

Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families
April 7, 1999—Minutes

Members Present

Maria Bell
Martha Carroll, Director, 16th District Court Services Unit
Dr. Michael Dickens
Meredith Gunter
Dr. Susan McLeod, Director, Thomas Jefferson Health District
Linda Peacock, Assistant City Manager, City of Charlottesville
James Peterson, Chair, Director, Region Ten Community Services Board
Jeff Sobel
Dr. William Symons, Superintendent, Charlottesville City Schools
Cathy Train, Director, Thomas Jefferson Area United Way
Roxanne White, Assistant County Executive, County of Albemarle
Esi Yarney

Others Present

Saphira Baker, Director, Commission on Children and Families
Terri Evans, Project Assistant
Howard Cullum, Consultant, Former Secretary of Health and Human Resources

I. Welcome/Chair Remarks

Mr. Peterson called the meeting to order at 5:10 P.M. to assure the presence of a quorum. After welcoming the attendees, he introduced Howard Cullum, former Secretary of Health and Human Resources to the Commission. He then referred to the revised agenda and noted that the Weed and Seed Network presentation would be postponed until the May meeting, which will be held at Albemarle High School.

II. Brief Update

Saphira Baker began the update by reporting on the activities of the Commission staff. Currently, Commission staff is involved with a joint effort with the United Way to produce a directory of youth services and collecting data for the Stepping Stones project. The staff will present the Commission's annual report at the June 21st Charlottesville City Council meeting, and desires to do a similar presentation for the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors as well. The Public Involvement work group is continuing to seek community involvement in Commission activities, and is sponsoring a logo contest to achieve this. Contest materials have been distributed to all local high school art department heads and principals. Thus far, over \$200 in prizes have been donated by local businesses, including tickets to Paramount's Kings Dominion.

Ms. Baker suggested holding the recognition ceremony for contest winners at the June 3rd Commission meeting at the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library. Dr. McLeod questioned

whether the June 3rd date was reasonable considering that schools generally prepare to close around that time. Dr. Symons replied that this date should not present a problem because schools are closing on or near June 10th. Ms. Baker also reported that the Commission website is progressing and expects to be able to present a demonstration of it at the June meeting.

III. Specification of items to be added and adoption of agenda

A request for a discussion of the activities of the Outcome Funding work group was added to the agenda.

IV. Comments from the public

As there were no members of the public in attendance, Mr. Peterson dispersed with comments and proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

V. Minutes from March 3, 1999

Because the names of the mentioner and seconder were not noted in some places of the March minutes, Mr. Peterson requested that Commission members refer to the minutes and indicate who initiated and seconded the motions for ratification. It was also noted that Cathy Train was not in attendance for the March meeting, although the minutes indicated otherwise. The corrections were noted and a motion was made to accept the minutes.

ON A MOTION BY MEREDITH GUNTER, SECONDED BY DR. DICKENS, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE MARCH MINUTES, WITH CORRECTIONS.

VI. Selection of Nominating Committee

Mr. Peterson announced that Debbie Pomerantz, Dr. Mcleod and Dr. Pianta would serve on the nominating committee, with Ms. Pomerantz serving as Committee Chair. In May, the committee will propose a slate to present to the Commission to be voted on at the June meeting. The new officers will take their seats in July.

VII. Committee/Work Group Updates

A. CSA Committee

Ms. Ralston opened the report with a summary of the financial affairs of the CSA committee. Albemarle County's request for state funding has been approved; approval of funds for Charlottesville has not yet been received. She also reported that the state CSA office recently completed a 2-day compliance review of Albemarle County. The representative liked the committee system that CCF has in place, and found no duplication of services.

The report suggested three things to improve the efficiency of the CPMT: (1) Include the child in FAPT meetings; (2) Change Individual Family Service Plans

(IFSP) to reflect outcomes; (3) Develop a system for the collection of parental co-payments. Ms. Ralston reported that CCF/CPMT actually collected more money than had initially been reported, and that Debbie Stone will research other localities to study their collection efforts. The Case Authorization and Review Team is currently looking into ways to reduce costs, and is considering three methods of cost-containment: (1) Have case workers present three alternative service recommendations (2) Develop professional FAPT teams or providing specialized training on financial management (3) Use “care coordinators ” similar to those used in Newport News and Hampton.

The CSA committee is still waiting on the State Executive Council to issue guidelines concerning the multi-disciplinary team requirement of House Bill 2075. The committee is also waiting to see if the new legislation will require the City Manager and Albemarle County Executive to appoint individuals to serve on the Commission since it serves as the CPMT for Charlottesville and Albemarle. The committee will produce an updated CPMT and FAPT policy and procedure manual after the release of State Executive Council guidelines. Ms. Ralston noted that the use of Medicaid funds for therapeutic foster care is on hold at the federal level. She also reported that Charlottesville and Albemarle are waiting on a bid from Chesapeake for the purchase of the Harmony information system for tracking data.

Ms. Train questioned what “FAPT” was an acronym for, and who was required to pay the co-payment for services. Ms. Ralston explained that FAPT stands for Family Assessment and Planning Team, and payment was not required from parents of children in special education programs. Parental co-pay is required, however, for Court Services Unit non-mandated cases and children in foster care or receiving foster care prevention services. Ms. Train asked whether it was a parent’s choice to pay. Ms. Ralston explained that it is policy to allow parents to pay on a sliding scale, but most parents are too poor to pay anything at all. FAPT also has been aggressive in the collection of funds in the past. Martha Carroll pointed out that the FAPT coordinator is in a tough position and line staff are uncomfortable with aggressive collection tactics. Often, line staff will request that collection be delayed. The coordinator, however, will be asked to focus more on collection efforts.

B. Data Management Work Group

Although the Data Management Work group has not met, Dr. Dickens reports that the suggestions from the previous Commission meeting were noted and that the Stepping Stones parameters have been revised to reflect these suggestions. He commented that Bright Stars should be included with other four-year old programs. He acknowledged that a discussion of teen births would be added to the parameters but he needed clarification regarding what had been decided. Dr. McLeod suggested that the number of children born to teen mothers be added to the guidelines. She noted that these statistics are available from the Bureau of Vital Statistics. Dr. Dickens agreed to add this as a separate category under the

“Health” category. Including these two provisos, he sought approval for the revised Stepping Stones parameters. Although not all data will be immediately available, he hopes to give a preliminary report of findings to the Charlottesville City Council at the June 21 CCF report.

Saphira Baker commented that Debbie Stone is taking charge of the data gathering, and that most of the statistics are from 1997. Moreover, some of the data is not exactly available in the form indicated by the parameters. In light of this, she will ask Ms. Stone what data will be available by the City Council meeting on June 21. Linda Peacock suggested having Ms. Stone send the Stepping Stones database to agencies via e-mail and requesting that they return it with the necessary information entered.

Roxanne White asked if Ms. Stone was using the Thomas Jefferson Planning District as a source. Ms. Baker replied that she was not certain of this, but knew that Ms. Stone was using schools as one source. Dr. Dickens noted that part of the data gathering process includes the creation of an instruction manual that indicates the source of all data collected; this will ease the process of locating data in the future.

Ms. Train questioned the inclusion of “bike injuries without a helmet “ and asked whether “accidental or violent deaths, age 0-17” were two separate categories. Dr. Dickens explained that bike injuries were included as a measure of community knowledge of such dangers and the accessibility of preventative health counseling to avoid these types of injuries. He further explained that “accidental or violent deaths” were not two separate categories and offered to change the wording of that parameter. Ms. Train also noted that an attempt to record volunteer hours is difficult because that kind of data is anecdotal compared to other “hard” data since most agencies don’t record that data or use it in their audits. Dr. Dickens explained that this information was included as a measure of community spirit.

Meredith Gunter asked whether unemployment would be considered in the Stepping Stones parameters. Kathy Ralston pointed out the underemployment is more significant in this area, as many families earn well below what is considered a living wage for this area. This information, however, is difficult to measure. The Virginia Employment Commission should have data concerning unemployment and average wages for this area. Dr. Dickens will consider adding this to the parameters.

Roxanne White suggested using “subsidized housing” instead of “public housing” as a parameter because there are rental assistance programs, such as Section 8, that cannot be classified as “public housing”. Dr. Dickens will revise the parameter to read “subsidized and public housing”.

DR. DICKENS MOVED FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE STEPPING STONES PARAMETERS, SECONDED BY MEREDITH GUNTER. THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

VIII. Remarks: Mr. Howard Cullum

Mr. Peterson introduced Mr. Howard Cullum, former Secretary of Health and Human Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Mr. Cullum effected the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) and the adoption of Medicaid as a funding source for mental health and mental retardation services.

Mr. Cullum began his remarks by describing the history of the Comprehensive Services Act. The CSA was designed by judges and local officials because of the rise in budget allocations in the 1980s for foster care and other services. Seeing the rise in costs, it was determined that localities needed more spending flexibility. The CSA provided for collaboration between interagency teams, coordination of services to avoid duplication and increased local autonomy.

Mr. Cullum states that localities did not want to spend massive time and energy to make decisions, however this is exactly what has played out. Expenditures have doubled in the last eight years: some localities explore alternatives to expensive treatment plans, while others simply pay bills for care. Mr. Cullum expressed his belief of what the prime directive of clinicians should be: if you can help a child and do it cheaply, do it. Accountability should be required only if such an approach is *not* taken. Otherwise, the CSA becomes another bureaucratic entity, which is contrary to the initial goal.

Mr. Peterson remarked that he was one of the first 150 individuals on the CSA Committee, and when it was first organized locally, the CSA committee looked to the state for direction. This is ironic considering that the act was passed in order to grant localities autonomy from the State.

Meredith Gunter asked if, from a public relations standpoint, it was advisable for the Commission to hold a public dialogue concerning the expense of treating at-risk children. Mr. Cullum advised against this, stating that there are issues that are less controversial and more urgent in the community needing to be addressed. He suggested that the Commission focus on services that are needed rather than those that are mandated (i.e. cost of special education). This way, there will be no need to explain why there are kids in the community requiring \$100,000 worth of services annually. The Commission should concentrate on issues like affordable day care and other topics where there is a consensus among the public that a problem exists.

Mr. Peterson thanked Mr. Cullum for his participation. He also recognized Maria Bell for her work on a 10K race and Esi Yarney for her nomination for the Rotary International Youth Leadership Award by the Charlottesville Rotary Club. He noted that because of time constraints, the Outcome Funding update would be postponed until the next meeting.

A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING, AND THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 6:35 P.M.