



CSN Minutes September 2, 2009

Present: Richard Benitez, Latino Outreach Council Patrick Hedges, Sheriff's Office
Jill Bolster-White, TMHA Kayla Plourde, JJDP
Lee W. Collins, DSS Jim Salio, Probation
Julian Crocker, Office of Education Sue Warren, No. Co. Connection
Lisa Fraser, SLOCAP Jeff Hamm, Public Health

Absent: Don Dennison, Jim Roberts, Gerald Shea, Biz Steinberg

Staff: Reva Gonzales, CSN Manager

Guests: Phyllis Braiotta (for Biz Steinberg), Susan Hughes, Jon Nibbio (for Jim Roberts), Jill Heuer, Robert Reyes, Rosalinda Rodriguez, Tracy Buckingham, Brad Sunseri, Steve Campbell, Marisela Garcia, Ron Huxley, Shirley Tuttle, Dennis Johnson, Jean Dukes

1. **Introductions, announcements, critical issues and additions to the agenda**
Sue Warren announced that North County Connection recently received a Proclamation from the City of Atascadero in that this being the National Recovery Month for September.
2. **Public Comment**
None
3. **Approval August 5, 2009 minutes**
 - Motion to approve minutes, MSP Roberts/Plourde
4. **Discussion Panel: Budget cut impacts on placement agencies and group homes**

The discussion panel consisted of Jon Nibbio (Family Care Network, Inc.), Tracy Buckingham (DSS), Brad Sunseri (Mental Health) and Robert Reyes (Probation). Jon reported on some proactive steps FCNI is taking to counter the state budget cuts. Tracy reported 10 years ago, we had 130 youth in group homes—currently running at around 40 for the past several years. She reported that she meets regularly with other agencies to discuss how to keep kids in their foster homes.

Brad reported on services in the community that allow kids to return to or stay at home: day treatment programs; contracts with Lucia Mar Unified School District; contract with Paso Robles Unified School District; contract with County Office of Education. Through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) there are therapists in schools; 5 full service partner teams; partner with FCNI and other agencies with WRAP services; participation on Interagency Placement Committee.

Robert Reyes reported that the goal of probation is to minimize the number of kids being placed—adopting and investing in “best practices”; fund juvenile drug court; Juvenile hall established anger management and substance abuse

programs; awarded a grant to establish an “in custody” treatment program focusing more on “after care” in transitioning back home.

Shirley reported that she oversees one of the two group homes in San Luis Obispo County, the Youth Treatment Program. They have been in existence 26 years and serve about 20 youth a year.

Tracy reported that DSS has 44 slots for WRAP services. Brad noted that it costs \$78,000 room and board at the RCL14 level to house a placed youth, not including costs relating to non-public school and mental health costs. Brad noted challenges as maintaining collaborative relationships (contracts) with schools; to provide proven programs through MHSA; maintaining core services; continue to support Community Based Organizations; how to maximize services with Medi-Cal and other state constraints; maintaining collaborative efforts with Interagency Placement Committee.

Robert reported challenges as Juvenile Hall filling up with more youth than they have room for and kids staying longer. He noted the budget drives what is left to work with which is the most serious youth cases.

Shirley noted challenges for YTP as possibly needing to close the facility—they are experiencing a \$64,000 budget cut this Fiscal Year and they cannot cut staff costs. They are trying to find ideas and money. Decision will be made around the holidays whether or not they will close.

The panel noted some proposed solutions:

Tracy noted that they will continue to do all they can. They have not cut staff and the staff is committed to being creative and to focus on programs and be wise with the funds they have.

Jon noted they were being creative, focusing on solutions, increased fundraising, training staff, state level advocacy, continuous foster parent recruitment.

Brad noted that Mental Health continues to move forward with programs that were slated to move forward; continue to work with Cal poly and other resources.

Robert reported that Probation continues to work closely with DSS, FCNI and Mental Health, and invest in things that work.

YTP is licensed for 9 youth and they run about 98% capacity. They are the only facility that accepts girls.

Future Agenda Items:

Budget cut impacts on youth placements and group homes costs.

Richard Benitez suggested this presentation be given to the County Office of Education.

Adjournment: 2:20 p.m.

Next Meeting: **October 7, 2009**
Department of Social Services
3433 S. Higuera, Room 356
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.