

**MINUTES
RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC HEARING**

JULY 15, 2010

The Public Hearing meeting of the Richland County Health and Human Services Board was called to order at 5:30 p.m. July 15, 2010 by Jeanetta Kirkpatrick in the Main Conference Room of the Community Services Building, 221 West Seminary Street, Richland Center, Wisconsin.

Members Present: Betty Havlik, Dr. Richard Edwards, Jeanetta Kirkpatrick, Marilyn Rinehart, Ray Schmitz, Robert Holets, Paul Kinney, and Walter Gust.

Members Absent: Fred Clary.

Citizens Present: Bonnie Tydrich and Mary Jane Jacobus.

Others Present: Angie Rizner, Christy Duhr, Lori Thuli, Marianne Stanek, Patrick Metz, and Randy Jacquet.

Approval of Agenda and Posting: Motion by Betty Havlik, seconded by Ray Schmitz to approve the agenda and proper posting. Motion carried.

Introductions and Review Purpose of the Public Hearing: Jeanetta Kirkpatrick noted that the purpose of the Public Hearing is to solicit comments by the public regarding the services and programs of Richland County Health & Human Services to assist in the development of the 2011 budget and plan.

Citizen Comments about the 2011 Budget and Services: Dr. Richard Edwards came forward to speak in support of the Richland Community Free Clinic noting that the clinic's model is very unique. It is located within the Richland Medical Center, so medical records can be accessed and directly entered into the system.

Dr. Richard Edwards noted that the Free Clinic has seen an increase in patients due to the tough economic times. Currently they have served 782 patients and many of those patients are destitute and in serious need of medical care. They often deny themselves medications or treatment in order to buy food or other necessities. Dr. Richard Edwards stated that the Free Clinic is open every Tuesday morning and 34-54 patients are routinely seen which are primarily between the ages of 18 to 64 years and have chronic diseases and mental health or drug abuse issues.

Dr. Richard Edwards reported that Richland County donated \$10,000 to the Richland Community Free Clinic in 2008 and 2009 and this donation was reduced to \$5,000 in 2010. The Free Clinic would like to be considered for the same \$5,000 donation for

2011. Dr. Richard Edwards noted that the Free Clinic has a wealth of qualified volunteers willing to perform the services of the clinic, but they also need cash donations in order to function.

Dr. Richard Edwards stated that he outreaches to the Richland County Jail 1 day per week as part of his work with the Free Clinic, which reduces the Sheriff's Department resources that would be necessary to transport inmates in need of medical treatment. Jeanetta Kirkpatrick recommended that Dr. Richard Edwards go directly to the Sheriff's Department and request a donation due to the savings he has presented the department.

Discussion was held regarding what the cash donation is used for. Dr. Richard Edwards noted that the major expense of the Free Clinic is prescription drugs - one pharmacy fully donates prescription drugs, one pharmacy requires that the Free Clinic pay half of the cost of the prescription drug, and some patients utilize Wal-Mart's \$4 prescription drug program. Dr. Richard Edwards stated that the Free Clinic cannot continue to expect the pharmacies to donate prescription drugs. Also, many procedures, surgeries, etc. are not free and must be paid by the Free Clinic if the patient does not qualify for charity care through the Richland Medical Center or Richland Hospital. Dr. Richard Edwards noted that the Richland Hospital does provide lab and x-ray services at no cost.

Jeanetta Kirkpatrick stated that in addition to the \$5,000 cash donation, Health and Human Services also provides a Public Health RN during every clinic and this equates to more than \$10,000 in staff time. It was noted that this same service is not offered in other counties with free clinics. Therefore, Richland County is donating approximately \$15,000 annually to the Free Clinic. Dr. Richard Edwards noted that the involvement of a Public Health RN is critical to the operation and overall well being of the patient. Marilyn Rinehart stated that the Public Health RN is also able to monitor the immunization records of those attending the Free Clinic.

Jeanetta Kirkpatrick questioned if the Free Clinic has pursued drug companies requesting free or discounted medications. Discussion was held regarding the distribution of medications and the requirements of the drug companies, noting that the current process for prescription drug distribution is more thorough. Dr. Richard Edwards noted that Marilyn Rinehart has been pursuing grants to assist with the cash needs of the clinic. Ray Schmitz stated that the Free Clinic is helping Richland County and he fully supports their operation.

Walter Gust stated that he is a Senior Nutrition Program volunteer and he would like to see the program continue in 2011. Marilyn Rinehart noted that she offers blood pressure checks at the Rockbridge Meal Site one time per month. Jeanetta Kirkpatrick commented that the Viola Meal Site has requested that a volunteer take blood pressures at their site as well.

Christy Duhr reported that the agency has implemented very serious cuts and she “does not know how much more Health and Human Services can cut and still keep the doors open.” Christy Duhr stated that taxes are collected, so people should be taken care of.

Paul Kinney questioned if just staff have been cut or if services have been cut as well. Christy Duhr stated that with staff cuts we can't continue to provide the same services with fewer and fewer staff. Marianne Stanek noted that various Public Health services have been cut and Lori Thuli commented that the Children's Services Unit lost 5 positions including a Parent Aide that offered prevention services. As client numbers increase, we can't be as responsive or proactive. It was noted that at this time there is a 2-4 month wait to see a psychiatrist and even a longer wait to see a child psychiatrist that will accept medical assistance.

Betty Havlik stated, “we help all these other countries, but can't help our own” and it always seems to be the children and the elderly that get cut. Walter Gust commented that “these are tough times and we must persevere.”

Jeanetta Kirkpatrick reported that the Richland County Finance Committee would be submitting a letter to all department heads within the next few days that will offer budgetary direction for 2011.

Adjourn: Motion by Dr. Richard Edwards, seconded by Paul Kinney to adjourn the meeting at 6:05pm. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angie Rizner
Office Supervisor