

Criminal Justice Health Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2011

Present Susan Adams, Kim Turner, David Augustus, Chuck Cacciatore, Bruce Gurganus, Eric Engelbart, Michael Mesmer, Robyn Roberts, Kate Kain, Heather Ravani, Larry Meredith, J. Sellers, Lisa Sepahi, John Hamel, Mike Daly, Jose Varela, Donna Garske, Graciela Rodriguez, Bobbe Rockoff, Felice McClenon, Matt Perry, Abby Dennett, Stefan Benton, Megan Allen, Luz Alvarado, Cristy Egan, Susannah Clark

Meeting Schedule for 2011: January 26; April 27; July 27; October 26

*Note: the CJBH committee meets quarterly on the 4th Wednesday. **Location of July and October meetings: Room 266, Emergency Operations Center***

9:35 Meeting called to order by Chair Supervisor Adams

This meeting is a roundtable discussion on the community response to domestic violence.

Donna and Kate provided highlights and successes in responding to domestic violence. Center for Domestic Peace has served 155,000 women and 28,000 men over the last 34 years. Their public health model focuses on primary prevention, early intervention and working with the perpetrators. You have to work with people “where they are”, and support the family so they can stay together in a healthy manner. This year they conducted a three-day training, they are developing partnerships, working towards concrete outcomes, creating overlapping (seamless) systems, and bridging out to faith leaders, the health care providers, etc. C4DP is evaluated annually in connection with federal grants; their strategies are research based.

Ed stated the domestic violence is a priority in the DA’s office; it’s the leading cause of injury in women aged 15-42. Five attorneys specialize in domestic violence, trainings, supervising and working with the community. Essential to serving the needs of victims of DV are emergency shelter, transitional housing, BIT’s and family counseling, mental health services, physicians who are knowledgeable. If we can reduce incidents, we can reduce victims. The goal of the Council is to review current systems and identify best practices.

Larry mentioned that economic conditions are exacerbating the problems. This is a great opportunity to open up the dialogue, broaden the field of vision. Bobbe looked at similar counties to see how their community response organization works. It is not unusual to see tension between the council and the Courts and between interest groups. The conversation may not be open and the composition of the council as diverse as the Courts

may want. Federal funding mandates priorities on arrests and outreach to diverse communities. C4DP is ahead of other organizations in providing shelter and transitional housing.

John Hamel said that the goals of the council need to be inclusive of various points of view. He suggested that law enforcement can be trained on ways to enforce current laws to keep people safer; it's not always the men that are the perpetrators, and the dynamics are complex. Megan Allan echoed that point of view, that one can't make assumptions based on gender. Agencies work with clients who have never been able to tell their stories; they may never have been introspective and haven't had the tools. Michael Mesmer and Stefan Benson said that in other counties the Board of Supervisors is the titular chair of the council. Victim groups and BIP's are members, along with judges, health care providers, CBOs, faith community. Stefan suggested everyone's strengths need to be part of the system.

Kim said there is a strong distinction between the work of C4DP and the council. C4DP has a proven track record in the work they do. The council is struggling to have a venue where all groups feel included and disagreements can be resolved in a productive way. In order for the Courts to be engaged, they need to see inclusivity, a commitment to policy setting, and a government model. Jose agreed. How about a facilitated process to create a better governing process? Kim suggests we look at all research, strategies, modalities, best practices and go through a community process before the new model is created.

Susan suggested we look at the Homelessness Policy Steering Committee as a model. The predecessor group, Continuum of Housing and Services, was a rather closed group with a limited purpose of going after federal grant money. The group was reconfigured, opened up and they now are a policy setting group with a broader view.

Ed talked about the MOU and the point was made by several that they didn't know anything about the MOU, and that is indicative.

Larry suggested a facilitated study group to come up with recommendations. How do we develop an effective working council that is open and equal?

Points made by various people and widely supported:

- the policy makers commit to attending council meetings
- Location makes a big difference; "neutral ground". Should be roundtable discussion
- Inclusive of all voices, all members are equal
- Strong government structure, ground rules for civil and productive discussion

Notes by Susannah Clark
Office of Supervisor Susan Adams