

HLN ADVISORY MEETING

October 14, 2010

In attendance: Lisa Fronsman, Lake Family Resource Center; Ashley Tuomi, Lake County Tribal Health; Catherine Rada, Carole Press and Lin Hunter, Mendocino Community Health Clinic; Denise Rushing, Lake County Board of Supervisors; Karen Tait, Lake County Public Health Department; Carol Huchingson, Lake County Department of Social Services; Linda Schulz, St. Helena Hospital-Clearlake; April Cunningham and Stan Janiak, NCO Head Start; Tom Jordan, First 5 Lake; Ehren Hawkins, Sutter Lakeside Hospital; Terry Rooney, Lake County Mental Health; Jane MacLean, Lake County Public Health; Joan Reynolds, Lake County Office of Education.

Following self-introductions, Susan explained that the purpose of today's meeting is to consider a cross-agency approach focused on addressing community health issues. She shared some compelling statistics (see agenda) as context for discussion. Susan explained that HLN and Public Health had endeavored, without success, to find an epidemiologist to develop a central repository of local statistics. A table of Local Health Indicators, developed by HLN contractor Cathy Ferron, was projected that tracks changes in CHIS data and 5th and 7th grade fitness tests. She added that Lake County was ranked the 14th most economically stressed county out of 3,414 counties with a population of more than 25,000 on the Economic Stress Index. She added that the recently-completed Countywide Health Needs Assessment, spearheaded by Linda Shulz, incorporates local data with existing data collected by the state. The report will become available following its presentation to the Board of Supervisors in December.

Susan said that she wishes to submit a proposal for a Network Development Grant to facilitate further discussion of county health issues and potential cross-agency responses. She asked whether or not the agencies represented are interested in exploring a cross-agency approach. As an example of an issue requiring a coordinated cross-agency response, she briefly described Dr. Feletti's Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) study which found that 63% of Lake County respondents to an online survey reported exposure to 3 or more ACE factors which generally indicate involvement in a number of avoidance behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol or drug abuse, associated with several chronic health problems.

As a second example, she presented information about Dr. Chasoff's 4Ps, implemented locally by Tribal Health, which may represent the County's best chance for improving the health of the next generation. She said that the questions on the screening form presented to pregnant women are constructed to be non-threatening. Jane explained that the first of the 4Ps relate to questions about use of tobacco, alcohol, prescription and other drugs by the patient's parents; the second "P" relates to use by the woman's partner; the third "P" to prior use by the patient; and, the fourth "P" relates to questions about the patient's continued use since becoming pregnant. Susan added that 72% of patients report using one or more substance prior to becoming pregnant. Statics relating to substance use after finding out they were pregnant are: 25% cigarettes; 16% alcohol; 17% marijuana; 15% pain meds. Susan added that a high percentage of referrals for are declined but that improved outcomes in Tribal Health's program may reflect the importance of a "warm handoff."

Susan opened discussion by requesting feedback from the group as to a) whether or not their agency would be interested in a collaborative project, b) which health issues and/or root causes they would like to see addressed, and c) what specific outcomes might be targeted. Ideally, the project would result in some improvement in the County's consistent ranking among the bottom 5 counties in the state for death due to all causes.

Lin commented that agencies could not afford not to collaborate, especially during threatened budget cuts and service reductions, because organizational partnerships are the foundation of every successful program.

Considering the impact of substance abuse on County resources, the first suggestion was to examine the protective factors that allow one child in an abusive environment to succeed while another child in the same environment does not. Joan recalled a few of the identified resiliency factors such as social connections, a high functioning mentor, high expectations, opportunities for activity (work, work skill development), and appreciation for effort. Tom asked how resiliency can be tracked and how do we identify what's missing in the county's continuum of care for pregnant women, which he considers to be fairly comprehensive. Lin agreed with the idea of focusing on pregnant women because they can be influenced with enough education and support. Cathy added that focusing on pregnant women or children would fail to identify total system gaps. Karen offered a definition of resiliency as the ability of an individual or organization to overcome factors that are commonly associated with poor health outcomes.

A second suggestion was to focus on increasing the number of meaningful adults in a child's life. Linda offered the example of businesses contributing to a lending library in order to reinforce messaging about community engagement and improve school readiness. The effectiveness of 'Challenge Day' was discussed and the possibility of engaging 'Challenge Day' volunteers as mentors on a year-round basis.

Another suggestion was to conduct a strategic cross-agency analysis to increase awareness of one another's resources and activities, improve interface between agencies, and develop a coordinated action plan based on existing resources and activities. It was also suggested that such an analysis could be used to identify effective practices (advocacy, screening, etc.) and gaps. Joan suggested that something as simple as agencies opening trainings to other agencies in order to expand cross-training opportunities and build connections between agencies would contribute to improved outcomes. Susan added that training infuses best practices and beneficial skills among service delivery personnel. Linda added that the analysis should attempt to identify local, regional and national best practices.

There was some discussion about the availability of grants for electronic connectivity that could help follow clients from one service to another. Lin and Cathy mentioned requirements for software to be certifiable meaning that certain data must be gathered in specific formats.

Jane said that a lot of exciting things are being done to help the county move in the right direction and that there could be real benefits associated with connecting the dots so that agencies could work

together. She added that the efficacy of existing programs could be promoted to generate additional community and agency support. She cited DSS grants and Tribal Health's home visitation project as examples. Stan added that capacity and synergy could be assessed and expanded during the grant term.

In response to Denise's question about HLN recreation survey outcomes, Susan said that survey results are available at www.lakehln.org. She added that it became apparent that using school sites for recreational activities would be most efficient since the county is not likely to have a YMCA in the near future, but HLN found that most high school facilities are already being used at near-capacity for intramural sports. Jane added that the shortage of opportunities for higher education was a gap that may be mitigated by exploring DSS's relationship with UC Davis.

In response to Denise's question about how this grant might position the county for prevention project funding, Susan commented that the primary purpose of such a planning grant would be to give thoughtful consideration to ways of increasing opportunities for additional prevention funding. Denise added that it was important to identify a bite-sized and important goal.

In response to Carol's question regarding the likelihood of receiving an award, Susan estimated that 25 agencies would receive approximately \$180,000/year for 3 years.

In response to Susan's question as to how agencies can more effectively help people succeed in overcoming behaviors that compromise their health, Denise said that it may be more useful to feed/support the things that you want to grow than to battle self-destructive behaviors. She used the example of an artists' guild that provides people with an opportunity to step back and view life differently.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.