

**FINANCE MEETING – DISCUSSION RE
CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES AND
PFM RECOMMENDATION ON PERMANENCY INITIATIVES
(WENDY HOVERTER)
HUMAN SERVICES BLOCK GRANT DISCUSSION
(JACK CARROLL, SILVIA HERMAN AND SUE CARBAUGH)**

February 26, 2014

The Cumberland County Finance Meeting took place on Wednesday, February 26, 2014 at 1:30 p.m., Commissioners' Hearing Room, Courthouse, Carlisle, PA. Present were Commissioners Barbara Cross, Jim Hertzler and Gary Eichelberger; Larry Thomas, Chief Clerk; Joanne Burkhart, Deputy Chief Clerk; Heather Ilgenfritz, Commissioners' Office; Dana Best, Finance; Wendy Hoverter, Lisa Reider, Nicole Crisp, Children & Youth Services; Jack Carroll, Drug & Alcohol; Silvia Herman, Sue Carbaugh, MH/IDD; Steve Marroni, Patriot News.

Wendy Hoverter spoke about the Children & Youth PFM Mission Review Recommendation: **(see attached)**. Ms. Hoverter's presentation consisted of an overview of the County's participation in the Pennsylvania Permanency Initiative Program since 2008. It has been a relatively inexpensive program and very successful. The program is funded partially through the State. The County's subsidy is \$81,833 per year.

Participation in the PPI requires the following:

- Family Group Decision-Making – *case workers work closely with families regarding any concerns they may have.*
- Family Finding – *with decreased child placement, a caseworker can have the time to act as a family finder.*
- Family Development Credentialing – *this provides training for the providers to enhance services to the Children & Youth clients.*
- Three-month judicial reviews – *to review the child's living circumstances.*

It is important that if at all possible, family relatives take children into their own homes rather than being placed through the government system.

Number of Intakes in 2013:

- 1,330

This year's intakes were higher than in previous years, but thanks to the initiatives of the PPI, the number of children placed in foster care has declined.

In 2006 there were 173 children placed in foster care and this total has dropped significantly to 136 children in 2013.

There was a brief discussion regarding drug use by the parents of intake children and drug use by the youths themselves.

Block Grant Discussion: (Jack Carroll, Silvia Herman and Sue Carbaugh)

Jack Carroll discussed the Human Services Forum he attended that was sponsored by the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. The Forum featured presentations from representatives of 7 of the 20 counties that participated in the first year of the Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) Pilot Program. The Forum brought a fresh look at the Block Grant Program. A presentation was given by Brendan Harris, Executive Deputy Secretary for the Department of Public Welfare (DPW). There was a very honest evaluation of the Pilot Program's first year.

Pros as Cons regarding the program were discussed as follows:

Pros:

- Participating Counties have had a positive experience with the Pilot Program
- Redistributing funding within the seven funding streams
- Greater Flexibility
- Melded to meet the needs of all residents
- No Complaints from the Consumers, Advocates, Providers and other Constituents were reported
- Governor Corbett's proposed 2014-2015 Budget will include plans to expand the HSBG to any willing County
- No plans to remove any of the funds currently earmarked for the HSBG

Cons:

- Liability concerns
- Poor Communication between the Counties and DPW
- Participating Joinder Counties receive their MH, IDD and D&A funds in separate County-specific allocations which creates less flexibility in managing funds across the joinder area
- Requests have been made and denied regarding Joinder Counties being allowed to maintain their combined funding streams while participating in the Block Grant
- No new funding streams will be added to the current seven already in effect
- No update provided regarding the status of the challenge to the constitutionality of the HSBG currently pending in Commonwealth Court

The proposed 2014-2015 Budget does not include restoration of the 10% cut to Human Services.

If not a participant in the Block grant, all annual available funding must be used or it must be turned back to the State. IDD funding was discussed as those are the funds that are usually returned to the State, since they have to be held in case of an emergency. It was noted that 17 of the 20 Counties participating in the Block Grant Program did not spend all of their IDD money.

Sue Carbaugh said that Providers' rates are being cut across the State. Providers are unable to stay afloat with these rate cuts. "Why expand a business that is losing money?" Local providers such as CPARC, Skills and UCP are laying people off. The providers that rent/buy homes for IDD consumers especially for "graduates" i.e., young adult consumers, cannot keep up with the housing demand. It was also noted that these consumers are living much longer lives. There needs to be expansion of services by providers who have not provided services in Cumberland or Perry Counties in the past.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Human Services Development Fund and the possibility of this fund helping to meet funding needs. It was mentioned that this fund is a shadow of its former self and would not be of much help.

There have been continual cuts to Human Services' funding since 2007.

Joinder counties were discussed. There are 37 counties with the State who are part of a Joinder. 30 counties are in the Block Grant Program. Only five (17%) of the 30 counties are part of a Joinder. Joinder Counties can separately join the Block Grant Program.

There was a brief discussion about segregated funds for next year and the possibility of redesigning MH/IDD Programs.

It was agreed that there needs to be a conversation with DPW in the near future with regard to Cumberland and Perry Counties' possible participation in the Block Grant Program and resolving some of the current issues.

The Commissioners suggested that the Perry County Commissioners should be contacted to get their thoughts on these issues and perhaps a joint meeting could be held with DPW.

It was noted that Perry County Solicitor Bill Bunt and Cumberland County Solicitor Ed Schorpp should meet to discuss liability questions.

The next Finance Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 1:30 p.m. The topic of this meeting is Discussion Regarding Criminal Justice/Drug & Alcohol/Prison.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie J. Mazarella
Administrative Coordinator