

## CHAC Meeting Notes

January 5, 2007

Present: Jill Patton, leader; Eileen Wasserbach, Sherrod Beall, Bern Heath, Anthony Demond, Bill Warren, Lynn Westberg, Luke Casias, Margaret Sterner, Fred Kroeger, Gene Bradley, Mary Stengel, Dianne Donovan, Bob Conrad, Julie Pickering, Uta Carleno, Missy Rodey

- I. Introductions:
  - contact sheet for updating information was circulated
  - Margaret Sterner, RN representing Community Connections attended as a new member
  - Bob Conrad, former member, was in attendance
- II. Approval of December 2006 meeting minutes: approved as distributed
- III. Fiscal Agent: Jill reported that the Community Foundation Serving SW Colorado has agreed to act as the fiscal agent for CHAC. Missy will work with Lon Erwin to complete the necessary paperwork. Gene Bradley will check with Lon regarding amount of money in our current account and HSD vs CHAC accounting
- IV. Structure of CHAC: Jill asked what degree of formality the group wishes to adopt. When the group was established after the first Community Summit, dues were collected to support the operations of the group, including a sum for Marsha Porter-Norton for her work as coordinator, printing, refreshments, etc. Discussion followed as to need to collect dues now. It was suggested that if monies are needed in the future, that the request should be made and organizations and/or individuals can come forward to meet the need. Jill will check with individuals on the current membership list to determine their level of interest in the organization and their willingness to have their names used as CHAC members.
- V. Website and email:
  - Kendra Holmes designed the CHAC website ([www.laplatachac.org](http://www.laplatachac.org)) and has indicated to Marsha she is willing to update the site. Missy will contact her regarding price. It was agreed that someone needs to keep an eye on the site and make sure it is updated to reflect changes as the organization and its activities evolve. The website has been paid for through 2007.
  - It was suggested that we need an email address that is checked regularly. Missy will check with Kendra regarding setting up a yahoo or other cost free site to link to the website. Sherrod volunteered to monitor the account and respond to inquiries
- VI. Transition Team update:
  - Luke Casias reported on the current situation at VWHS. 2 FT and 1 PT (2 days a week) physicians remain, plus one FT PA. None of these will be going into private practice after VW closes in Durango on 3/31/07. Luke indicated he is willing to stay in our community, but must (along with the PA) complete his National Health Service loan obligation before he can work for a non-government entity. Whether he and the PA might be incorporated into the Mancos clinic is being investigated, but that clinic (an FQHC) has its own board and takes its call through SW Community Hospital, not MMC. Largest concerns at present: home health and nursing home patients. Nothing is yet set up for coverage of home health (60 to 70 patients); Ellen Martin, MD is talking with Four Corners Nursing Home to determine if she might cover the later.

Layoffs plans are being made for the other VW staff. The biggest staffing problem Luke foresees is the loss of front office staff. Bern suggested a “loaned staff” concept to help fill such gaps. Luke agreed that might work. This will be pursued as need arises. VWHS has met their legal requirement of 45 days notification for closing of the health center.

- Missy reported on the current activities associated with the transition team, including a proposal that will be taken on January 9<sup>th</sup> to the City Councilors and the County Commissioners in a special joint meeting. The proposal asks the city and the county to consider acting as public partners to meet our health care crisis and includes several phases of crisis management: short term financial support of a MMC urgent care clinic designed to meet the urgent needs of only those patients who do not have a medical home. This would not include home health or nursing home coverage. MMC is developing a budget request that will cover losses from reimbursement shortfalls. Luke said he is pursuing a means of making the patient electronic medical records available to such a clinic as “read only” (the clinic will not house the permanent patient records). MMC will make available an “RNs on Call” service for call-in assistance to individuals with medically related questions and no physician relationship. A long term phase would include the hiring of a consultant to review the county’s health care needs and suggest a model that would be best and most feasible to meet those needs. A time frame of 3-4 months is considered appropriate for the consultant review and recommendations. Funding for this position might come from the city/county or from a formerly submitted Caring for Colorado planning grant response to which is expected in late February or March (submitted by MM Foundation).
- Going forward: Bern reported that a pro forma of a community health center suggests that \$750,000 is needed annually to sustain operations with 1 to 1 ½ million dollars needed to stabilize a health center in the long run.. LPC has a higher percentage of Medicare patients (a practice can exist with a maximum of 15-18% Medicare patients) without having a Federal grant to sustain reimbursement losses. VW has offered equipment and might be interested in sub-letting its space to assist with the establishment of a new clinic. Funding of a LPC CHC will require community will and a consistent funding stream. How can VW patients be given a voice to build political force and influence funding? Luke suggested form letters they can personalize with comments and signatures; Bern suggested form letters are less influential than personal requests sent to our governing officials. Perhaps loaned office staff could facilitate the preparation of such letters. A form letter could be made available on the CHAC website. The *Herald* should be led/managed in its PR with critical stories including patient experiences and regional economic impact. CHAC should also help educate officials by contacting Commissioners and other public officers. Bern stated he hopes his vision of an integrated health clinic will be considered. The burden of supporting any clinic may very well fall to the creation of a HSD. The question of whether LPC itself can organize a HSD was raised.
- Luke informed the group that the staff of VWHS in Durango would like help in surveying LPC providers to determine where short or long term homes for their patients might exist and to create a list of potential referrals. The group agreed that this is an appropriate activity for the CHAC to undertake. **Action item:**

anyone willing to participate in conducting such a survey, please notify Missy Rodey ([mrodey@frontier.net](mailto:mrodey@frontier.net)).

- Lynn Westberg reported that SJBHD is gearing up to provide more child and adult immunizations to help cover the created gap in services. They are considering a centering pregnancy model of care as well as group well child and chronic disease management services. A PA or Nurse Practitioner might be available through their Latino outreach grant.
- VII. Grant proposal update: Eileen distributed an overview of the Colorado Health Foundation grant that is centered on potential work towards a HSD proposal. It was suggested that she hold the grant in anticipation of city/county response to funding requests and/or other responses to the imminent closing of VW in Durango.
- VIII. Report on Ellen Robert's bill for "Health Care Services Special Districts": Ellen will finalize and file this bill by January 15<sup>th</sup>. The bill provides for exemptions from certain provisions of the special district act for creation of a HSD or HAD, including submitting the service plan to the planning commission (service plan would go directly to the BOCC) and prevention of exclusion requests. It further exempts petitioners from the requirement to send letter notification of a public hearing before the board to the property owners within the proposed special district, and specifies an alternative to a court hearing, limiting the court's review to whether the petitioners have satisfied all the legal requirements for the formation of a special district.
- IX. Other: Jill Patton suggested the writing of an open letter to Gov Ritter regarding the LPC health care situation. The group supported this and suggested such a letter also be sent to the Colorado Health Care Commission, all relevant political entities, the Colorado Medical Society and the Colorado Association of Family Practitioners. Jill will undertake the writing of this letter.
- X. Adjournment: 10:15 am. Next Meeting: February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8:30 am, Christ the King Church.