will be held next week and is sold out as 280 will be in attendance.

• Penn State Harrisburg is partnering with Dauphin County on a new website covering all areas of the heroin and prescription drug epidemic. This collaboration is being financed through a grant using Dauphin County gaming funds. Drug & Alcohol Services (D&A) will be working with the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to use Medicaid expansion and matching county monies for detox expansion at Gaudenzia Common Ground.

• Department hopes to purchase naloxone for county adult probation officers who have been trained how to carry and use the item.

• Recovery Housing Scholarships are available to Medical Assistance recipients using Health Choices reinvestment dollars to cover first two months’ rent.

• Regarding the D&A budget, it is hoped that funding will be increased in order to improve capacity to combat heroin usage.

• Rocco Cambria asked if the department is tracking the success of drug treatment programs, and was told “yes”. Tracking includes looking for reductions in the usage of the drugs of choice and identifying the various stages of drug treatment. Hopefully, more and more people in recovery will eventually become Certified Recovery Specialists. The two new Mobile Case Managers will assist with these tracking efforts.

Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities update provide by Dan Eisenhauer:

• Crisis hired two new full time staff on May 9th, but just experienced two recent resignations. They currently have three full time vacancies and one part time vacancy. It’s a challenge to achieve full staffing levels.

• No expectation of any substantive changes in block grant Homeless Assistance Program block grant plan content or funding.

• Need to better coordinate with homeless shelters and transitional housing programs referrals to Rapid Re-Housing.

• Submitted grant to OMSHAS in which they would work with the PA Psychiatric Institute (PPI), and the CMU to help identify teens and young adults as prospective beneficiaries of an evidence based program targeted to persons experiencing a “First Episode Psychosis.” The program includes psycho - education for the person and their family, blended case management, and evidence based supported employment. The grant is very competitive as there will only be six counties awarded a grant. If the grant is not awarded,
the department will still work with PPI and would try to implement some portions of the evidence based model.

- According to a 2015/2016 local study on the Dauphin County prison population, providing mental health services alone does not result in a reduction of recidivism for persons with mental illness in the criminal justice system. The principal problem underlying recidivism is anti-social behavior. The department will attempt to incorporate into their block grant plan efforts to combine mental health services, and programs that may address anti-social behaviors that increase the risk of criminal recidivism.

- The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services/Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is likely going to change eligibility for the current Waiver funded programs that are currently targeted towards people with an intellectual disability (ID). Such changes could negatively impact ID base funds in the block grant.

- The ID program is focusing on employment and decreased usage of residential group homes. Independent living with supports, and life sharing arrangements, usually have better outcomes including greater satisfaction for consumers than living in group homes.

- Nancy Thaler, the Deputy Secretary for ODP, is reviewing current procedures and is making many systemic changes to the ID system and doing so at a rapid pace. One change is implementing a planning method called “Life Courses”. MH/ID will partner with other counties to apply to ODP to become a “learning collaborative” to implement Life Courses with the goal of engaging families and consumers to better plan for their futures including using informal supports and formal services.

- Currin Hayes-Yoder asked about the eligibility for Rapid Re-Housing and Dan responded by stating that the program follows HUD definitions of homelessness and HUD regulations. Darryl Reinford commented on the involvement of Christian Churches United.

- Rocco Cambria inquired about his desire to see about 30 staff become certified in customized employment, but that the training to become certified is not being funded. Dan said he would check with Shirley Keith-Knox about the availability of ID program funds for this cost.

- Scott Burford asked if Deputy Secretary Thaler has given any indication regarding funding for ID Block Grant funds, and Dan commented that her priority is to stabilize funding of the ODP waiver programs versus Block Grant funding.
Scott Burford commented that the County Commissioners are proud of the progress taking place in the Human Services Departments. He said the human services team has really stepped-up to meet community needs.

Mr. Burford pointed out that next year, we will have 100% flexibility in terms of using Block Grant funds.

Mr. Burford reiterated that our formal Block Grant Plan for FY 2016/2017 is due to the state by July 8, 2016. The plan will be presented to the commissioners prior to its state submittal.

Mr. Burford mentioned that progress has been made towards refining the Block Grant formula.

There were no comments from neither the Planning and Advisory Committee nor the public.

Mr. Burford thanked everyone for coming and encouraged all to call or write if they think of any questions.

All were wished a happy holiday weekend and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:00AM.