

## HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

March 28, 2012

340 West Hanover Avenue, Morris Twp.

### Members Present:

Robert Armstrong, Citizen Rep./Morris, Sussex, Warren HIV/AIDS Advisory Committee

Marcia Brands, Citizen Rep.

Jeff Bashe, Citizen Rep./United Way Success by Six, departed the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Linda Csengeto, CEAS/COC Representative, OTA Rep., departed the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Cynthia Degazon, Citizen Rep.

Xiomara Guevara, Hispanic Affairs

Charles LaRussa, Citizen Rep.

Elizabeth Manley, Caring Partners/YSAC Rep.

Kathy McKeithen, Citizen Rep.

Ken Oexle, Citizen Rep.

Tom Pappas, Citizen Rep./Aging, Disabilities & Veterans Advisory Committee, departed the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Michelle Roers, United Way of N.N.J.

David Walker, Morristown Neighborhood House

Rebekka Zydell, Child & Family Resources

### Also Attending:

Laurie Becker, MCDHS

Sheri Boehm, MCOTA, departed the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Joan Bruseo, MCOTA, departed the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Shelia Carter, MCDHS

Gary Denamen, MCOTA

Ryan Godfrey, Student at Drew University

Zachary Larsen, Student at Drew University

Pat MocarSKI, MCDHS

Frank Pinto, MCDHS, departed the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Christine Stepaniak, MCOTA, departed the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Luis Tamayo, NJDHS, departed the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Phyllis Tonnesen, MCOTA, departed the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Katherine Vernon, Student at Drew University

- I. Call to Order** – The March 28 meeting of the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) was called to order at 5:30 p.m.
- II. Welcome and Introductions** – Everyone was welcomed and introductions were made.
- III. Guest Presentation** – Morris County Office of Temporary Assistance (MCOTA)  
The traffic at MCOTA has increased 61% from two years ago. Presently there are approximately 5,000 clients going through MCOTA per month. This increase in clients

has created additional stress on staff. MCOTA realizes they must all work harder, faster and be more efficient.

Recent changes include revamping the food stamp program. There is a newly formed hand picked group that will now be handling this program. In the Medicaid area, there are new procedures in effect to help staff catch up on 500 backlogged cases. Every effort is being made to get things done in a more timely and efficient manner.

Discussion ensued about Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, and General Assistance (GA). Ms. Zydel asked for an explanation on why clients are generally terminated from their benefits once they find employment. Ms. Bruseo explained that the TANF income guidelines are very low and once the client gets a job their benefits are terminated. This is due to state regulations and MCOTA has no leeway with these rules and regulations. MCOTA realizes that this often makes it difficult or impossible for clients to pay rent and/or other bills; however, they must follow state rules and regulations.

Ms. Roers asked about the possibility of having a single point of contact for clients. Ms. Tonnesen stated there are 29 Medicaid programs alone and it is impossible for one worker to answer all questions or to have adequate knowledge of all programs. The reason clients are shifted to different workers is because each worker has their own specialty. Ms. Tonnesen stated, with new policies in place, clients speak with one person who answers the intake line. The client will no longer be switched around. The intake person will take a message and forward it to appropriate staff. The client will get a much quicker return call this way.

Ms. Tonnesen also stated that there are programs in place to help clients obtain a higher degree of education so they may get better paying jobs. There are many clients able to succeed. However, there are also many clients with skills that won't enable them to make enough money to independently survive. A big problem in Morris County is that housing costs are extremely high. Morris County is the second most expensive county to live in. The average one bedroom apartment with utilities is about \$1,200 a month. The high cost of housing makes it extremely difficult for clients coming out of the social service system to manage. Often clients end up cycling in and out of the welfare system.

Ms. Brands stated that State Hospitals are currently housing a lot of folks that can't be discharged since there is no permanent supportive housing available to them. It seems especially difficult for those patients with drug and alcohol abuse and/or mental illness. This is a whole other population that needs help to obtain housing.

Ms. Roers stated there is \$22 million out there for the Housing Trust Fund that we should also consider doing advocacy for. This money was designated for towns to provide housing for low and moderate income people in New Jersey. Under a law signed by Governor Jon Corzine towns in New Jersey had until July 2012 to use this money. There is a great need for this money to be used for programs to help support

affordable housing. The local Planning Boards need to be reminded that they need to commit their money or this Housing Trust Fund money will be taken back from towns. Members of the Committee are considering advocacy efforts pertaining to this issue.

**IV. Approval of February 22 Minutes** – Pat MocarSKI pointed out that “is reduced” was left out of the bottom of Page 5 fifth bullet point. The sentence should read “If the child is absent 3 days the provider payment is reduced by 3 days.” A motion to approve the minutes with noted correction was made by Linda Csengeto and seconded by Tom Pappas. All were in favor with no opposition and no abstentions.

**V. County of Morris Department of Human Services – Frank Pinto**  
Mr. Pinto stated that in attendance today are college students visiting from Drew University for Student Government Day. Earlier today about 34 students attended the Freeholder Board’s Annual Student Government Day at the Freeholder’s Session.

**VI. County of Morris Planning and Development, Division of Community Development – report provided by Sabine VonAulock – read by Ken Oexle**  
Community Development’s 2012 Annual Action Plan is available for comment on the Morris County Planning & Development, Division of Community Development’s website at [www.morrisplanning.org/divisions/community](http://www.morrisplanning.org/divisions/community) or by telephone request to (973) 285-6061.

The action plan lists all the activities recommended for the following three programs:

1. Community Development Block Grant- which assists towns and nonprofits with infrastructure, neighborhood facilities and public services.
2. HOME Investment Partnerships associated with the development of affordable housing; and
3. Emergency Solutions Grant which provides Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing funds to organizations serving persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

A public hearing will be held on Thursday, April 19, at 5:30 p.m. in the Freeholder Public Meeting Room on the fifth floor of the Administration and Records Building on Court Street in Morristown.

**VII. New Jersey Department of Human Services Report (DHS) – Luis Tamayo**

The state budget is \$32.1 billion which is larger than last year. The Department of Human Services budget is \$6.3 billion. There are significant changes and restructuring taking place which accounts for some shifting around of funding.

On March 19 there was a public hearing regarding the closing of Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital scheduled to close this summer.

There is \$2.5 million earmarked to move non-violent offenders to treatment instead of incarceration.

There is proposed an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) expansion to 25%. They are trying to inform seniors about EITC and make them aware that there are local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites they can use. There are over 300 VITA sites in all. Free income tax preparation is available at VITA sites for low income taxpayers filing simple tax returns. There is a significant savings they may also be eligible for with the EITC. A family of 5 making about \$40,000 can save \$5,000. This is a lot of money. For further information on where local VITA sites are located call 211.

Ms. Carter informed the Committee that a presentation was given on EITC and VITA at the Freeholder meeting this morning.

#### **VIII. New Jersey Department of Children and Families – Sue Jones**

The award for the Morris County Family Success Center went to Northern New Jersey Maternal Child Health Consortium. The program is located at 73 Basset Highway in Dover. Family Success Centers are “one-stop” shops that provide wrap-around resources and support for families before they find themselves in crisis. Family Success Centers are located throughout the state. The grand opening for the Morris County Center will be on April 14 from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. For further information call (973) 620-9711.

In Morris County the Division of Youth & Family Services (DYFS) worked with 755 families and 1,472 children. Referrals seem to be on the rise. There were 387 referrals for the month of February.

#### **IX. Staff Report – Laurie Becker and Shelia Carter**

McContacts is being used for future correspondence and meeting notices. If you want hard copies of any materials you receive via email, please contact Pat Mocarski at least three days in advance at [Pfetzer@co.morris.nj.us](mailto:Pfetzer@co.morris.nj.us) or call her at (973) 285-6859.

#### **Morris County Child Care Assessment Concept**

- The State Department of Children and Families (DCF) is required by the Modified Settlement Agreement and Annual Progress Service Report (APSR) Program Improvement Plan - to assess service needs for at risk children (youth 14 to 21) and families across New Jersey’s 21 counties.
- We’re not being asked to generate volumes of new data. We may use existing county level information and stakeholder input.
- We will distribute a survey which solicits feedback related to:
  - Services that are currently available in the target areas;
  - Barriers to accessing these services; and,
  - Gaps in the provision and availability of these services.
  - We are to receive feedback from providers, consumer/clients and any other stakeholders with knowledge of the county’s array of services.
- We will provide an analysis that prioritizes or **ranks** service **needs**.

- There will be a Meeting of the HSAC Planning Subcommittee on Wednesday, April 4, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., at 30 Schuyler Place, Third Floor, Blue Room.

Ms. Becker stated that the County wants to take this opportunity to work together with the advisory committees and make this happen. Upcoming focus groups working on this include:

- Aging In/Aging Out Task Force, Tuesday, April 14, 30 Schuyler Place, Morristown at 10:00 a.m.
- Youth Services Advisory Committee, Thursday, April 19, 340 W. Hanover Avenue, Morris Township at 2:30 p.m.
- Systems Review, Monday, April 23, at Caring Partners CMO, 200 Valley Rd., Suite 406, Mount Arlington at 9:30 a.m.

Middlesex County has been used as a model. Their total report ends up being about six pages; however, there were about 80 pages in total including the attachments.

Ms. Carter will be getting Survey Monkey Gold to help gather information for this assessment.

**X. Subcommittee Reports –  
CEAS/COC – Linda Csengeto**

There was discussion about the presentation given to Community Agency Directors regarding Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act and upcoming changes related to homeless funding.

The idea of merging the Morris County Continuum of Care (CoC) with another county was also discussed. It was decided that there is a need to explore all aspects of this idea. On April 5 there will be a follow up meeting of Directors regarding the idea of merging CoC's.

The Homeless Plan retreat will be on May 18 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth's College, Annunciation Center, in Morristown, New Jersey. This is a planning retreat to develop strategies for Morris County's ten year plan to end homelessness. For questions, please call Jodi Miciak at (973) 993-1160 x135.

Robert Parker, CEO of NewBridge Services, Inc. also serving on New Jersey's Special Needs Housing Trust Fund Steering Committee reported:

The Special Needs Housing Trust Fund (SNHTF) needs to be replenished.

Signed into law in 2005, the fund authorized the issuance of \$200 million of bonds to create housing for people with special needs and the homeless.

The Special Needs Housing Trust Fund, under the auspices of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, helped create quality housing people can afford with needed supportive services throughout New Jersey.

People with special needs include individuals with mental illness, physical or developmental disabilities, victims of domestic violence, ex-offenders and youth offenders, youth aging out of foster care, runaway and homeless youth, individuals and families who are homeless, disabled and homeless veterans, individuals with HIV/AIDS, or those in other emerging special needs groups.

Mr. Parker asked agencies to go to **SNHTF.org** (Special Needs Housing Trust Fund.org) to endorse the Campaign to Encourage the Governor and State legislature to **renew** the Special Needs Housing Trust Fund. Without this funding many families would still be living with aging parents or institutionalized. Others would be homeless or returning to prison because they can't find a home they could afford.

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will be counting every family member individually instead of looking at a family as one unit, to be in line with Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) regulation. The benefit is to have a better picture of the number of people being served; since every member of the household will be considered.

**Planning Subcommittee – Childcare Dedicated Voucher Process – Rebekka Zydel**

The subcommittee has reallocated 14 dedicated vouchers for infants from birth to 2 ½ years old. Agencies receiving from 1 – 4 vouchers are Mt. Olive Child Care & Learning Center, Little Learner Academy, Flanders Valley Country Day School, Morristown Neighborhood House Peer Place, Greater Morristown YMCA Richard Blake Center and the Magic Garden School.

As of March 1, there are potentially another 11 slots that may be available for reallocation. These slots are not being utilized for a variety of reasons from parents losing their jobs to families moving. The wait list has begun to move. Agencies have 60 days to fill these slots. Child & Family Resources is watching and tracking empty slots. There are currently 334 children on the waiting list. The waiting list is need based and not first come first served.

**Program Review Subcommittee – Kathy McKeithen**

The subcommittee met and after much discussion agreed that it is not necessary to make any changes in the funding priorities at this time. All Grant-in-Aid, Social Services for the Homeless and Child Abuse Prevention funding priorities will remain the same.

**XI. Advisory Committee Reports**

**Youth Services Advisory Council (YSAC) – Liz Manley**

The next YSAC meeting will be on April 19, 2012 at 2:30 p.m. at the Morris County Human Services Building at 340 West Hanover Avenue, Ground Floor Conference Room.

### **Workforce Investment Board (WIB) – Jack Patten**

DiscoverAbility NJ, which is part of the NJ Division of Disability Services, recently issued a fact sheet for workforce professionals on disability benefits. The fact sheet will also be useful for other social service providers because it contains information on a wide range of programs and services for jobseekers with disabilities. Fact sheet topics include:

- Disability benefits programs
- Work Incentives
- Resources and New Jersey specific information
- A link to data on increasing enrollment in cash benefit and health coverage programs

For further information on DiscoverAbility NJ go to [www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/projects/discoverability/](http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/projects/discoverability/).

The WIB funds employment programs for unemployed youth. The programs are operated by Morris/Sussex/Warren (MSW) Employment and Training Services (ETS). In Morris County, the principal youth training provider is NewBridge Services Project 70,001. NewBridge has successfully provided youth services for the WIB for over 20 years. In addition to comprehensive youth programs like NewBridge, the WIB also funds individual training at local colleges and trade schools. Finally the WIB can contract with businesses to provide direct training to eligible youth. ETS is now recruiting youth aged 16-21 for its classroom training and on-the-job training programs. For further information on these programs call Michael Polizzo of MSW Employment and Training Services at (973) 829-8400 x222.

### **Mental Health Substance Abuse Advisory Board (MHSAAB) – Laurie Becker**

The next MHSAAB meeting will be on April 12 at 5:15 p.m. at 30 Schuyler Place on the Third Floor. All are welcome to attend.

Ms. Becker stated that the annual Consumer and Family Forum will be held on June 12 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Saint Francis Conference Center, 122 Diamond Spring Road in Denville. The theme of the forum is the Many Faces of Recovery “Standing Up to Stigma”. Please join in for an interactive evening.

### **Council on Aging, Disabilities & Veterans – No report**

#### **Morris, Sussex, Warren, HIV Advisory Committee – Robert Armstrong**

The most recent World AIDS Day slogan, Getting to Zero, Zero new HIV infections; Zero discrimination; Zero AIDS-related deaths, reflects the new language and goals around bringing the 30 year epidemic to a close.

The National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) -

Goals: 1) Reducing HIV incidence; 2) increasing access to care and optimizing health outcomes; and 3) reducing HIV-related health disparities.

Vision: The United States will become a place where new HIV infections are rare and when they do occur, every person, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or socioeconomic circumstances, will have unfettered access to high quality, life-extending care, free from stigma and discrimination.

The Newark Eligible Metropolitan Area (NEMA) HIV Health Services Planning Council is creating a 2012 Comprehensive Health Plan that incorporates the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS), Health Care Reform, Early Intervention Services and Healthy People 2012 Initiatives for The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Programs. A new collaborative is being created called Early Intervention & Retention Collaborative (EIRC). EIRC will be implemented this year to better integrate prevention and treatment resources by breaking down the silo effect of having the two areas administered by separate funding streams. HIV prevention and testing is administered by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and HIV care and treatment is administered by HRSA. The Ryan White program has identified HIV interventions which are both Prevention and Treatment including identifying HIV positive people who are unaware that they are infected, and linking newly diagnosed individuals to care. The EIRC will administer local HIV prevention and treatment coordination and will be made up of representatives from Centers for Treatment and Referrals (CTR) and HIV service providers. There will be one EIRC in the tri-county region of Morris, Sussex and Warren.

In 2011, a ground-breaking clinical trial (HPTN 052) – named the scientific breakthrough of the year by Science magazine – found that HIV treatment not only saves the lives of people with HIV but reduces HIV transmission to others by more than 96%. This confirms that treatment is prevention, since an HIV positive individual who has an undetectable HIV viral load, is vastly less likely to be able to spread the infection.

The NEMA Grantee reported that the NEMA Ryan White Part A award for FY'2012 is \$14,134,006 which is about \$80,000 more than last year. Nationwide there was a \$1.5 million decrease in Ryan White funding.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 24 at 11:00 a.m. at New Jersey AIDS Services in Morris Plains.

**United Way of Northern New Jersey Success by Six – Michelle Roers**

There will be a Public Officials Forum on Tuesday, May 15 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The annual forum features an important public figure highlighting an important topic to the community. This year the forum will feature Cory Booker - who will be speaking on the theme of mentoring. Mentoring efforts in the area will be highlighted. All are invited. The Forum will be held in the Dolan Performance Hall at the Annunciation Center at the College of St. Elizabeth's in Morristown. Please make a reservation by calling the United Way of Northern New Jersey at 973-993-1160.

**XII. Old Business –**

Ms. Becker stated that the 2012 Not-For-Profit Conference will be on April 26. It will be held at the Meadow Wood Manor at 461 Route 10 East in Randolph from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required and due no later than April 24, 2012. There is a \$20 fee for this event. For further information fliers are available and registration can be completed on line at <http://events.morrischamber.org>.

**XIII. New Business –**

Ms. Zydel stated there is an advocacy effort for the Childcare Development Block Grant which needs to be reauthorized and up for renewal. It is a good time to write your local Congressman for support. Discussion ensued about the need to get this grant reauthorized. Ms. Zydel will draft the letter for this advocacy effort. This letter needs to be done prior to September.

Ms. Roers from United Way of Northern New Jersey agreed there is a tremendous need for advocacy letters for childcare and the Housing Trust Fund. A letter with regard to Housing Trust Fund monies should be sent to the League of Municipalities and/or local senators to remind them that if they don't commit their Housing Trust Fund money it will be lost. Ms. Roers will draft a letter of advocacy for the committee to review. Mr. Oexle suggested her completing the draft by April 15 in order that Ms. MocarSKI can email it to the committee for review prior to the April meeting. The committee would like to get this letter out as soon as possible since the deadline for committing the Housing Trust Fund money is July 1. Ms. Roers stated how important it is that all municipalities recognize the need for affordable housing and the need to encourage them to commit their money so they won't lose it. The committee will review and vote on this letter at the April 25 meeting.

**XIV. Public Comment – None**

**XV. Adjournment –**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Fetzer MocarSKI  
Program Development Aide