

Baltimore County Department of Social Services Board Minutes

The meeting of the Advisory Board of the Baltimore County Department of Social Services was held April 17, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Gregg Powell; Chair. Karen Bethea, Stefanie Bronson, Donald Gabriel, Orrester Shaw and Rosalyn Wiley attended via conference phone.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lisa Jablon, Sheri Jackson

OTHERS PRESENT: Gregory Wm. Branch; Director, Marsha Parham; Executive Director; Office of Housing, Mark Millspaugh; Deputy Director, and Kathy Wynn, Executive Secretary to the Director.

I. Reading and Approval of the Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 20, 2017 as presented.

Motion by: Karen Bethea
Second by: Orrester Shaw
Decision: Unanimous Approval

II. Director's Report

Housing Executive Report

Due to the prolonged budget approval process for the HUD budget, the Office of Planning has extended the amount of time for the 2017 Administrative Plan hearing. Predictions are Housing will be funded at 94% of what we were funded last year.

Ms. Parham provided an overview of the 2017 Administrative Plan changes distributed to board members (attached). The 2017 Administrative Plan is effective July 1. An independent public hearing will be held in mid-May.

Not included in the Plan is that we are moving forward to close the waiting list, gathering data and building justification. The Board will hear more on this topic in the future.

STEP Program

A response was submitted to a letter of interest from the Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Supplemental Targeted Energy Program (STEP). This program would be administered by the Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP). Participants in the program who meet the eligibility requirements will have an incentive to participate; the goal is to

change behavior on energy usage as well as assist with resources and referrals towards self-sufficiency.

Clients that participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program or the TCA Job Network Program will be linked to this program.

The first phase of the program will be educating clients on energy usage. The second phase will be to increase knowledge of the job market and improve self-sufficiency skills. In the third phase, clients will participate in on-going case management. If they are successful and complete each phase, clients will receive an incentive payment. Four case managers would be hired to monitor the program and make referrals. The goal of the program is to have each participant spend no more than 6% of their income on utility costs.

We met with DHR representatives and they were impressed by what we proposed and we will likely receive funding for the initiative. They want to implement first in a smaller jurisdiction; Baltimore County will more than likely be the first large government organization to implement. We are anticipating a late summer, early fall implementation of the program.

Job Network Placements

The Job Network Program has been highly successful with job placements. Baltimore County has a little more than 1000 participants. We are on pace to match our job placement rates for prior years but will not exceed as the caseloads are going down. From July 2016 to the third quarter of this year the total job placements is 941 with average hourly earnings of \$11.62. The percentage of jobs that provide medical benefits to the employee, not necessarily the family, is 18%. Other jurisdictions are at three to five percent.

Participants in this program receive temporary cash assistance. Prior to participation in this welfare to work initiative they had low attachment to the labor market averaging \$5,000 in annual earnings. The department works on building relationships with employers, assisting them with participants as needed and letting them know they can reach out to us for support. If the job placement is going to fail, it usually does so within the first 90 days which we focus heavily on monitoring and providing support. We have been successful in getting participants placed in better paying jobs helping them to better their lives. Program data is tracked through a longitudinal study and published in an annual report titled *Life after Welfare* by The University of Maryland School Of Social Work. This report examines outcomes of families who have left cash assistance.

Weighted Caseload Analysis

At the last legislative session, the Baltimore County delegation proposed legislation, and eventually included in Budget Language that the Department of Human Resources (DHR) produce a weighted caseload analysis. DHR has contracted with the Regional Economic Studies Institute of Towson University to perform this study. The first phase of the study was to collect a survey from each LDSS administrator that outlines the structure of their

department. Baltimore County operates on the SHAPE model, other jurisdictions on the caseload model.

As of April 10, they rolled out a survey that is going directly to caseworkers. The survey consists of thirty questions that ask where they work, their primary role and how much time is spent on each task. Mr. Millspaugh just received the questions today. An analysis of survey results will be put together on how much time it takes for the average worker to do various types of cases. The next step is to determine what is done with the information. The report is due to the legislature May 15.

Child Welfare Program

There are not enough facilities in Maryland to place children/younger adults with behavioral issues where the caregiver no longer can have them in the home. Most important, is placing these children/younger adults in facilities that meet their needs. Baltimore County has three foster youth in facilities Massachusetts, one in Georgia and one in Pennsylvania. Foster youth with challenging needs cannot go out of state unless they are turned down by in-state facilities. An estimated seven to ten in-state facilities would not accept these children/younger adults.

Dr. Branch and Judith Schagrin, Assistant Director; Children's Services, visited the Judge Rotenberg Education Center in Massachusetts where three of our foster youth reside. The facility was very clean and well maintained. State-of-the-art cameras were located throughout the facility. All clients were appropriately dressed and groomed. The atmosphere and environment was educationally and emotionally appropriate.

A member of the board asked what the cost was to place these foster youth. Cost is dependent upon staff ratio needs, more intensive as their needs increase. The department must reapply each year to see if there is a facility in Maryland that will accept them. These types of placements are not intended to be permanent, they are to be treatment focused. The court is involved in the process, a lawyer is assigned to each youth.

One of our foster youth had been placed in numerous settings. In her birth home and foster home she tried to harm her caregiver and siblings. She exhibits other explosive behaviors as well. This is the type of behavior we are talking about. These youth have a clinical team that work with them. A master's level social worker works with those teams on a plan of care.

III. Old Business

Board Candidate

A resume for board candidate was reviewed by the Board. Does this individual bring a skillset the Board needs? This individual was vetted by this office and brought back to the Board for further discussion.

Prior to the next meeting, Mr. Millspaugh, Dr. Branch and Mr. Powell will call the candidate and chat with him. A vote to be taken at the May meeting.

Generous Juror Fund

Mr. Millspaugh has made progress on the initiative with the generous juror fund. The new jury commissioner has reached out to him and is interested in meeting to discuss how to bolster the program. The announcement regarding the fund is being made daily to jurors. Our goal is seeing what else we could do to help market, generate additional revenue and raise awareness of foster youth.

Ms. Wiley and Mr. Gabriel volunteered to participate on this initiative. Dr. Branch and Mr. Powell nominated Ms. Jablon to this group. Ms. Bronson has jury duty this Friday and will report back to the Board. Mr. Millspaugh to draft a summary on the fund, how it benefits youth and will forward to Ms. Wiley.

IV. New Business

Board members are welcome to attend Camp Connect to be held June 19 – 25.

V. Remarks of the Chairperson

The Chair met with Mr. Millspaugh on Friday and has agreed to work with youth aging out of foster care.

The Board should select an initiative to work on; Dr. Bethea to work on the video discussed at a prior meeting. The Chair thanked everyone for attending. The next meeting of the Board will be held on May 15.

VI. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Motion by: Orrester Shaw

Second by: Rosalyn Wiley

Decision: Unanimous Approval



Gregory Wm. Branch, M.D., MBA, CPE, FACP