

Minutes
Communities Connect Membership Meeting
Friday, February 13, 2009

Participants: Holly Greenwood, CHOICE Community Health Network; Sallie Neillie, King County Project Access; Jackie Saul, Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access; Ralph DeCristoforo, Community-Minded Enterprises; Kerri Lenderman, Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access; Marti Anne Gilman, Free Clinic of Southwest Washington/Clark County Project Access; Patty Hayes, WithinReach

Meeting Objectives

- Update on Community Collaborative Grant re-authorization
- Identify next steps for legislative strategy
- Update on other legislative issues

Minutes

Topic
(Desired Outcome)

Introductions and Agenda Review

Marti Anne from Clark County Project Access joined the call representing the Free Clinic of Southwest WA and discussed their newly launched Project Access. Everyone shared information about their respective programs and it was decided we would add a small paragraph about member organizations to the Communities Connect website.

2009 Legislative Strategy Development

- **Community Health Collaborative Grant Program**
 - **SB 5360 & HB 1620**
 - **Update on meeting Senate Staff/CHC**
 - **Strategy for hearings**

Senator Keiser had previously introduced language tying the Community Collaborative Grant program to another funding program for Community Health Centers, which created concerns over perceived competition for funding. Communities Connect decided to then focus on ensuring that Community Collaborative language is in the bill, even if there is no specific funding source tied to it. We have since met with Rhoda from Senator Keiser's office and representatives from the WA Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers (WACMHC) and have pulled any language from bill referring to funding for the Community Collaborative Grant program, while also assuring there is language in place that the program will be authorized. Because the program is not in Governor Gregoire's budget that was released last December, we can only request funding but it will not be specified.

There will be a hearing for this bill (SB 5360) and Holly is putting together a panel to present information about Community Coalitions. The House version of the bill (HB1620) will not be heard, which is typical when there are companion bills on each side of the Legislature. Holly noted that Representative John Driscoll, who works with Spokane Project Access, a member of Communities Connect, is in support of the bills.

The group agreed this is the right path for Communities Connect to take regarding the Community Collaborative Grant program. Holly and Jesus have created a one page fact sheet about community collaboratives, to serve as a resource.

Holly will keep members updated and will send out Calls to Action when needed (and noted they will likely have a short turn around time). Holly has also been attending weekly HCCY update meetings and is keeping them up to date on Communities Connect.

- **Other Legislative Issues**
 - **GAU**

This was cut in the governor's budget but we have since learned the legislature wants it put back into the budget, although we don't know where this money will come from.

- **Basic Health**

The Basic Health budget was cut by 42% in the governor's budget and it is assumed they will need to cut participation in order to reach that amount. Rep. Kelli Linville has indicated to WAHA that Basic Health is not sustainable in its current form, and has requested WAHA provide suggestions of how reduce costs without drastic cuts to benefits. A draft document prepared by WAHA was routed to Communities Connect members this morning. While it has already been submitted to Rep. Linville, she is aware that WAHA plans to request feedback from Communities Connect and may make changes based on the feedback. The group agreed to partner with WAHA on this effort, and Holly asked that the group provide their comments to Kerri by Wednesday.

- **Outreach \$'s**

Because of healthcare funding designated in the 2009 stimulus package (due to be signed by President Obama on Monday), we believe Governor Gregoire will support reinstating funding for Medicaid outreach (the Apple Health for Kids program), although perhaps not at the original level of funding.

Other Issues

- **Medicaid Advisory Board**

Wendy Carr (from Whatcom County) sits on this board and reported to Kerri that Doug Porter has requested more consumer representation. Holly has sent a description of the group and request for consumer representatives willing to serve on the panel to the Communities Connect membership. Ralph noted that it would be helpful to have a consumer who is also already involved with a community organization, and the group agreed it would be convenient to also have someone who lives in the Olympia area.

- **Membership Update/Dues**

Jackie informed the group that dues invoices were sent out in January and a few member organizations have already paid. She will keep the group updated as more renewals come in.

- **Grant Writing Opportunities**

As previously noted, Communities Connect is experiencing a budget shortfall for 2009. Holly stated that CHOICE is willing to write a grant on behalf of Communities Connect and requested any other members do the same as they are able, while recognizing that everyone is busy with their own programs. Jackie informed the group that she can provide fiscal sponsor/WAHA information as needed.

Review of Next Steps:

- **Next General Membership Meeting:– March 13, 2009**

- **Do we want legislative update calls more often during session?**

The group discussed the frequency of membership meetings during the legislative session. Ralph noted that he is satisfied with the level of calls now as he feels he is kept up to date via emails from Holly. Kerri suggested asking again at the next membership meeting as there are not many people on the call today. Jackie also noted that King Co. Public Health isn't participating on today's call because of a county imposed furlough, and Sallie noted this furlough is being very strictly enforced. Jackie will send an email to survey members if Friday is still the preferred meeting day and if frequency of meetings should be increased.