

**Fairfield Community Coordinating Council
Meeting Minutes, December 10, 2003**

Chairperson: Sarah McMaster

Members Present: Sandy Kammermann, Valdon Walker, Joel Nelson, Kim Lewis and Heather Bennett (Martin Primary Health Care Center), Patti Wilkes (First Steps), Frankie O'Neal (DELC and Train Museum), Larry Dozier (Fairfield Memorial Hospital), Greg Slater (Ministerial Association), Eric Hartley, (Mental Health).

I. Meeting called to order 11:43 am

II Introductions

II. **Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Dozier made a motion to approve the November meeting minutes. Rev. Slater seconded the motion. Minutes were approved by acclimation.

III. Officers Reports

- a. Chair: Sarah McMaster, no report,
- b. Vice-Chair: Pelham Lyles, not present
- c. Secretary: Sandy Kammermann, no report
- d. Treasurer: Ms. Wilkes announced there is \$795.88 in the bank. Ms. McMaster stated that no deposit had been made since last meeting.
- e. FCHP Representative: Linda Tucker not present. Ms. Kammermann announced there was planning for a meeting regarding the need for Dental Health Services in the county. This meeting in conjunction with the DHEC Office of Dental health will be held January 29th at 12 noon. Several members of FCCC mentioned they have received a postcard asking them to save the date.

IV. Committee Reports

A. **Youth & Family:** Mr. Walker reported on the Fathers Matters. There are now 28 participants in program now. 15 are now working full-time jobs. 43% are mandated to participate and 1 was referred by Welfare-to-Work. Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition is meeting and new officers were elected to fill vacant positions. Sandy Kammermann is Chair, Joanne Cooper is Vice-Chair, Henrietta Harrison is Secretary. At the TPPC meeting Brenda Jackson gave a presentation on what works in Teen Pregnancy Prevention from "Emerging Answers". The TPPC is searching for additional funding sources. The TPPC is also using the same name as is used in Richland County: YOU FIRST. The Youth & Family Committee Members reviewed the 2 children/teen brochures published by the FCCC and made corrections. Suzanne Henson, Tobacco Control from DHEC discussed the ongoing dialogue on increasing the cigarette tax in the state by \$.61 or \$.93.

B. **Nutrition Committee:** Ms. Kammermann had no report as the committee did not meet this month.

B. **Membership:** Ms. O'Neal reminded members that membership dues are to be paid in January. Membership forms were distributed but are also available on the FCCC website.

V. Continuing Business

There are additional copies of the brochures created by the FCCC at the school district Parenting Center. There was discussion of revising the brochures. Ms. Kammermann will provide Ms. McMaster with corrected copies of the two brochures relating to children. Ms. McMaster will give those to Marvin at the Career Center. He will then put the brochures into a format that can be put in to the FCCC website. Then the information will be accessible on the website. Rev. Slater mentioned we still need to print copies so that they are accessible to persons in the community

who do not have a computer. Having these brochures on the website would also make it convenient for an individual in an agency to print a few copies as needed.

VI. **New Business:** No new business.

VII. **Program: Larry Dozier, Fairfield Memorial Hospital Update I**

FMH is very low on cash right now and has been severely impacted by many factors. The biggest problem is not the expense of running the hospital, but insufficient revenue received from patients that are admitted and have procedures. The hospital has been trying to reduce expenses by cutting out non-essential services. For example, Cardiac Rehabilitation is a large budget item that generates a loss of \$80,000 per year, so it was cut. However, due to community interest, the County Council has agreed to help financially in order to keep the Cardiac Rehab program open. It is indicative of rural hospitals that 75% of patients leave Fairfield County for hospital stays and 85% leave for surgeries. The hospital's liability insurance is increasing. It is losing money on Medicare and Medicaid patients, and, due to the small numbers of insured, paying patients, it cannot make up the difference with privately insured patients. FMH used to receive Medicaid disproportionate share money each year of over \$1 million. Then, it was dropped from the program and received nothing from the program for a couple of years. Last year it received only a small amount. The hospital is still waiting to learn the amount for this year and hopefully receive payment. The eligibility formula for Medicaid disproportionate share is heavily based on a hospital having proportionally more Medicaid inpatients than other hospitals. However, FMH does not have as many Medicaid admissions as other hospitals because it does not have obstetric patients. [It would not be cost effective to start an OB service as there are only about 250 babies per year born in the County.] In addition, rural hospitals are paid less for services than urban hospitals even though their expenses are about the same. Fairfield has a 15% unemployment rate. Thus, bad debts for FMH are up to 13% of gross revenues, when they should be 8 or 9%. Another complicating factor is the HIPAA law. Due to problems with the October 16 implementation of new billing standards across the state, FMH is behind on its collections and recently had to make several large transfers from savings to pay vendors.

The hospital has been aggressive in implementing a number of cost-cutting/efficiency initiatives, as well as new revenue programs.

1. The billing department has undergone major changes, and is operating very smoothly now.
2. A number of jobs have been combined within the hospital. A total of \$460,000 in direct controllable expense was eliminated in this year's budget.
3. Fairfield County Council has been very helpful in providing needed financial assistance. Council has funded the annual Cardiac Rehabilitation deficit (\$80,000), as well as the replacement of an air conditioning chiller for the operating room (\$80,000). The hospital will be meeting with Council soon to discuss borrowing from the county in the event the hospital's funds run low.
4. Physical Therapy and Cardiac Rrehab will probably move across the

street to the old McCrory's building. Both departments need more space, and they will share a fair amount of common space in the new facility. Fairfield County Council will be asked to fund that consolidation of departments and any construction costs. FMH will use the vacated space for expanding its Cardiology Clinic, which will generate additional nuclear medicine revenues.

5. The hospital plans to start a skilled nursing bed program. This will begin in late January and should help fill up empty beds.

6. The hospital is trying to recruit a new surgical practice to Winnsboro, and is talking with a Rock Hill surgical group that has substantial interest in expanding to Winnsboro. Due to inadequate utilization, Dr. Wooldridge has closed his office. Dr. Kudchakar will no longer take indigent patients.

7. Mary Lynn Kinley will be visiting physicians in Columbia often - to get patients back here after the surgeries.

8. The Medicare Prescription Drug Act contains some provisions that will help rural hospitals, including an increase in Medicare reimbursement rates and increased reimbursement to physicians. FMH expects to see a \$230,000 improvement (average) over the next ten years.

9. The hospital is exploring getting designated as a Critical Access Hospital. This designation takes a hospital off of the prospective payment system (DRG's), and results in the hospital being paid its true costs for the care of Medicare patients - both inpatient and outpatient. As a result of the prescription drug act recently signed into law, Medicare will now allow hospitals to operate up to 25 beds in this category, and that will fit FMH's profile very nicely.

Mr. Dozier noted that he was optimistic that the hospital would soon be turning the corner financially, but commented that the hospital really needed more Fairfield County patients to use the facility.

Ms. O'Neal mentioned that the cable TV show is good in highlighting info about the hospital and services provided.

VIII. Networking:

1. **Ms. Kammermann (Martin Center)** announced that the Weight Control Group is still meeting twice each month. Members are encouraged to take flyers regarding the program back to their place of business. The Right Weigh To Health Path now has benches. Plans are underway for some garden clubs to help with planting in January. Step Counters are available for sale for \$15 at the desk at the Martin Center. A new series of Prenatal Classes will begin in January. Flyers listing the classes are available.
2. **Rev. Slater (Ministerial Association)** announced that the Ministerial association is sponsoring a holiday party for inmates at the County detention center next week. Anyone who would like to donate food or personal items to the event should contact. Betty Swink.
3. **Erik Hartley (Mental Health)** announced that Mental Health personnel met with Linda Tucker of DSS and the Emergency Operations personnel to put together MOA so that Mental Health is automatically engaged when there is a disaster here in the county. .
4. **Sara McMaster (Library)** announced the library has hired Louise Sanders as the Children's Services librarian. She also reminded everyone of McMaster Book Endowment for the purpose of purchasing books for children. They are currently taking books to Good Samaritan

House. Red Cross, Detention Center. Fathers Matter. If anyone knows of another group that works with children and would like to give away books this time of year, they may contact the library.

5. **Joel Nelson (Martin Center)** – The USC Social Work Student club in Columbia is still collecting items to donate to the Somali Bantu families. Now the resources are all being gathered into one warehouse sponsored by Lutheran Family Services. Then families will be able to pickup what they need.
6. **Frankie O'Neal (DELIC and Train Museum):** The Santa Train will run one more Saturday this year. Ridership is down. The train museum does not have the option of a 1st class ride this year as the dining car coach spring broke. The springs have to be remade by the one manufacturer in the United States.
DELIC is sponsoring Active Play teleconference on December 11th for any child care providers. Participants must pre-register with library. Call Louise at 635-4971.
Tellabration was wonderful. Pine Tree players were able to raise some funds. They need money each month to just pay building expenses.
7. **Patti Wilkes (First Steps)** announced that First Steps met yesterday with First Steps State Board of Trustees and new Executive Director, Susan DeVenny. Trying to cut some programs yet continue to meet the biggest needs in the communities. People are optimistic that programs will not be cut. Currently are doing a needs assessment right now and have sent lots of surveys out. Hopefully people will give feedback on needs. The survey was sent home with all preschool children and all children in daycares registered or licensed.
8. **Rev. Slater (Ministerial Association)** announced that the local Red Cross office is in the midst of a "Heroes campaign". They are trying to enlist 25 churches to commit \$1,000 each for the 2004 year. Red Cross is in critical need of funds. They are in the midst of moving county offices to save money and rent. If you make donations to the Red Cross, clearly designate that it is for the Fairfield Center.
Good Samaritan House: Things are better than a year ago. The house has a loan from the county as they had a cash flow problem. They are hoping to receive FEMA grant in the spring. There is discussion of putting together a thrift store as a joint effort of Red Cross and the Good Samaritan house and splitting the revenue.

IX. **Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 14th at 11:30 a.m.**

X. **Meeting Adjourned: 1:05 p.m.**