



**Commissioners' Conference Room  
Second Floor – County Administration Building  
10:00 am – 12:00 am**

**In Attendance:** Commissioner Lew Gaiter, Commissioner Steve Johnson, Commissioner Tom Donnelly, Linda Hoffmann, Neil Gluckman, Laura Walker, Marsha Ellis, Jim Drendel, and Ann Marie Grobarek

A recording of this worksession is available at: [http://larimer.org/bcc/list\\_worksessions.cfm](http://larimer.org/bcc/list_worksessions.cfm).

**Introductions & Announcements**

Commissioner Gaiter welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Director Laura Walker asked if there were any additions to the agenda. The implementation task force for Adult Protection and child care information were added.

**General Assistance Fund Overview**

Laura Walker provided more information on the background and usage of General Assistance funds as a result of a discussion during Admin Matters regarding the General Assistance Ordinance. Laura provided a handout and explained the following:

- Money from this program is intended to be recovered from the client.
- To be eligible you have to be at less than 130% of the federal poverty limit, and, if employable, they must register with the Workforce Center and seek work through them. If they qualify for GA, then they also qualify for most of our other benefit programs which might be a better way of assisting them.
- Appropriate categories of expenses for these funds include rent, lodging and mortgages, food, transportation, clothing, supplies necessary for work, burial and other medical needs. It does not include utility bills (which are covered through LEAP) or property taxes (unless they can be paid back).
- Because there is now immediate eligibility for Medicaid as long as someone has a completed application, there should be no delay in paying for prescriptions or other medical needs, so GA funds are not often used for this category.
- Laura reviewed handout showing the different GA payments for the past six years and what was recovered. Ideally payments are made directly to vendors or providers. Medical or dental expenses have gone down, as previously noted. Examples for illustration are at the bottom.
- We have a contract with the Salvation Army, providing about \$18,600.00 of GA funds per year. Laura explained the handout showing the spending over the last six years by the Salvation Army. Laura was struck by the number of requests denied each year.
- Laura met with the Captain of the Salvation Army office who explained that they are out of funding by the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day of each month. The Captain explained how they prioritize applications using characteristics like sustainability and family composition. The possibility of increasing the amount of their contract was discussed as an option to address their unmet need.
- Instead of educating every caseworker on how to obtain General Assistance funds, the idea is that caseworkers go to the Accountability Unit and they will recommend the best ways to get assistance and support for the clients. Education will focus on the Accountability Unit staff.

Marsha Ellis explained that the County and State Diversion programs had to be discontinued due to decreased funding from the TANF grant. The Salvation Army grant covers most of the things that Diversion had covered, so it has been a good option for filling that void.

Commissioner Donnelly had asked our department to consider General Assistance funds for a citizen who was stuck with the decision of either paying their utility bill or paying their property taxes. They paid



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their utility bill, but GA funds could not be used to help this person as they could not pay back the property taxes. However, the citizen is now signed up for LEAP, so the money set aside for utility bills is now free to be used for property taxes and no GA funds were necessary.

Commissioner Donnelly asked if there were other organizations besides the Salvation Army that we could support with GA funds, and Laura responded that this is supposed to be one-time funding to an individual, not ongoing support. Commissioner Johnson verified that the Salvation Army funding of \$18,600.00 is in addition to the \$50,000.00 budget for GA funds. Commissioner Johnson recommended that we consider educating Income Maintenance Technicians and provide more information to the public about the availability of these funds. He recommended having some oversight on funding that the Salvation Army is granting or denying, and Laura suggested that we could add more stringent requirements in the contract language to address concerns. The contract period for the Salvation Army runs from 2013 through 2017. The imbalance between the unmet needs of people applying for the Salvation Army funds and the readily available funds that are not utilized by the Department because of our other programs raises questions about better ways to structure and use this money. Commissioner Donnelly stated that he trusts the way the Department is looking at the fund, and recommended that we add looking at better ways to use the funds to an agenda for a future meeting.

#### **Transforming Child Welfare into a Trauma Informed Community**

Jim Drendel, Director of Child, Youth and Family Services showed “Robbie’s Story”, a video of a young man named “Robbie” for the purpose of anonymity. This video demonstrated the trauma assessment process Larimer County and several other counties in the State are using. This specific case study demonstrates a few things:

- Robbie’s Story shows how this process brought up topics we would never have talked about before. In this case, we discovered the therapy that had been arranged for him was not working. At six years old he was rejected from school and put in an institution where he was catatonic. He would not eat. Dr. Henry from SAFY did a trauma assessment and came up with fourteen things that had to be done. For example, his aunt went to specific training on how to not react when Robbie acts out. Talk therapy, which did not help Robbie, was changed to equine therapy.
- Jim Drendel explained that SAFY is Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth. It is a provider of trauma treatment services that is different from anything we have seen before. It is amazing to watch Dr. Jim Henry do an assessment with a child. He spent a record twelve minutes with Robbie, who does not trust adults.
- Out of 944 trauma screenings from the last year, 250 children screened in. It takes three marks to get to Dr. Henry, but DHS had to set the minimum at six due to financial limitations.
- The work with Robbie is not over – it is just starting because of the level of damage. He has doubled in weight. Jim has been in Child Welfare for over 30 years and it is the most exciting thing that he has ever seen.
- This work focuses on re-wiring of the brain using things like glass-blowing, having a pet tarantula, or playing bongos when stressed.

Commissioner Gaiter asked about the ultimate plan for the video, and Jim replied that we will use it for training with foster parents. Other counties have asked if they could use it too. Commissioner Gaiter suggested that it might help the public understand DHS better. Jim would like to present this at CCI. Commissioner Johnson said he was really impressed that our staff embraced something new in the hope that it would work better. DHS now is in our second year of using trauma assessments and CSU is collecting data from our first year. Commissioner Gaiter suggested we think about the 2017 budget and consider what it would take to allow Dr. Henry to see more than just children who have three marks.



### **C-Stat Dashboard Review**

Laura Walker provided a review of the most recent C-Stat Dashboard. She provided the Larimer County Dashboard and then 10 Large Counties Dashboard for comparison.

- Larimer County met 15 out of 23 objectives in July, then 14 out of 23 objectives in August, and then 16 out of 23 objectives in September.
- Income Maintenance Technicians have been working a lot of overtime and putting in a lot of effort, but our backlog of items that need to be processed has increased from 1,000 to 3,000.
- In comparison, the 10 Large Counties only met 10 out of 23 objectives for September.
- Some objectives are important to us and some are not. We think they should have number of children who remain in the home as an objective. And some objectives are suspect because the sample size may be misleading, for example, the sample size may only be 3 cases – so one error makes a 33% difference.

Commissioner Gaiter said it would be nice to provide aggregate numbers so the Commissioners would have that data readily available. He also recommended that the Department indicate which objectives are more of a priority and which ones are not. If the Commissioners have which ones are more important and which ones are not – and why – they can be better advocates. Laura stated that she had three or four which were performance measures used for creating our budget.

The State is pushing for video-conferencing for C-Stat meetings. If the Commissioners are interested in attending, you are more than welcome to do so. The meeting handouts consist of memos explaining how to participate if you desire.

### **Hunger Free Colorado and CCI meeting**

Laura Walker explained that Hunger Free Colorado is a statewide non-profit organization with the mission of getting more people fed. One of their big issues has been encouraging people who are eligible for Food Assistance but not currently enrolled to apply for the program. They have obtained a grant to do more outreach in the community. Laura saw a preview of their efforts at a national conference held this summer because Colorado is 46<sup>th</sup> in the Country Food Assistance participation. They had a fact sheet ranking counties on timeliness, accuracy and market penetration. Larimer County was 2<sup>nd</sup> for timeliness and 1<sup>st</sup> for accuracy. But Larimer County had less than 40% of the eligible population participating in Food Assistance. Hunger Free Colorado determines the “eligible population” using national numbers for benefit program participation. Larimer County has seen a 220% increase in Medicaid applications due to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), but Food Assistance cases have stayed approximately the same.

Several people from counties across the State met with Hunger Free Colorado who wants to partner with us on how to better market the available programs. We have no funding to do outreach and marketing for Food Assistance because of our loss of funding in County Administration and the bill DHS has to pay due to the accounting error from the State. The extent of our outreach is to have someone go to an event and staff a table if available. Accuracy numbers can be improved with improvements to CBMS, and HCPF is going to attempt to maximize their 90/10 funding for the ACA to address the issues in the system. Hunger Free Colorado said they would not release the Fact Sheet until the County has an opportunity to review the fact sheet. Laura may ask the Commissioners to sit down to review the fact sheet. Jim Drendel and Commissioner Gaiter questioned the source of the data indicating that Colorado is 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation in market penetration. Laura said we would get that information from them as events unfold. (<http://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/hungerfacts/> lists the USDA, Program Access Index 2013, January 2015 as the source.)

### **County Administration Payback Update**

Laura has not heard a response regarding the letter we have sent to the State indicating how Larimer County will pay back the money the State has determined we owe due to their accounting error.



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#### **Client Activity Report**

Ann Marie Grobarek, Business Operations Coordinator, presented an overview of the department's client activity. Ann Marie reviewed: monthly average caseloads, program activity, complaint totals, and results from the client follow-up survey regarding complaints from July 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2015:

- The Food, Medical & Financial Assistance Program caseload has 62,773 cases, down .06%.
- Child Support collected over \$4,373,226 dollars.
- Children, Youth and Family received 1,724 referrals, and 97% of children with a case plan to remain home did.
- We received a total of 8 complaints during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter.

Laura, Jim and the Commissioners discussed the complaints against Child, Youth and Family Services and the factor that many of our complaints are people who are unhappy with a decision made by the Courts. Our complaint process is one of the only ways a person who does not want to involve an attorney in the process can feel like they can object to a Court decision.

#### **Additions to agenda:**

Laura reported that counties as a whole are having issues with the task force established to update Senate Bill 109, particularly when it comes to including people with developmental disabilities in mandatory reporting. For example, there were nine different recommendations for changes to the bill that were sent out at 3:30 PM in the afternoon with the expectation that they be voted on the next day at 10 AM. The recommendations were drafted by staff in the Adult Protection office at the State. There are several external agencies at the table but they are not able to have the input expected. Objections to the recommendations include the following:

- The task force response indicated that the increase in funding is not commensurate with the expected increase in referrals,
- There is no good definition of individuals who have developmental disabilities because it does not address whether or not someone has had an assessment,
- And there is no funding for services, only a small budget for emergencies.

We currently are not funded enough to keep our workers at a 25 to 1 ratio for Adult Protection. We currently have a 30 to 1 ratio. We think we would need six more people and we might get 1.5 more with the proposed funding. It is important to address these questions in order to properly care for concerns regarding developmentally disabled people. Commissioner Johnson asked if Lori Metz, Adult Protection Supervisor, or some of her workers could come to the January State Board meeting. It feels as if the State is not listening to concerns or questions posed by the counties.

Commissioner Johnson reported that the new child care regulations will dramatically raise the costs of child care. The Board is very interested in what local providers have to say. Licensing requirements are so extensive it becomes cost-preventative and micro-managing including requiring sunscreen and specifying what kind of food can be served. There is a drive for world-class quality care under the name of safety that has the effect of putting people out of business. Laura added that Red Rocks Community College is now the vendor and provides the people doing licensing.

Meeting adjourned.