

Sonoma County Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Problems

Monthly Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2009

5 – 7 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Trey Dunia
Marvin Mars
Kevin McConnell
Edi Patrick
John Abrahams

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Gino Giannavola, AODS
Donna Newman-Fields, Prevention & Planning
Maureen Donaghue, AODS
Angela Avery, AODS
David Sheaves, AODS

PROVIDERS & GUESTS

Michael Spielman, DAAC
Tanya Sarcos, SRTP
Elizabeth Ward, SRTP
Cheryle Stanley, WRS
Edward Sprunck, SRJC Student
Marc Andrade, SRJC Student

Called to order at 5:10 pm, by Trey Dunia

I. Public Comment

- None

II. Action Items

- November minutes amended and approved
- Budget Recommendations for FY2009-2010: Action on this item is delayed until after the budget discussion. Once the budget information was received and thoroughly vetted, a motion was made.

Preamble:

- Reduce internal AODS services first due to higher cost and client services neutral (Orenda Outsourcing)
 - Least potential to impact the jail population
- Do not reduce community programs (especially beds that are so difficult to get back on line)
 - Any reduction to some providers would close their doors
- Protect underserved and special population core services
 - Minorities (Latino), women, perinatal and adolescents
- Do not reduce TASC program necessary to get inmates in treatment beds
 - Screening and placement of inmates ASAP into community treatment

Motion:

- Give priority for reductions in the following order:

- Transfer Orenda service to community, including specific moves to Orenda space.
- Eliminate the Starting Point program
- Eliminate the 4-6 hour hold program and eliminate vacant positions.
- Do the utmost to avoid reductions in bed space and reductions in TASC Counselors.

The motion was seconded and passed with four in favor and one abstention.

III. SACPA (Prop 36) Update

- **Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee spent most of the time reviewing the annual UCLA SACPA surveys. There was some discussion about problems with the construction of the survey – some of the questions were not clear. The survey included a lot of demographics, how the clients interface with the courts, etc. Electronic copies of the surveys will be emailed to the Advisory Board Members.
- **Budget:** The 2009/2010 proposed state budget does not have any reductions to the SACPA/OTP funding. However, there are no state general funds allotted for AOD services in the budget. All funding will be transferred to the “Nickel a Drink” increase in the alcohol tax. There is no plan B for funding if the alcohol tax fails. Federal Block grant funding is dependent on state MOE (Maintenance of Effort) funds. If there is no state AOD funding, within two years we will be out of Federal dollars.

The alcohol tax increase is supposed to generate \$585 million. \$311 to \$315 million will fund AOD services. \$211 million will fund CDCR treatment services. The remainder will fund Social Services (CalWorks) AOD services.

The SACPA funding for 08/09 is \$90 million statewide, down from \$120 million. OTP 08/09 funding statewide is \$17 million, down from \$45 million. This level of funding will remain in 09/10, if the alcohol tax is approved by the voters.

IV. Prevention Division Update

- The Environmental Coalition, tasked with passing policy and ordinances, is working on reducing underage and adult high-risk drinking. The Rohnert Park coalition last year passed an Alcohol Beverage Service ordinance that requires all alcohol merchants to pay a fee. The fee covers the costs of merchant education and training, as well as police dept costs. Since the institution of the fee, there has been a 50% drop in alcohol sales to minors, plus a 50% reduction in the number of alcohol related police calls.
- Alcopops – Alcohol drinks that look like soft drinks (Mike’s Hard Lemonade, etc) – are classified as wine/beer, even though they contain distilled spirits. The tax on wine/beer is \$0.20 per gallon, while the tax on distilled spirits is \$3.70 per gallon. A group of kids involved in Friday Night Live lobbied in Sacramento to get the classification for Alcopops shifted to distilled spirits, so they can be taxed at the higher rate. The State Board of Equalization passed the change. Subsequently, the alcohol industry reformulated their alcopops to reduce the flavoring agents that contain distilled spirits.

This brought the level of distilled spirits low enough for the drinks to be classified as wine/beer, even though the alcohol content was retained.

The Environmental Coalition is trying to contact the Marin Institute to determine what can be done to fight alcopops. If the drinks were taxed at the higher rate, the cost of the alcopops would significantly increase. Research shows that the price matters to kids. The Marin Institute has data that shows the higher the price, the lower the consumption rate for juveniles.

- In the city of Sonoma, there is a coalition focused on under-aged drinking. They have been having a difficult time getting the citizens to recognize that there was a problem. There have been a number of big parties and incidents of minors in possession in the city. The coalition was able to get a whole series of articles in the Sonoma newspaper. They worked closely with the reporters to make sure the issue was framed not as a kid's problem, but a community problem. The media coordination included the articles and letters to the editor. This effort generated community dialog in a meeting, attended by members of the Sheriff's Dept. and Valerie Brown.

V. AODS Division Update

- Budget reductions were on the agenda for the Board of Supervisor's meeting. The CAO's focus included accelerating the budget process so that the cuts can go into effect on July 1st. The board has authorized the CAO to institute a 5% cut. Departments are also to plan for 10% reductions, and 15% reductions. The Board will have a policy workshop in March to review the initial 5% reductions and give priorities and direction for the 2nd and 3rd 5% reductions. The CAO has established priority through a tier system for county departments:

1. Public Safety
2. Health and Human Services
3. & 4. Planning, Parks, Building, etc.

The 1st level may take the least reductions – departments in the lower levels may take larger reductions depending on the priorities set by the BOS and CAO.

AODS is working on creating reduction plan options, taking into consideration the Bennett Study, the County Strategic Plan, the Upstream Plan, the Juvenile Justice Study, the DHS Strategic Plan and the AODS System Study. There will be a meeting with the CAO on Friday to discuss DHS budget reduction options.

We met with the Sheriff's Dept. to discuss how cuts to our programs will impact the jail. The County jail has two closed units, and to make budget cuts the Sheriff is considering closing a third unit. If that unit is closed, and we cut beds, the Sheriff may be forced to reopen the unit at a cost of \$1 million for staffing and fixed costs, regardless of how many inmates. The Sheriff estimated that if we loose 25 treatment beds, the jail would be able to absorb a corresponding increase in inmates without having to open one of the already closed units.

The AODS budget has several places that are county funded. We opted to keep the current level of services for special populations, targeted populations and underserved populations, in keeping with the studies previously mentioned.

The Advisory Board discussed several approaches for reducing the budget. They considered the impact to the community, the lack of significant differences in outcomes across the AODS system, the difficulty in obtaining use permits to replace closed community facilities, the impact on the jail, and the value of several programs.

Michael Spielman of DAAC requested time to comment. He really appreciates the intent of the Advisory Board. There are 83 beds paid through county funding at Turning Point. Over the years, he has determined that a 10% reduction in the budget translates to a 20% reduction in beds, due to fixed costs and staffing level requirements. The loss of county funding for beds is exacerbated by the loss of other client income attached to the beds such as food bank funding.

A motion was made with recommendations for priority of reductions – please see section II, Action Items.

VI. Roundtable Discussion

Michael Spielman: DAAC is celebrating its 40th anniversary on January 29th. Director Renee Zito of state ADP is a confirmed attendee.

The Perinatal Program moved to a new building, got new furniture, and increased capacity – they now can accommodate 38 women and 25 kids. They have a waitlist with 11 women wanting to get in. They are starting a pre-perinatal group in Outpatient. The county's perinatal placement system is working well.

Gino Giannavola: The 5th District has a new supervisor. Board members representing the 5th District who wish to continue serving on this board should contact Efren Carrillo to introduce themselves and indicate their willingness to continue to serve with his approval.

Mark Andrade: Mark introduced himself as an SRJC student and prospective Advisory Board member. Valerie Brown has his application. He will begin working at R House next week. Mark was informed that as an employee of one of our contract providers, he would be ineligible for membership on the board. AODS will notify Supervisor Brown's office of this status change.

Marvin Mars: The senior group is in limbo – they are having difficulty in arranging a date for a meeting. Alice Tanner is dropping out of the group. Marvin met with Lynn Woolsey – she gave him a letter of support. A copy of the letter will be available at the AODS Administration office.

Cheryle Stanley: The WRS facility had a wonderful Christmas. They received donations of gifts and catering, and provided a real Christmas for the women and their children. They made sure that every child, whether in residence or just visiting, received a gift.

Dana Alvarez: The Outpatient facility does not usually do a Christmas celebration. This year, they decided to have a dinner. They cooked for 70 people, gave gifts (organizers) and asked the clients to find something meaningful (poem, CD, etc) to give to another client.

The DUI Court Program is growing. They are in the grant writing process now.

Eddie Sprunck: Eddie stated that he was impressed and humbled by the discussions held tonight.

Elizabeth Ward: She is back from vacation. The program is installing new software – there is a lot of stuff happening.

Mark Andrade: Mark would like to continue attending these meetings, if he cannot be on the board. He understands the difficulty of the discussions tonight, and appreciates the board member's service.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Next Meeting: February 18th, 2009
Prevention & Planning conference room - 490 Mendocino Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403