

AHS FIELD SERVICES
BURLINGTON DISTRICT
Monthly Update
March 2007

Leadership Team Meeting – AHS Burlington District
Monday, March 26, 2007

Present: Anne McBee, Economic Services, Julie Rollo; Nancy Menard, Karen Garbarino, Dept. of Health; Tom Rotella, Office of Child Support; Erin Maguire, Regional Spec. Ed. Rep.; Beth Kuhn, Champlain Initiative; Ann Marie Miles, Victoria Boutin, Office of VT Health Access; Sr. Lindora Cabral, Mercy Connections; Kathy Henry, Dept. of Labor; Jill Evans, Dept. of Corrections; Felecia Lambert, RAC; Denise Lamoureaux, VT Refugee Coordinator; Lynn Granger, AHS Service Coordinator; Barbara Rachelson, Lund Family Center; Mark Ciociola, Vocational Rehabilitation; David O'Brien, 1st Baptist Church; Barbara Pafiero, VDH/ADAP; Mark Redmond, Spectrum; Martha Maksym, United Way; Deborah Sheldon, Recycle North; Sally Borden, Kidsafe; Karen Crowley, VDH/ADAP; Gina D'Ambrosio, JOBS; Eric Johnson, VocRehab; Catherine Simonson, Baird/Howard; Nita Lescher, Casey; Steve Habif, VCAS; Jane Helmstetter, AHS Field Director; Note taker: Julie Kenison, VDH.

Tom Rotello facilitated introductions and asked Mark Redmond to lead the discussion on Transition Age Youth. As agreed at our last meeting, additional community members who are affiliated with this population were invited to attend this meeting to address with the Leadership Team some of the most pressing issues in our community. Materials distributed included the Report of the Gov. Task Force and Legislative Update on H.449. The following notes reflect the highlights of the discussion.

1). Transition Age Youth

- Governor has said that policy must change regarding issue of 18 year olds aging out of the foster care system losing access to support services.
- There is \$725,000 available in budget for the transition age youth program at present. H.0449 has been introduced in the House which would allow youth to stay under the support of the foster care system until they are 21, 22 years of age if they are still enrolled in school or have a job.
- Case management concerns raised by this shift:
 - As of now, it's estimated that 80% of 17 year olds in custody of the State would choose to stay in foster care after they turn 18. With the new legislation, the families could continue to get funding; but what about the 20% who aren't in foster care-how will they be funded? Can they get the funds for housing even if they aren't living with a family?
 - There is potential to increase development of housing for 19, 20 year olds in SRO (Single Room Occupancy), 9 units to one house, to be supervised and remain under state care until transition into society can be made; 1/3 of the support they receive would go toward rent.
 - Youth need to know they can re-engage even after a year

- Housing needs are a huge issue; Youth have to be in school or working-how do you support those who lose their jobs?
- There is an increased focus on Medicaid eligibility for 18 year olds and older. There needs to be more youth enrolled; those who are or aren't enrolled in Medicaid are confused and overwhelmed with the paperwork involved in the Medicaid application/retention procedure.
- DCF worker could do additional paperwork to assure health care coverage continues.
- Can youth opt back into system if they choose to leave at 18? This needs to be an option as some youth will change their minds once they've left the system and yet are still entitled to Medicaid.
- There will need to be additional work on reporting changes and re-enrolling wording in the bill for those who wish to regain their benefits once they've disenrolled. Is there enough money to cover this if all kids opt to continue to receive services?
- Independence Place run by LUND, serves up to age 21-other programs at LUND serve up to age 27; agencies such as this may just need more capacity.
- Are youth in favor of this? Are they part of the advisory group? Is there an evaluation component built in?
- There is a Youth Development Commission in Dept. of Children and Families-chaired by Lynn Bundy-group formed in 2006-doing active networking with youth who were formerly in custody.
- Only 1.5 employees (case managers) identified in the bill? Is that enough?
- Some concerns about future funding if numbers increase
 - Another group of youth is being studied - youth with developmental delays or severe mental health issues or substance abuse would need additional support.

2) Several concerns were expressed which require additional information. It was agreed to continue with this community discussion at the April 23 Leadership Meeting.

- Is there a guide or checklist available for youth aging out of foster care?
- What happens to youth who have issues with the judicial system and end up in adult legal system?
- Should there be more work done with school guidance counselors?
- Who are the connections for the youth?
- Who should assure that this information gets developed?-Youth Council?
- How do we keep youth enrolled?
- What about youth who are aging out of residential programs-separate conversation-where will these youth go?-Legislation (H.449) doesn't address this at present.
- Can we identify all youth aging out of system and make a plan to reconnect with them again after 6 months.
- What groups come together currently in the district who are involved with youth and might be a good starting point for a community process?
 - Youth Council exists-Is there a state connection

- Youth Advocacy Groups
- Transition Age Group facilitated by JOBS monthly meeting
- Youth Developmental Staff at DCF-currently this is their job but only up to age 18
- Include support group for foster parents –LUND is natural partner.
- Who else should we invite to the follow up discussion - Christine Johnson and Cindy Walcottothers?

3) Given the need to extend the discussion to the April Leadership Meeting, the group requested the Schedule be revised and added to these notes. We will finalize the schedule at the April Meeting. For your consideration:

- April 23 – Transition Age Youth Continued
- May 14 – (Note change to 2nd Monday due to May 28 holiday) Partnership with Education - where are the intersections with AHS and how can we utilize this resource most effectively? Possible partners to contact for inclusion: Students FIRST, Autism Project, Children’s Integrated Services, School Social Work Program, Truancy Project
- June 25– Cultural Competency & Customer Service – Discussion to include the work of “Bridges Out of Poverty”, current groups with successful policies and practices and strategies to address the subtleties of racism without increasing defensiveness.
- July 23 – The Utilization of Service Coordination to achieve better outcomes for consumers AND providers. Review of the current system across the lifespan with an eye toward understanding eligibility criteria and “eliminating the seams” – Children’s Integrated Services, LIT, Transition Age Youth Treatment Team, Adult LIT, Act 264 Partnerships, Incarcerated Women’s Initiative.
- August 27 - Housing
- September 24 – Mental Health, Substance Abuse & Trauma
- October 22 – The Legal System & Alternatives to Incarceration
- November 26 & December(24) will be structured to produce an overview of the work of the preceding Leadership Meetings with a goal of providing recommendation to AHS for policy changes to better meet the outcomes identified through the Re-Organization process.

4). Jane gave an update on the North Ave. Building process. A memo was sent from Secretary LaWare to all Burlington Staff on Wednesday, March 21 explaining the loss of availability of the Pine Street site to house a new AHS regional office. Simultaneous meetings took place earlier Monday morning, March 26 at 1193 North Ave and 108 Cherry St. to discuss the next steps in the AHS Building process given this change. AHS Secretary Cindy LaWare and BGS Commissioner Tasha Wallis led the meeting with the North Ave. Staff and VDH Commissioner Sharron Moffatt and Dep. Secretary Steve Gold led the discussion with the VDH Staff at 108 Cherry St. Highlights of the ongoing process include:

- There is a commitment by the agency to provide an opportunity for employees at the North Avenue building to relocate as soon as possible, even if that requires an initial temporary site.
- As part of a relocation to interim space process, a variety of options are being explored to ascertain what spaces are currently available in downtown Burlington & vicinity. Bids from developers are being sought; ads will run this weekend. One of the options includes temporarily relocating some current employees at 108 Cherry Street so that AHS district office direct service units can move there in order to provide a single, interim, accessible Burlington address for consumers. These plans are in the very early stages and AHS will be actively engaging in dialogue with all potentially affected employees in tandem with the exploration of new potential sites as the process moves forward.
- Through BGS, a discussion has been initiated with a developer of a new building that could be built across from the Court House on Cherry Street which would be large enough to accommodate the consolidated AHS office. These discussions are very preliminary and all employees will be kept informed of any new developments.
- Secretary LaWare provided this message to AHS staff : “I want to reiterate that we will be moving forward immediately to create the opportunity for interim relocation of North Avenue employees. We appreciate that there have been staff concerns about the North Avenue building for some time and are committed to ensuring a healthy work environment for all.”

If staff have questions, thoughts or comments they can be addressed to either AHS Field Director Jane Helmstetter jane.helmstetter@ahs.state.vt.us or VDH Commissioner Sharon Moffat smoffat@vdh.state.vt.us

5). Important News from RAC and the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization regarding Transportation Needs in our state and community....

The House Transportation Committee will be hosting a public hearing on Tuesday, April 3, 2007 in Room 11 of the State House from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The purpose of this hearing is to discuss public transit and critical care transportation. Because public transit and vehicle use play a large part in global warming, the committee would appreciate your comments on a surcharge on new low mileage vehicles, emissions labeling and a decrease in the purchase and use tax for efficient new vehicles. For more information, please call Sheri at 802 828-2254

**NEXT LEADERSHIP MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2007
9 – 11 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 2A, 108 CHERRY ST**

