

Minutes
Homeless Taskforce
November 1, 2006
United Way 245 N. Water
7:00 – 8:30 am

Taskforce Members:

Rev. Cheryl Jefferson Bell Sue Castille Gypsy Claar Connie Dietz Jack Focht
 Patrick Hanrahan Lou Heldman Bernie Hudspeth Bishop Michael Jackels
 Bishop Scott Jones Steve Martens Janet L. Miller Tim Norton
 Marsha Stanyer Mary K. Vaughn

Ex officio members: Winston Brooks Bill Buchanan George Kolb Ron Holt

Staff: Jenni Gluszek Beth Oaks Jeff Porter Gloria Summers

Welcome

Jack Focht called the meeting to order at 7 a.m.

Minutes

The minutes from the October 18 meeting were approved.

New Business

Via Christi Presentation

Pattie Moser profiled the homeless served by the Via Christi Emergency Rooms (ERs). These individuals are very hard to care for due to their circumstances. Homeless clients don't have money for medications; when told to rest, they go to the Library and seek fluids from the nearby fountain. Keeping casts dry is a chore, so they often must return to the hospital to have the casts re-set. If on IV drugs, they must come to the hospital daily, b/c without a home, these drugs can't be administered.

If individuals have psychiatric needs, they are sent to the assessment center at St. Joseph. Out of 5,500 assessments in the last 12 months, approximately 50% were uninsured or on Medicaid.

Jim McFadden then shared some numbers regarding the number of uninsured and Medicaid patients seen in the Via Christi ERs annually.

- 50,000 uninsured/Medicaid cases between St. Francis and St. Joseph Emergency Rooms in an average year.
- Approximately 1/3 of those mentioned above have no insurance at all.
- 10,000 uninsured seen at St. Joe each year with a collection rate of less than 2%.
- There are 250 cases in 06 without addresses (defined as homeless), as well as many others who give fake addresses.
- These 250 cases cost the hospital \$2.5 million.
- 98% of the 25,000 uninsured/Medicaid St. Joseph ER cases did not have emergency needs.
- 1,500 individuals came to St. Joseph or St. Francis ER 4+ times in 9 months.

In response to the statistics listed above, Via Christi is starting the Mother Mary Anne Mission. This mission will be a walk-in clinic located next door to the St. Joseph Emergency Room. Individuals will be seen the same day but this format is much less costly to the hospital. McFadden estimates it will cost half the resources the ER did to serve these clients. Besides saving money, this will open up the ER to those with true emergency needs.

The Mother Mary Anne Clinic will be open from 4 p.m. to midnight Monday – Friday with the possibility of weekend hours depending on funding. This location has been selected because Grace Med is already located near the St. Francis Campus and there is not a safety net clinic in the zip codes near St. Joseph.

Via Christi does not receive any public dollars for their work except for Medicaid/Medicare reimbursements.

Discussion of Future Plans

Lou, Jack and Steve are contacting speakers for the next meeting. Committee members discussed how they would like to see the taskforce proceed from here. Interns will work on mind maps which consider the “types” of homeless in our community, what those individuals need and what causes these situations. How to get the community engaged was also discussed briefly. County and United Way staff will work on this. Finally, best practices in Yonkers and St. Louis were discussed. Both of these cities have businesses that employ and house homeless individuals (a bakery and a restaurant).

Future Meetings

In keeping with bi-weekly Wednesday morning meetings, the next meeting will be Wednesday November 15, 2006 from 7-8:30 a.m. The meeting will be in the United Way of the Plains Board Room, 245 N. Water. Meetings are open to the public.

Adjournment

Having no other business the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 a.m.