Dauphin County Human Services Block Grant Planning and Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2016

In Attendance: Scott Burford, Randie Yeager, Sam Priego, Fred Lighty, Annmarie Kaiser, Cheryl Dondero, Currin Haines-Yoder, Paul Boyer, Rocco Cambria, Paula Ruane, and Jack Wright

Scott Burford thanked all for attending and participants introduced themselves. He reminded us that the meeting is a quarterly public hearing which is open to the public and emphasized the importance of attending.

He informed us that the meeting room and the elevators will be renovated by the end of April, but the committee will continue to meet in the same room.

Scott pointed to a handout titled, “SB 613 – County Human Services Grant Expansion Amendment” which will give all 67 Pennsylvania counties the ability of voluntarily apply to become a block grant county. In 2012, Dauphin County was one of just 20 pilot block grant counties.

Human Services Development Fund update provided by Randie Yeager:

Although the Children and Youth funding stream will be moved out of the block grant, Randie Yeager mentioned that the department will continue to participate in our quarterly planning and advisory committee meetings. The data collection process will continue. Randie said that even though the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is not a part of the block grant, that department participates in our meetings. Director Bob Burns was unavailable to be present due to a provider contract issue. It is important that all human services agencies stay connected with the program.

Regarding the Human Services Development Fund (HSDF), Randie commented that the Northern Dauphin Food Pantry remains very busy, and that there is just one participant in the HSDF AAA Meals on Wheels program.

She mentioned that the dashboard associated with the United Way’s “Life in the Capital Region: 2014 Assessment of our Community” will be placed on both the United Way’s and Dauphin County’s websites. The dashboard will be updated as soon as new reports are made public.

Randie Yeager delivered MH/ID Director Dan Eisenhauer’s report:

Homeless Assistance Program (HAP):

HAP funding remains level compared to last fiscal year. We were able to use transferred Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) funds from other programs last fiscal year (15-16) to increase payments to HAP providers beyond the original allocation and we hope to be able to do the same thing this current 16-17 Fiscal year because three shelter providers (YWCA, Shalom House, and Interfaith Shelter) and the HELP Ministries Homeless Prevention program were deemed ineligible.
for Pa’s DCED 2016 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding. The ineligibility stems from the fact that Harrisburg is an entitlement community. Our homeless providers are facing decreased revenue from other sources. Dauphin County has appealed the determination by DCED that Dauphin County is ineligible for those funds, but all the 2016 ESG funds were already disbursed by DCED. Rocco Cambria asked if anything can be done regarding ESG funding, and Randie and Fred Lighty said there is not much we can do since the issue is with H.U.D. In response to another question from Rocco, Randie said the shelters will lose more than $100,000 and that making up that shortfall will be a significant challenge.

The Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness is revising and updating its 10-year blueprint to end homelessness document. This 10-year plan is intended to focus our community and funding efforts in a coordinated and deliberate manner to reduce street homelessness and transient homelessness, promote housing first options, increase affordable housing, and prioritize individuals and families for scarce permanent housing resources.

Crisis Intervention:

Crisis Intervention is nearly fully staffed. In the past two months, we hired three new full time case worker staff for second and third shifts as well as three short term per diem staff who can augment our staffing patterns while our new staff are being trained. We also filled our clerical position. This is the first time in almost two years we are at essentially full staff.

Mental Health (MH) Program:

The Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute (PPI) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in September to celebrate the completion of a capital project including HealthChoices Reinvestment funding establishing two separate inpatient programs for children and adolescents at their North Third Street location. This will be a big help since there is a demand for beds for children.

We are increasing our responsiveness to public school districts. An overview of the MH program was presented to approximately 40 school district personnel in mid-September. A Resource Toolkit is being developed to help them share information between districts about methods or programming that improves the emotional wellness of students.

We continue to work with CMU, PPI and the YWCA on our First Episode Psychosis Grant implementation. Formal training is being arranged for the grant partners on the evidence-based methods for treatment, education, and employment.

Sunflower Fields recruitment for tenants is underway. The developer expects to have five units available for tenants in January 2017, with five additional units becoming available in each of the next six months until all 35 units are occupied.

Intellectual Disabilities (ID) Program:

Goodwill Keystone Area announced that they will be closing their facility-based and day programs by July 1, 2018, and will instead focus solely on employment and employment related services in
the future. About 95 Dauphin County residents are served in this program. ID attended a meeting convened by Goodwill for parents and consumers to announce the decision and to begin the process of informing family members and consumers about their options.

The PA Office of Developmental Programs published draft regulations (PA Code Title 55 Chapter 6100) that will govern waiver funded and county base funded ID services. Comments are due December 20, 2016.

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

Annmarie Kaiser began her report by bringing to our attention the fact that referrals are on the rise within Children and Youth as evidenced by a recent increase in the daily average from 18 to 30. One of the reasons for the increase may stem from the department’s greater sense of presence in the community and because children have returned to school thus, increasing referrals from teachers and other mandated reporters.

She pointed out that caseworker vacancies will soon be filled by a great group of Caseworker 1 candidates. Also, it was mentioned that the caseworkers that have left their positions are leaving for other opportunities. It is anticipated that vacancies in the Northern Dauphin Office will shortly be filled and that an Emergency Duty worker will be added during the week and another one will be added on the weekend. This person will provide assistance by meeting with children and families to fulfill the required timeframes.

Annmarie brought to our attention that Angela Quarles, Community Outreach Supervisor, has a new title, but she has been doing significant outreach in the community even prior to this change.

Four case aides will be hired and assigned to various county regions and will provide more hands-on support to families.

Currin Haines-Yoder told us that the department has fully implemented its assessment process pertaining to current data. Currently, out-of-home care data is being analyzed.

The new Educational Liaison is being made aware of truancy allegations and their associated school districts for referrals to truancy prevention programs.

Angela Quarles’s position is fluid since its new and can easily adjust given changing circumstances. She is doing great work at community events. She will be tasked to present information to families about community and contracted services providers with the hope that this will prevent families from entering the Child Welfare system.

In regards to housing, the department is working towards moving forward with Rapid Re-Housing which will focus on the 18-25 years old population as individuals or parents.
Drug and Alcohol Services update provided by Cheryl Dondero:

Cheryl mentioned that her department has three vacancies, two of which are in the process of being filled. Two new per diem case managers are being fully trained and will soon become operational. By January 1st, she hopes to have “warm hand-off” related materials (overdose to treatment) ready to distribute to partners such as hospitals and police departments. Cheryl met with Dauphin County E.M.S. and Police Chiefs who are excited with their new county services. A protocol containing a “warm hand-off” will be implemented.

She told us she anticipates her staff will soon be able to arrive at hospitals in the tri-county area within 30 minutes of being notified of a drug overdose situation.

The Hamilton Health Center and Pennsylvania Counseling Services are scheduled to each receive supplemental funding from the state in the amount of $500,000. They were selected by the Department of Human Services to become a Center of Excellence. Each center will have 300 patients and efforts will be made to get the two awards consolidated into one. D&A will serve as the coordinator in that patients won’t get their referrals without coordinating with them. Randie pointed-out that for the past two years, D&A has trained Certified Recovery Specialists who will be involved in this effort.

Cheryl said that the terms of the D&A Advisory Council will expire on December 31, 2016 and anyone interested should come forward. She said she would like to see representation from the Bhutanese and Amish communities given recent drug outbreaks.

Scott asked about the selection process for the Centers of Excellence and Cheryl mentioned that the centers are a key portion of the governor’s response to the opioid crisis. The centers must also deal with issues such as housing, medication treatment, and food. She explained that most of the grant funds will be used to hire staff for care management. We want to ensure that opioid users receive more access to treatment, have more of an incentive to enter treatment, and periodically return to treatment.

Sometime soon, the state is expected to announce a D&A treatment hotline.

Cheryl said that D&A’s phone number has been co-opted by a for-profit company in Florida. Paula Ruane of Gaudenzia reported on a similar incident.

D&A is now doing assessments on all DUI’s in Dauphin County.

Cheryl is interested in learning of what impact possible changes in the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid Expansion will have on her department in terms of service provision.
Other Issues:

Randie mentioned that transportation is a big challenge in Northern Dauphin in terms of residents being able to access services or even go shopping at grocery stores. There are no pediatricians in Northern Dauphin and just one gynecologist who sees patients once a month. Of the area’s 31,000 residents, 6,000 are on medical assistance. She told us of an application for a gaming grant which, if awarded, will be used to purchase one van to transport adults and children within Northern Dauphin and another for transportation to Harrisburg. The vans will provide access to health care, treatment, pharmacies, and grocery stores.

Cheryl Dondero asked about the status of gaming grants. Scott said that while the legal issues involving gaming grants wind their way through the courts, Penn National Gaming signed a MOU to continue funding the county until next June. A second MOU may be signed late next year. Penn National Gaming’s efforts are very much appreciated.

Scott thanked everyone for coming and wished everyone a Happy Holidays.

Randie said she anticipates that the full Human Service Integration Plan will be shared at the next meeting in February.