

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

BOB RILEY
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STATE OF ALABAMA

RURAL ACTION COMMISSION

GERALD DIAL – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JOHN HARRISON – STATE CO-CHAIR
MARGARET BENTLEY – STATE CO-CHAIR

Region 3
Health Committee Minutes
September 11, 2007

Members Present:

Carolyn Harper, Honda
Sue Scott, Alabama
Jack Riley, University of Montevallo
Kathy Smothers, Ridgewood Healthcare Center
Joel Tate, Walker Baptist Medical Center
Lynde Courtney, Healthspring of Alabama
Julie Beckham, Alabama Lion's Sight Conservation
Rachael Green, Healthspring of Alabama
Nancy Corser, Wallace State Community College
Laura Caudell, Children's Hospital
Chad Nichols, Rural Action Commission
Ralph Mitchell and Associate, Administrative Services
Stephen Busenlehner, Saint Vincent's
Jeff Haddox, Sight savers of Alabama
Dr. Tom Ellison, Project Health
Andrea Goode, Kid One Transport
Brett Evans, Kid One Transport
Kim Cochran, Pfizer
Terry Watkins
Mike Singer, Ronald McDonald House
Russ Buchanan, Giving Flight
Terry Ackley, Southeastern Diabetes Education
Carol Lockhart, Lockhart and Associates
Andrea Anderson Nix, Community Health Charities of Alabama
Casey Murphy, Community Health Charities of Alabama
Tracy Smith, Kid One Transport

I. Welcome

Tracy Smith and Andrea Anderson-Nix welcomed the group and summarized the group's purpose. The purpose of the Region 3 Health Committee is to identify and address the rural health needs of Jefferson, Shelby, Walker, Blount, Chilton and St. Clair Counties. The group represented some of the many resources available to the Region. Introduction of the members in attendance were made.

It was stressed that as the committee worked, it was not necessary to limit inclusion of participants to the 6-county area, but rather to think about collaboration and overall impact. Each of the 8 ARAC Regions is comprised of 4 committees including health, education, economic development, and workforce development. It was noted that many of the issues faced would be those faced by other regions and may likely cut across the purview of other committees. Cross-committee and cross-regional work is both expected and encouraged.

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Nix suggested that this first meeting focus on orientation to the ARAC structure, familiarization with the activities of the Black Belt Commission and a brainstorming session regarding major healthcare issues within the region. That discussion would hopefully give rise to a list of subcommittees.

II. Chad Nichols

Chad Nichols with the Alabama Rural Action Commission explained the work of the Black Belt Action Commission, which was established three years ago by Governor Riley. The Rural Action Commission is a direct result of the success of the BBAC. The predominant reason for that success was the tying together of many available resources and the mobilization of the communities involved.

Mr. Nichols suggested that as work begins, committee members consider:

1. *What am I doing and how does this fit in with what others are doing?* This will help broaden the scope and assist in achieving all goals.
2. *The Commission will look anyway you want it to look. We cannot solve every problem but if we listen and focus, we will be able to make positive changes.*

As we move forward:

- A) Do not try to recreate the wheel, focus on what is already here and how they can be enhanced or customized.
- B) Identify the resources necessary and communicate your needs. A number of legislators are already involved in this work and provides the group with a great deal of strength.

Mr. Nichols cited a number of successful BBAC projects including the facilitation of dialysis in under-served Pike County, the development of a youth soccer league, the establishment of a program which encourages rural students to pursue a career in healthcare, the creation of a website to educate Alabamians about available health insurance coverage, and the Black Belt Eye Care Consortium.

Mr. Nichols concluded by pledging the support of the ARAC office.

III. Jeff Haddox

Jeff Haddox of Sight Savers also served on the Black Belt Action Commission and helped form the Black Belt Eye Care Consortium. Mr. Haddox described how there had been a number of eye care organizations active in the Black Belt but operating independently without communication. Mr. Haddox described how the different organizations were able to come together to create a much more comprehensive continuum of care. The consortium has screened thousands of children and adults and saved/improved the sight of many.

Mr. Haddox stressed the importance of collaboration and commented that the Consortium's effectiveness was a direct result of coming together in the spirit of cooperation. He suggested that future collaborations in Region 3 be kept simple, be diligent with follow-up and realize with this type of structure comes funding opportunities.

IV. DVD

A DVD detailing the accomplishments of the Black Belt Action Commission was shown. Individuals wishing to view a copy of the DVD simply need contact Tracy Smith or Andrea Anderson Nix.

V. Forming of subcommittees

The group participated in a brainstorming session to identify specific healthcare issues in Region 3. Many topics were discussed. Among them:

- Access to pharmaceuticals
- Childhood Obesity
- Health Screenings
- Lack of Practitioners in Rural Alabama
- Training of EMT's
- The Number of Uninsured/Under Insured
- Geriatric Access to Care
- School Nurse Program
- Awareness of Available Programs/Resources
- Wellness Education
- Transportation/ Emergency and Non-Emergency
- Migrant Healthcare/Cultural Diversity
- Dental Care/Give a Kid a Smile Program
- Role of Secondary Education
- Stress on Rural Emergency Rooms
- Workforce Wellness
- Grants and Funding Sources

These issues were considered and brought together under the four following headings for the purpose of forming sub-committees. Individuals volunteered to head those sub-committees and are so noted.

1.) Underinsured – Chairs: Joel Tate and Tom Ellison

- Health Insurance/Medicaid
- Indigent Care
- Resources Serving the Underinsured Population

2.) Transportation – Chairs: Andrea Goode and Ralph Mitchell

- Emergency
 - Staffing Issues
 - Response Time Issues
- Non-Emergency
 - Funding
 - Awareness of Resources
 - Cultural Diversity Issues

3.) Education and Awareness – Chairs: Laura Caudell and Terry Ackley

- Education
 - Wellness/Prevention
 - Health Screenings and Fairs
- Awareness
 - Communication of Available Resources

4.) Provider Access – Chairs: Wallace State and Tom Ellison

- Developing Students
 - Encouraging Interest
 - Educational Funding
- Recruiting Providers to Rural Alabama

VI. Closing

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Nix thanked the group for their time and efforts. The meeting was adjourned with the plan of meeting again, **October 9, 2007 at 9 am in the training room Kid One Transport.**