

## Human Services Commission Public Hearing Minutes

September 13, 2011

1 p.m.

Waubonsee Community College

Aurora, IL

### Commissioners Present

Toni Irving, Governor’s Office (Co-Chair); Joe Antolin, Heartland Alliance; Anne Irving, AFSCME Council 31; Shawn Jeffers, Little City Foundation; Jack Kaplan (proxy for Laura Thrall), United Way of Metropolitan Chicago; Michelle Saddler, Illinois Department of Human Services; Nancy Shier, Ounce of Prevention Fund; Sara Sullivan (proxy for Tony Godinez), Illinois Department of Corrections

### Hearing Attendees

Justine	Bennett	Aurora Township	Kerry	Larson	Aurora University
Christina	Bruhn	Aurora University	Mary Ann	Latsaras	Aurora University
Jeff	Bulanda	Aurora University	Nikki	Lay	Breaking Free
Judy	Bush	Hesed House	Victor	Lira	Soledad Social Services
Sheri	Buttstadt	Senior Services Assoc.	Denise	Loss	Ray Graham Assoc.
Trisha	Byrd	SIOL	Amanda	Mahoney	United Way
Alice	Capizzano	Wabonsee	Carrie	Manar	Aurora University
Rob	Castillo	Aurora University	Anne	McBride	Breaking Free
Rebecca	Cole	Aurora University	Kyla	McClure	Aurora University
Christine	Coster-Bowen	ESN NFP, Inc.	Michelle	Meyer	Mutual Ground Inc.
Erin	Dahl	Aurora University	Michael	Moran	Breaking Free
Devin	DeToni	Aurora University	Jerry	Murphy	INC Board
Kathleen	Doherty	Between Friends	Jon	Nichols	Breaking Free
Ryan	Dowd	Hesed House	Kathy	Olson	Milestone Inc.
Kim	Drew	Heartland Alliance	Gary	Pastion	Addiction Counseling Student
Joe	Dutra	Hesed House	Megghun	Redmon	Aurora University
Chris	Ellerman	Outreach Community Services	Danielle	Richardson-Hailey	Aurora University
Judith	Gethner	Illinois Partners for Human Services	Jennifer	Rozycki	Aurora University
Alexandra	Heinz	Aurora University	Jennifer	Rozycki	Aurora University
Peggy	Hicks	Team Illinois Aurora	Stefanie	Sabin	Aurora University
Kim	Illingworth	Addiction Counseling Student	Ivonne	Sambolin	IDHS
Hope	Keeper-Young	Aunt Martha's YSC	Gwendolyn	Tsuji	Aurora University
Candace	King	Du Page Federation	Elizabeth	Wagner	Aurora Township
Dave	Koch	VNA Health Care	Lucia	West-Jones	IL Assoc. of Area Agency on Aging
Wayne	Kulick	Countryside Assoc.	Tanya	Wilhoit	Aurora University
Audrey	Lake	Ray Graham Assoc.	Charleszetta	Williams	IDHS

Support staff: Betsy Bowen, Brandon Thorne, and Simone Weil, Chicago Community Trust; Gabriel Sulkes, Governor’s Office

### **I. Welcome and Introduction of Commissioners**

Co-Chair Toni Irving welcomed guests and described the purpose of the hearing. One of the goals of the Human Services Commission (HSC) is to understand and convey how to best utilize limited

resources in tough economic times. The hearing is a way of providing the Commission with insight and perspective on this.

The other Commissioners attending the hearing introduced themselves.

Co-Chair Irving directed attendees to the handouts providing an overview of the Budgeting for Results process and an overview of the 2011 budget for key human services agencies.

Co-Chair Irving explained the hearing procedures. All speakers wishing to give testimony are invited to do; there is a three minute time limit per speaker. Commissioners may ask some clarifying questions of the speaker following the testimony. Also, video recording of some of the testimonies may take place.

(Note: Testimony has been recorded here in the order in which it was received. Written testimony, where available, is linked and posted at HSC website:  
<http://www2.illinois.gov/hsc/Pages/Reports.aspx>)

## **II. Public Testimony**

### **Hesed House**

Ryan Dowd, Executive Director

Hesed House is an agency in Aurora serving homeless individuals. The shelter is at full capacity. The speaker described how the agency does not have enough chairs or mats for people to sleep in since they are already serving more people than they have beds for. Homeless shelters serve two functions: to provide the bare amount of dignity and sustenance needed for people to live, and to provide a way back into society. Homeless shelters are especially important when other services such as substance abuse and mental health services are being cut. While recognizing the need for budget cuts, the speaker stated that now is not the time to disproportionately cut homeless shelters.

Following the testimony, commissioners thanked the speaker and asked if he had adequate funding, what Hesed House would be able to accomplish. The speaker replied that they would continue to provide a range of services to help people get back on their feet, including job placement and other services.

Commissioners noted that in the city of Chicago, the impact of these cuts on services for the homeless has also been observed and that the cuts are extremely unfortunate.

### **Northwestern Illinois Agency on Aging**

Lucia West Jones, CEO

The speaker spoke on behalf of the Illinois Area Agencies on Aging, which reaches over 500,000 older adults in Illinois annually. She spoke of the impact of the cuts on the older adult population, particularly in community-based services, including Illinois Cares Rx, home-delivered meals, legal assistance, housing assistance, and homecare. She asked for the cuts to be restored to support community-based services and in particular home-delivered meals for older adults. This saves the state money in terms of supporting adults to remain at home, rather than in nursing homes. She also recommended greater investment in older adult resource centers, transportation services in metropolitan and rural areas, and in evidenced-based aging care programs. Community-based services for older adults leverage money through federal funds and volunteer hours.

### **Breaking Free**

Michael Moran, Executive Director

The speaker spoke of the cumulative impact of budget cuts on substance abuse treatment services in Illinois. Breaking Free is a community-based agency in Aurora providing school and community-based substance abuse prevention, treatment, and intervention services along with child abuse treatment and prevention services. The local community has a high percentage of Spanish-speaking clients, who have been impacted by the cuts to substance abuse services over the past couple of fiscal years. Reductions in funding have translated into staff cuts and reductions in services for Breaking Free. This affects the agency's ability to provide evidence-based programs at an adequate service level. It is critical to reach children at the elementary and middle school ages to prevent substance use and abuse. The cuts have resulted in decreased access to services, disproportionately affecting Spanish-speaking individuals.

Following testimony, commissioners asked the speaker if they had documentation in terms of outcomes for the specific constituencies Breaking Free serves. The speaker replied that the state has required providers to use evidence-based programs and Breaking Free relies on external research to locate appropriate programs. Breaking Free also collects their own data to ensure that fidelity to interventions is occurring and the intended outcomes are being achieved. The speaker expressed concern that outcome-based measures could lead to agencies accepting more functional or easier to treat clients in order to get better outcomes.

Commissioners thanked the speaker for sharing his data and testimony and expressed that certain legislators have been supportive of continuing to look at the budget in the fall veto session and encouraged the speaker to continue to speak with legislators about this issue.

### **Team Illinois Aurora**

Peggy Hicks

Team Illinois is an organization that has existed for more than 80 years and has many stakeholders at the table, including faith-based groups and community service providers, and works on combining resources to solve community problems. Most of the individuals they work with are very low-functioning. While recognizing that some cuts need to be made and that priorities need to be selected, a concern is that as new data systems are introduced, these new systems can introduce additional costs, especially for small provider agencies. Hopefully this process will not eliminate these agencies. A transitional period will be needed so all agencies can understand what data is

required in order to receive funding. Who will determine what agencies will receive funding and what cuts will be made? Will this new program be cost-efficient, at all levels, including for funders, providers and clients? The state also needs to think about how to measure the real impact in the community and not just reporting numbers.

Following testimony, commissioners asked if Aurora was the only site. The speaker replied that there are sites in other locations and they continue to work as a group. Team Illinois has had a positive relationship with many of the DHS staff over the years.

Commissioners thanked the speaker and asked what she thought about other forms of collaborations. The speaker stated that due to difficult financial times, collaboration is especially important. Talking with the clients themselves is also critical, in order to find out the best ways to help people get the services they need.

### **DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform**

Candace M. King, Executive Director

The suburbs have needs that are very different from the city. Poverty is far more dispersed and is less place-based. The suburbs are undergoing profound demographic shifts, with the number of people in poverty increasing. There are now 160,000 low-income individuals in DuPage County. Suburbs have difficult transportation systems and lack the infrastructure of services for low-income people like food pantries and health clinics. Human services resources are not equitably distributed across the state in terms of federal, state, and private money. Across all funding streams, Chicago receives between \$2 and \$5 more per eligible individual for human services than in DuPage County. In 2009 for the first time, fewer than half of the state's poor people lived in Cook County, but there is no organized mechanism in place to see that the funding moves to where people in need are.

Following testimony, Commissioners asked the speaker to clarify what the \$2 to \$5 in disproportionate funding per person means. The speaker said that an example is Head Start: an eligible child in Chicago is about 4 times more likely to find a Head Start slot than in DuPage County. This is true in other systems including developmental disabilities and substance abuse services. Leadership is needed to look at the needs of the whole state and more equitably share resources.

Commissioners inquired about the state implementation of Budgeting for Results, if there is a method or measurement that could be recommended in terms of tracking dollars per customers served. The speaker replied that other states have allocation formulas that determine how much money goes where and ensures dollars are directed to the needs of particular areas.

Commissioners shared their familiarity with the situation in early childhood education and groups have worked very hard to push ISBE to dedicate resources to the suburbs and collar counties. This led to growth in access to education for children in the suburbs, but unfortunately some of these programs suffered under cuts made this year.

Commissioners asked if the dispersal of poverty makes determining sites where services are to be delivered more difficult or controversial, i.e. due to zoning laws. The speaker replied that "NIMBY"

still exists but there are ways it can be overcome. Far more poor people live outside of the concentrated pockets of poverty in DuPage County than live in them; poverty is dispersed across the county. This makes it complex to determine how to deliver services.

### **Milestone Dental Clinic**

Kathy Olson, Clinic Administrator

The Milestone Dental Clinic, located in Rockford, provides dental services to people with developmental disabilities in Winnebago County and 39 other counties in Illinois. The clinic receives some of its funding from DHS. Demand for these services continues to grow, but the clinic's grant is in peril, leading to potential service cuts. The Surgeon General's recent report demonstrates that you cannot be healthy without oral health. The speaker shared a story of a resident of a facility in the suburbs who was refusing to eat or drink because of oral health issues. He was seen in their clinic and had several infected teeth extracted, which relieved his pain and suffering and enabled him to eat again. The clinic also works with the dental school at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to train dental students on providing dental care to people with developmental disabilities. They hope this will be considered as the state makes tough budget decisions.

Commissioners stated that for many families caring for people with developmental disabilities in the community, access to oral care is often a huge issue. The speaker's story is an example of how eliminating cuts even in small programs can have system-wide ramifications.

Commissioners suggested that if there was a fee-for-service mechanism in Medicaid, this might help be a solution. The speaker replies that Medicaid has cut dental reimbursement rates; also, providing oral care to people with developmental disabilities requires more staff and more time. While fee-for-service would help, it would not cover the entire gap.

Commissioners commented that this partnership had helped his organization and that the mainstream dental community is often not receptive to caring for people with developmental disabilities. The speaker commented that the clinic's collaboration with UIC is helping to change this access problem.

### **Outreach Community Ministries**

Chris Ellerman, CEO

Outreach Community Ministries (OCM) forms community partnerships with corporations, local churches, and others to provide unique services in communities including outreach with homeless youth, a mental health center, and other programs. They impact about 6,000 vulnerable and low-income individuals in the community each year. OCM has had a long working relationship with the state, with state funding constituting about 10% of their budget. One of their programs serving young people on the verge of becoming involved in the criminal justice system was recently cut, even though this program provides cost-savings benefits in the form of diverting youth from prisons and jails. When cuts were made, the best practice would be to allow agencies time to phase out with their clients over at least three months. OCM committed to doing this despite cuts made to their program.

Commissioners asked the speaker to clarify what impact the cuts have made on how many youth OCM can serve. The speaker said about 150 kids would be pulled back from services due to these cuts. The needs are already greater than what his organization can serve and there are few other youth development and prevention programs in the area. To divert youth, they use master's level clinicians to work with kids and their families. Networking in the community, mentoring, and correcting underperformance in schools are also important.

Commissioners asked about the coalition the organization represents and how they successfully recruit and maintain volunteers, since this is a challenge for many organizations. The speaker replied that the coalition of churches they work with in each community are unique and that being community-based and forming partnerships is essential.

Commissioners asked if there is an advantage for the state to work with collaborative organizations such as OCM that work in multiple communities. The speaker commented that he estimates they match every state dollar with about \$2 of their own, so it is a good investment for the state. Organizing multiple communities is not easy, but it brings in a lot of community resources and volunteers. Commissioners also asked if the best practice for the state would be to provide some lead time for agencies to phase out with clients when they are making budget cuts to programs. The speaker said it is critical to announce the wind-down up front, i.e. to give at least 90 days notice, so providers have time to terminate programs responsibly with clients. It is also challenging for providers when the state is so behind in its reimbursement of grant-based programs.

### **Between Friends**

Kathleen Doherty, Executive Director

The speaker shared the story of a client who was a survivor of domestic violence and was being beaten by her husband. Within a year of coming to Between Friends, the client was able to sell her house, improve her health, get a divorce, find a job, and share resources with other women. She came "full circle." However, Between Friends was able to serve far fewer individuals last year due to cuts. Many domestic violence service programs in Illinois have been unable to provide programs to clients due to inadequate levels of staff and other services, and many saw further decreases in state funding over the past year. Domestic violence survivors need a range of services, including education to the community so more people understand what domestic violence is and do not blame survivors. But providers have not been able to provide some of these services because of cuts. Between Friends surveyed hundreds of survivors of domestic violence, and many reported that they would have stayed in abusive situations without the support they received. Some reported that they would be dead without these services.

In her testimony the speaker made reference to a \$1 million increase in domestic violence program funding from FY'11 to FY'12. The speaker remarked that the contracts agencies have with the state do not reflect that increase in funding.

Commissioners asked the speaker to clarify what she meant about \$1 million in funds that has not been allocated. The speaker explained that domestic violence agencies had received contracts similar to that of last year and were unsure as to where the \$1 million increase had gone, if it would

be allocated, and how it would be allocated. Commissioners clarified that the plan for the \$1 million will be by next month.

Commissioners asked how many more additional people Between Friends could serve if they received their share of the \$1 million in funding. The speaker replied that this still would not bring them back up to 2008 levels, when they served 10,000 clients. For Between Friends, most cuts were made in their evidence-based prevention program and they would like to be able to reinstate some of these prevention services.

Commissioners commented that many people have discussed that services should be subject to scrutiny to make sure they fit local demographics and are evidence based. The speaker said they have been working to establish recommended outcome measures to help determine who would get funds.

### **INC Board**

Jerry Murphy, Executive Director

INC Board is a local mental health authority that helps plan for local substance abuse and mental health services. Currently one of the major adjustments they have seen is in how the system serves non-Medicaid clients. Medicaid eligibility should not be a determining factor in whether or not people can get services. Mental health providers are handicapped by the fact that they currently only have four month contracts with DHS and are being reimbursed two to four months late. Many people with developmental disabilities on the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) list will pass away before they get needed services. One specific example of poor decision-making is the termination of the CHPS program, which prevented or forestalled the commitment of people with mental illness to state facilities through short-term intervention services. Now the state has to pay for expensive hospital and emergency room-based services for this population. Lawsuits and getting federal reimbursement are terrible criteria for making decisions about serving our most vulnerable citizens.

Commissioners commented that this year, DHS is in the midst of rolling out Budgeting for Results. There is a Budgeting for Results Commission, which will be trying to determine what are appropriate measures and outcomes. She encouraged the speaker to work with DHS Division of Mental Health to provide input on what would be appropriate measures. The speaker commented that he was dismayed that no providers were included on the Budgeting for Results Commission and that it would be important to include a provider who has knowledge and expertise of the day-to-day realities providers face.

Commissioners commented that the HSC urged the Governor's Office to include providers on the Budgeting for Results Commission and that she continues to feel this was a mistake. Many of the people on the Budgeting for Results Commission are legislators who need to understand what issues providers are facing.

### **Aurora University**

Jeffrey Bulanda, Assistant Professor of Social Work

The speaker expressed concern about the availability of field placements and jobs for social work students, saying that the state will lose a lot of talented people dedicated to the mission of helping others if there is no change of them being able to get a job. He is also a former school social worker. School social workers have up to 100 to 200 students on their caseloads, which is too high to provide intensive mental health services. The state needs to look at how we are providing mental health services and prevention in schools. For five years the speaker has also run an after-school “apprentice in social work” program for teenagers that provides counseling and vocational development and engages youth in community activism. His evaluation shows that the program has led to improvement in grades and self-determination. The program was cut in half in 2010, from 30 students to 15, despite demonstrated outcomes. This is a very cost-effective program and yet it has been cut. Research consistently shows that if we do not pay for services up front, we will pay on the back end, i.e. in terms of youth going to prison.

### **Aurora University**

Tanya Wilhoit, Gwen Tsuiji, and Samantha Clausen, Social Work Students

The speakers described how all of the agencies where they are interning have been affected by budget cuts in different ways. For example, one agency refers youth to mental health services. Almost all of the programs they ordinarily make referrals to have been cut or eliminated, making it difficult to make good referrals and hard for the agency to fulfill its vision of decreasing drop-out rates. Another student described her work in a youth program that had to reduce important after-school services for youth and reduce staff by 50% due to budget cuts. This has prevented the agency from fulfilling its mission and helping youth reach their full potential. The third speaker described her agency’s work with substance abuse services for male youth and adults. They have had to cut services to people who need them due to budget cuts. This also means that there are less qualified staff at agencies to mentor and educate social work students, due to staffing cuts. Ultimately the budget cuts of FY 2012 will affect all of us.

Commissioners asked Ms. Tsuiji if she knew what percent of funding was cut and how it translated into reductions in the staff or in the number of people served. The speaker replied she was not sure and Sec. Saddler said it would be helpful if this information could be provided to DHS. Commissioners thanked the students for speaking and asked Ms. Clausen if she knew how many of the adolescents whose services were cut or reduced had other problems as a result. She replied that all 38 of the youth in the adolescent male program are also involved in the criminal justice system.

### **Ray Graham Association**

Denise Loss, Direct Support Professional (DSP)

Ray Graham provides services to people with developmental disabilities through a variety of programs in the community, including residential and day programs. The speaker described how she is like a family for some of the individuals she serves. With the state budget cuts, Ray Graham has lost a lot of quality DSP staff. This leads to a decrease in the quality of care for the people they serve. Everyone deserves a high quality of care. A DSP is a lower-paying but rewarding job that the speaker is honored to do, and wants to be able to keep on doing so that the individuals she works with can enjoy a good and healthy life. There is nothing more important than taking care of other

human beings. If the budget cuts go through, Ray Graham and other providers will not be able to provide the best care that people deserve.

Commissioners thanked the speaker for her work and her testimony and agreed that it is a tragedy that good caregivers are being lost due to budget cuts. Commissioners stated that there were cuts in grants and delays in payments due to providers in the past year and asked the speaker about the effects of this. The speaker commented that there have been a lot of changes in the past five years, including her agency having less money for food, leading to staff members sometimes buying food for the residential homes with their own money. Also, the staff is overworked. And because of budget cuts and staff cuts, staff has had to leave after years of service, when the clients have come to know them and depend on them. Commissioners also thanked the speaker for her service and stated that it is becoming even more difficult to attract passionate people to the field because of the financial situation. He also stated that staff burnout is escalating. The speaker agreed that this work cannot be done alone. Many DSPs already go beyond the call of duty and have to take care of each other.

#### **Senior Service Associates, Inc.**

Sheri Buttstadt, Certified Information Assistance Specialist

Senior Service Associates is an Area Agencies on Aging program that provides services to seniors and their caregivers in three counties. They help with everything from understanding Medicare to bereavement counseling. The speaker spoke of working with a family who is distressed because their mother has Alzheimer's, which is a crisis for many families. The ripple effect of when programs are cut includes not only quality of life, but is a matter of survival for many people. The Community Care program is essential for helping seniors stay in their homes as long as possible. If these services are cut, people will have to go to nursing homes, lose all their money, and ultimately cost the state by going on public aid. Also, many seniors were recently cut from the CircuitBreaker program and are having trouble getting their medications. As a result, many will stop taking their medication, or take it inappropriately, leading to hospitalization, medical costs, and deaths. These are the ripple effects.

Commissioners commented that within the prison system, there is an increased number of elderly prisoners and also an increase in elderly people exiting the prison system. The speaker commented that some seniors have resorted to stealing in order to get food and mental health is a huge concern for the population.

Commissioners asked if the speaker thought the Affordable Care Act would help eliminate the "doughnut hole" for seniors in terms of drug costs. The speaker commented that it will take 10 years to eliminate it and in the meantime, the costs of drugs are going up, and the Affordable Care Act could be overturned in the meantime.

#### **Countryside Association for People with Disabilities**

Wayne Kulick, Executive Director

Mr. Kulick spoke of how his organization works to find paid work opportunities for people with disabilities in northern Cook and Lake Counties. Over the past several years, they have endured

several funding cuts, leading to staffing cuts and decreased benefits to employees. They have already eliminated all mid-level managers and feel they have nowhere else to cut. However, they continue to work to find jobs for people with disabilities. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 70% and they are trying to work to change this. Payment delays have caused the organization to meet its credit limits twice and pay more than \$36,000 in interest, which they need for direct support services. People want to work. The state needs to look at other priorities and programs instead of cutting human services again and again.

Following testimony, commissioners asked for clarification on the unemployment rate of people with disabilities and the speaker confirmed that it exceeds 70%. Toni Irving asked for recommended areas to cut instead of human services. The speaker commented that he would leave this to the legislators' determination. His organization's funding is primarily from DHS.

Commissioners asked what other funding sources they have. The speaker stated that they hold a number of fundraisers and receive gifts through appeals to corporations or foundations, but these are getting more difficult to find. Joe Antolin clarified that they are fundraising in order to pay off interest on their line of credit, which the speaker confirmed, and asked about how many more people they could serve if they didn't have to do this. The speaker said they are in the process of expanding; their target is to expand to more than 50 new individuals this year, on top of 360 people they are already providing services to in a facility-based program. The organization received some ARRA money this year, but those funds have ended.

Commissioners asked that in light of the budget cuts, how have they been able to expand services? The speaker stated that they hope to continue to fund expansion through gifts and foundation support, and through generating subcontract work to help cover overhead.

### **DayOneNetwork**

Joyce Helander, Executive Director

DayOneNetwork is an independent service coordination entity that serves as a front door for people with developmental disabilities and delays who need to find services. As a previous speaker mentioned, there is a PUNS system for people with developmental disabilities, which has grown over time. This is a statement of what services are needed statewide. There are about 22,000 people who are in need, either underserved or not served at all. It gets difficult for families when people with developmental disabilities reach age 22 and the entitlements they receive through school no longer exist. People need group homes and supportive living arrangements. There are recommendations for closing state facilities, which needs to be done in a meaningful way. Dollars need to support community services and also respite care, which has been earmarked for cuts. Families have been caring for people with disabilities for their lifetimes, which is intense. Cutting respite care may lead to increased hospitalizations.

Commissioners commented that Federal law changed several years ago regarding if young children who were wards of the state through DCFS should be screened for developmental delays and early intervention services. She asked the speaker about what services they can provide to these type of children. The speaker commented that they work with a number of families who are involved with

DCFS and screen the children for developmental delays. They have specialists such as RNs and social-emotional specialists who are able to help make these determinations and recommendations for services. Many organizations have had to lay off their social-emotional specialists and this is a big concern.

Commissioners shared that some of the facility closures are being presented as a way for the state to save money, but there are concerns that these closures may have some negative impacts for families and people with developmental disabilities. It is unfortunate that the purpose of closing these facilities is to save money, when often the savings gained do not come back to the systems and communities affected. Commissioners stated that one of the unfortunate things about the proposed closures is that there won't be a true savings, since there is already a large budget deficit.

### **III. Closure and Adjournment**

Commissioners thanked all guests for attending and offered a special thanks to the students for attending and giving their testimony.

Co-Chair Toni Irving thanked all guests for attending and announced that the next hearing on human services will be in Springfield, on September 21<sup>st</sup> at 1 p.m. She encouraged guests to attend this hearing and to provide written testimony by email if they had not submitted it already.

The hearing was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.