

Capital Area Collaborative

Tuesday, July 15, 2008 8:00 am to 10:30 am

DHHS, Conference Room A

35 Anthony Avenue, Augusta

Conveners: Healthy Communities of the Capital Area (HCCA), Spectrum Generations, City of Augusta, United Way of Kennebec Valley

Present: Ron Bansmer, Leslie Bray, Vanessa Broja, Marie Bronn, Dennis Cully, Martha Cushing, Rebecca West Dick, Steve Garascia, Susan Garascia, Marion Greene, Pat Greenleaf, Joanne Joy, Suzanne Kearns, Pam Marshall, Jim McGrath, Mary Nicholas, Carol Smith, Holly Stover, Donna Strickler, Bob Thibodeau, Karen Tucker, Amy Wagner, Naomi York

AGENDA

- 8:00-8:30 Networking
- 8:30-8:45 Welcome
Introductions: Getting to Know Who is in the Room
Martha Cushing, SpectrumLink
- 8:45-9:00 Sub- Committees: Membership, Scheduling, Chronic Disease/Matter of Balance, Others?
- 9:00-9:30 MaineCare Overview: *Holly Stover*
- 9:30-10:00 Community Conversations:
Joanne Joy, HCCA
- 10:00 Evaluation
Next Meeting Date, Location, Host
- 10:00-10:30 Sub Committees Meet

MEETING NOTES

Networking :

The group gathered and networked until 8:30, when Martha Cushing formally welcomed all, and started the meeting.

Welcome/Introductions: Getting to Know Who is in the Room: *Martha Cushing, SpectrumLink*

Martha asked that those present introduce themselves and their organization to the group.

Ron Bansmer, DHHS	Suzanne Kearns, Spectrum Generations
Leslie Bray, Spectrum Generations	Pam Marshall, LTCOP
Vanessa Broja, Spectrum Generations	Jim McGrath, Office of Elder Services
Marie Bronn, Chateau Cushnoc	Mary Nicholas, Spectrum Generations
Dennis Cully, Legal Services for the Elderly	Carol Smith, St. Mark's Home
Martha Cushing, Spectrum Link	Holly Stover, DHHS

Rebecca West Dick, Healthy Futures
Steve Garascia, Public Health
Susan Garascia, Spectrum Generations
Marion Greene, Maine Transition Network
Pat Greenleaf, Spectrum Generations
Joanne Joy, HCCA

Donna Strickler, Sexual Assault Crisis and Support
Bob Thibodeau, DHHS
Karen Tucker, HCCA
Amy Wagner, HCCA
Naomi York, Matter of Balance teacher

Martha then expressed appreciation to all and noted this meeting was being held in response to the request that we not wait until fall to meet a second time. She then introduced Joanne Joy.

Sub Committees:

Joanne reviewed the agenda and noted that a meeting time for subcommittees had been provided at the end of the plenary meeting. She asked for committees present who were interested in meeting and established there were four:

1. Membership: Who to invite to meetings, how often to meet, where.
2. Scheduling: *The group as a whole decided to meet the second Tuesday of odd numbered months. The next meeting is September 9th from 8 to 10:30. We will meet at 41 Anthony Avenue at DHHS.*
3. Matter of Balance: This is an evidenced based program that focuses on mobility as we age. Several Master Trainers are present today; Amy, Mary, Susan and Naomi. This group will meet at 10 to day.
4. Strategic Planning regarding MAPP. Information about the MAPP process will be included in the Community Conversations portion of today's agenda.
5. Website/communications Committee: Steve Garascia.

Joanne asked the group if there were other sub-committee topics. Several were suggested for this, or another meeting:

- Violence prevention: It was suggested we put this on the agenda for September.
- Money management programs: Pat Greenleaf offered to speak on this topic.

The decision was that three subcommittees would meet at 10 a.m.- Membership, Matter of Balance and Strategic Planning.

MaineCare Overview:

Holly described the customer focused, integrated approach to services offered at the MaineCare office:

- Walk-ins are welcome to access benefits
- Paternity testing
- Home base for public nurses
- Child and family services
- Adult services – the first example of fusion of all adult services for the region
- Licensing and regulatory services

Holly then introduced Ron Bansmer of MaineCare.

Ron offered he would give a brief overview, then open for questions.

He distributed several handouts on MaineCare:

- Income guidelines for benefit eligibility

- MaineCare Information Resource Guide
- Long Term Care Issues

Here are highlights from his presentation:

- Estate recovery is the biggest fear, and reason why people delay or do not apply for benefits.
- There is no asset test for QMB and SLMB
- Income limits are up to 185% of federal poverty levels.
- It was found that membership increased when income levels were increased. There was movement to move the income limits higher and, although this did not happen, there is concern it may in the future.
- Medicare savings – QMB pays co-pays and saves people money.
- Comment: Mary Nicholas noted she gets many inquiries on QMB and SLMB. People hesitate to apply because they have to forgo regular insurance, and do not want to lose that safety net – even though they can go back on insurance in the future if QMB or SLMB benefits end.
- Ron shared that when individuals express the above concern, he refers them to an independent source for advice on dropping insurance and going on QMB as he advocates for them to make an informed and un-pressured decision and does not want to appear he is “selling” the benefit.
- Question: How does an elder know they are on QMBY?
 - Answer: They are contacted if they qualify.
- Question: Are there income exclusion for MaineCare eligibility?
 - Answer: Yes – refer to the manual for particulars. Certain income is excluded: VA income. Income earned, social Security are counted
 - Training program earnings are excluded.
 - There are incentives for disabled to transition back to work, for example, the asset limit is higher
- Question: There is a perception among some that receiving Food Stamps will cause Estate Recovery issues later. Where are materials to prove it is OK to get on Maine Care or receive Food Stamps and not have Estate Recovery problems?
 - It is true that there is no connection between Estate Recovery and Food Stamps. It is confusing because the same application form is used for all the programs. Food Stamps and MaineCare are two different programs entirely.
- Comment: It would be useful to have one information sheet comparing and contrasting the differences.
- Question: Regarding Estate Recovery: If a person wants to give away money – how much can be given in what amounts and how frequently?
 - Answer: \$500 per quarter per gift recipient

The next presenter, Bob Thibideau, Food Stamp Administrator, was introduced to the group and gave a brief overview and answered questions from the group:

- Food Stamps fall under the Department of Agriculture

- They help those on a low-income buy food and helps farmers to move food.
- They are a supplemental program – meant to supplement the purchase of food, not to provide complete food budget for the recipient – a “safety net”
- There is a current push to increase enrollment. Nationwide 65% of those eligible are enrolled – in Maine that number is 75%, or 180,000 people.
- In the 2008 Farm Bill the Food Stamp Program was renamed to “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” or SNAP. In Maine the program will be called the Food Supplement Program. This name change will be rolled out in October of this year.
- Food Stamp Application process is easy
 - Come into the office – not a lot of paperwork
 - You can apply over the phone, or send in an application, but a face-to-face interview is required before the amount benefits can be received.
 - Quick turnaround – no more than 30 days to determine eligibility and then benefits begin within 48 hours
 - Information provided is confidential
 - 60 is considered “elderly” and there are four differences
 - Assets can be \$3,000 more
 - This amount will go up each year and is tied to the consumer price index
 - No gross income tests
 - No excess shelter cap (rent, mortgage, utilities)
- Average allotment is \$67 a month
- Question: Does the allotment accumulate?
 - Answer: No, if there is no activity in the account for 90 days it is put on hold. If is no activity within the next 120 days, the account is expunged.
- Question: How will the name change be rolled out?
 - Answer: One way will be to send information community groups and ask for inclusion in their newsletters. Please send suggestions along to Bob Thibideau on ideas of how to spread the word on the local level.
- The Free School Lunch program will be automatic for children of families receiving Food Stamps and/or TANIFF
- There is a pamphlet available for distribution free of charge: “Food Stamps Make America Stronger”

Handouts:

- 10 Facts on Food Stamps
- Benefits of the Food Stamp Program

At this point both Bob and Ron concluded their presentation, and asked if there were any closing comments or questions from the group.

- Comment: Joanne Joy – If there is an interest in sources of fresh, local foods, contact HCCA and we will host a coalition.
- Question: Is the Serve program back in the Kennebec area? It is in Richmond. In this program you can order \$25 of food goods for two hours of volunteering.
 - Answer: It is in Richmond, do not know if it is in Kennebec County

Community Conversations

Joanne Joy gave a Power Point presentation of the emerging Public Health Infrastructure and the MAPP process; an outline of the presentation is attached.

Public Health:

- Mark Griswold is the new Office of Public Health Director.
- Public Health is “one-stop shopping”

MAPP:

- The current map phase for the Summer of '08 is to “Organized for Success” and to begin the Visioning process. Look for upcoming World Café format events.
- HCCA requests you forward any input for visioning to them

Joanne then opened the floor to questions and, seeing none, turned the meeting over to Martha.

Evaluations

Martha noted that it was 10 a.m. and time to transition to sub-committee meetings. She handed out meeting evaluations and requested they be completed and returned prior to leaving.

Martha adjourned the plenary meeting at 10 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Karen Tucker, HCCA

Please send corrections, comments to ktucker@mcd.org