

Health Access Coalition
Meeting Minutes, 5/09/06

Present: Aimee Chitayat, Mary Ann Ferrera, Mary Benotti, Ana Araujo, Wanda Session, Sandra Padilla, Jana Aloo, Martha Rodriguez, Lola Ejiwunmi, Sue Martini, James Acuña, Paula Hines, Michelle Williams, Padmini Parthasarathy, Rachel Berry-Millett.

Welcome and Introductions: Aimee welcomed the group and members introduced themselves.

Steering Committee Report: Mary Ann reminded members that the Public Charge presentation will be held on Tuesday, June 13 and that it will replace next month's Health Access Coalition meeting. Mary Ann announced the upcoming Strategic Planning Session in July and emphasized the importance of attendance and prompt arrival of all HAC members. The meeting will be held from 9am – 12pm on Tuesday, July 11. The focus of the meeting will be to assess and redesign the HAC sub-committees and their goals and activities for the coming year.

CHDP Gateway –

Michelle Williams gave a PowerPoint presentation on the CHDP Gateway Program. The program provides preventive and follow-up care for Medi-Cal recipients ages 0-20, deemed eligible newborns, and uninsured children 0-19 who meet the income guideline of <200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Uninsured children who receive services are linked with temporary Medi-Cal, and an application for continuing Medi-Cal is sent to the family's home. For those who meet eligibility requirements, there is no cost for CHDP services. Statewide, 675,000 kids were pre-enrolled in the Gateway program last year, and over 6,600 children have been enrolled in Contra Costa County.

Michelle and Paula Hines took questions after the presentation. Copies of the PowerPoint will be distributed to coalition members at the next meeting.

April 25 Board of Supervisors Meeting –

Wanda, Aimee, and Paula updated the group on the April 25 Board of Supervisors Hearing on the county budget cuts. The 2006-07 county budget has been finalized and 220 positions have been eliminated, 200 of which were vacant positions. Of the 20 filled positions cut, 18 were from health services and 2 were from general services. One of the primary items that people advocated against at the hearing was pharmacy closures at the Richmond, Pittsburg, and Martinez health centers. Additionally, there were major program reductions in Mental Health Services and in Alcohol and Other Drug Services. Some potential cuts were rescinded, however, including those for STAND and other domestic violence services, as well as the crisis line.

Policy Update –

Aimee Chitayat gave an update on the following policy items:

- AB2141 (Jones), the Parent-Child Communication Assistance Program (PCCA), which seeks to decrease teenage pregnancies through programs that target parent education and training on how to talk to children about sex and sexuality. The bill is currently in need of support. Aimee distributed a Fact Sheet outlining the proposed program.
- Governor Schwarzenegger's 2006-07 Budget. The Health & Human Services Assembly sub-committee recently met to discuss the budget. The committee proposed \$76 million in co-pays for dual-eligibles forced to pay for their medications under Medicare Part D. The committee also recommended \$5 million be used to start coverage expansion for uninsured children, including raising the Healthy Families income guidelines from 250% of the Federal Poverty Level to

300%, and the Medi-Cal guidelines from 100% to 133% FPL. Funds for Eligibility Workers as well as a stipulation that premium payments would not be required before enrollment in Healthy Families, were also approved. The committee rejected a media enrollment campaign.

The budget was still in negotiation at the present time, but Governor Schwarzenegger was expected to release the May Revise within the week.

- The Citizenship Verification Provisions in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which will require individuals seeking Medicaid coverage to furnish written proof of citizenship at the time of application or redetermination. The requirement will apply only to U.S. citizens and will not change the verification requirements for legal residents or undocumented individuals. Aimee distributed a summary of the Provision.

The group also discussed the immigrant day of protest on May 1, the recent fear of INS raids, and the concern over patients canceling medical appointments. Aimee distributed a *Contra Costa Times* article addressing the issue.

Mental Health Services –

Suzanne Tavano, the Clinical Operations Chief of Mental Health Services, discussed the effects of funding cuts to Mental Health and gave an overview of mental health services and programs. The 2006-07 budget cut \$3.5 million from Mental Health, much of which was vacant positions. There was a net reduction of staff as well as direct service cuts, including closure of the Summit Center for troubled youths and a reduction of services at the Orin Allen Boys Ranch and Juvenile Hall. Many of the boys will be diverted to other programs. With the reductions, access to care for undocumented and uninsured children is a major issue, as well as children who are aging out of foster care.

The children's clinics suffered the most reductions in the budget cuts. In 2004-05 Mental Health served 18,000 individuals, 40% of which were children. There are approximately 2,000 children being seen in the provider network. With the cuts, some kids can be diverted to the network but those who need high-end clinical services may experience a longer waiting period.

Suzanne outlined the regional program structure and its intake and referral process for children's services. She distributed handouts on Managed Care Medi-Cal Access for Mental Health Services, Mental Health Centralized Administration & Programs, and East, West, and Central County Children's Services.

Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, will provide \$7.5 million for new mental health programs, but will not supplant reductions from the budget cuts.

Announcements & Updates

The location of the June 13 Public Charge presentation has been changed to the Willow Pass Community Center, located at 2748 E. Olivera Road in Concord. We will NOT have a Health Access Coalition meeting in June. All members are invited to attend the presentation in its place.

The meeting was adjourned at 12pm.