

## **CHAC MEETING NOTES**

### **February 1, 2008**

Attending: Marsha Porter Norton, Deb Banton, Jack Llewellyn, Missy Rodey, Jenny Wrenn, Jeanine Justice, Lisa Schwantes from Senator Ken Salazar's office (with an intern from Fort Lewis, Wes), Joanne Spina, County Commissioner Joelle Riddle, Bob Conrad,, Bob Juskevich, Jill Patton, Eileen Wasserbach, Sherrod Beall, Tom Rebbin, Tony DeMond, Lynn Westberg, and Bern Heathl and guests Pat Murphy and Charlie Speno.

Guest Speaker: Rick Reiter of Reiter & Associates, Ballot Initiatives Consultant

#### **The first item on the agenda was a talk by Rick Reiter on "Steps and Strategies in Designing and Carrying Out Successful Ballot Initiatives."**

Rick started by recommending that the best timing for a successful Health Service District campaign would be November 2008. He observed that a presidential election year will have a good voter turn-out and will attract a high percentage of younger voters who may be more ideologically favorable to a Health Service District. Rick did indicate, though, that the crux of the matter is getting voters to pass a new tax. The voters must be convinced that there is a compelling reason for a new tax.

Rick stated that the primary target audience for a Health Service District would be those in the age group of 45-65. That population is most likely to be concerned about their own health issues and that of their parents and grandparents. A secondary target audience would be those over 65 as they constitute a large part of the population using the services of the current Health Services Clinic (HSC).

He indicated that the critical part of the HSD campaign would be before July 4<sup>th</sup>. After that time, all focus will be on the national conventions. Rick outlined the following general strategy.

- 1) Get 90% consensus on the issue policy regarding the purpose and need for a HSD. This should be no longer than 1 page, or around 500 words, and could be used as the text for the ballot measure booklet for the November election. This should be complete by the end of February.
- 2) Work up a contact list of early deciders, "movers & shakers", and community opinion shapers. These are activists with influence over constituencies and networks. Start by having each CHAC member list 10 contacts. This listing process may be done multiple times. An additional tactic would be to research voting records to determine those who are frequent voters. This step could be done concurrently with Step 1.
- 3) Send out two or three information mailings to the contacts determined in Step 2. The JSI report could be sent out as part of these mailings as it would lend credibility to the effort. Follow-up these mailings with a mail survey that would consist of a very brief statement of the policy along with some basic questions. This survey would be a testing of the waters and would occur around April.
- 4) In April or May, contract for a professional phone poll that would be presented as follows:
  - a. Read the ballot question and ask for the interviewee's opinion.
  - b. Describe the individual components of the issue.
  - c. Give a historical background for the need.
  - d. Present pro and con arguments.
  - e. Then ask again for an opinion on the ballot question.

- f. Obtain demographic data on the interviewee.

The results from the phone poll will provide critical information on the decision whether or not to continue or not with the campaign. In order for the campaign to continue, the poll should indicate at least 57% favorable responses. It will also give information on what parts of the issue appealed to voters and which ones do not. This can then be accentuated in the rest of the campaign.

It will be important to have the “movers & shakers” take a public stand for the issue by June. They will need to be convinced that the policy is both responsible and accountable.

In response to a question about the benefits of including a sunset clause in the measure, Rick stated that it could demonstrate accountability. He also indicated that the question of a sunset clause could be part of the phone poll, and that the responses could give an idea how much faith the voters have that a federal or state healthcare system would eventually replace the need for a HSD.

Rick mentioned that he believes addressing care for the elder generation would have more appeal than focusing on care for the indigent and uninsured. Care for the elder generation is a non-partisan issue.

In response to a question about a County-initiated ballot question that would ask for a tax increase whose funds would be dedicated to healthcare, Rick indicated that it is generally easier to get referendums passed than it is to get initiatives passed. A referenda, he noted, is a ballot issue placed by governments on the ballot versus coming from the citizen level. People have voted for the government representatives and already have a level of vested trust in the government. The governance for a HSD would be new. Exploring such a measure with the County could be done while starting work on the HSD campaign, he recommended.

A final question that was posed to Rick was about the advantages/disadvantages of sales versus a property taxes. Rick observed that: seniors favor sales taxes; the younger population doesn't have a strong preference; and sales taxes bring up questions of fairness. He suggested this would be a good question to include in the phone poll.

**The second item on the agenda was an update from the PHCCC's efforts to establish a model for primary health care delivery.**

Pat Murphy gave the update. He indicated that the PHCCC has been acting as a facilitator in discussions between Mercy Regional Medical Center, Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center (SWCMHC) and San Juan Basin Health Department (SJBHD). He indicated that it has been a challenging process and a plan has not yet been agreed upon. Missy Rodey agreed that a model is still in the evolving stage.

Lynn Westberg of SJBHD stated her belief that the Health Services Clinic is an embryo for a model, and that the question is where to go from this start and how far to go. She said the concept of integrated care is unanimously favored, but that there is disagreement around the governance structure.

Bern Heath of SWCMHC added that the search for a model is confusing in that there are multiple entities involved in investigating options: CHAC, PHCCC, and the three parties of Mercy, SWCMHC and SJBHD.

County Commissioner Joelle Riddle offered that she believes there should also be other parties involved including the Southern Ute Tribe, the City of Durango and La Plata County.

Joann Spina wondered if an FQHC (Federally Qualified Health Center) would be a good option. Bern responded that it can be an option, but that it is a very slow process to qualify and establish an FQHC.

Sherrod Beall pointed out the critical timing concerns for a primary care healthcare model if a HSD campaign is to be mounted. Missy responded that the parties are aware of timing issues and she added that another timing issue is that the lease for the HSC facility ends in August.

Jenny Wrenn wondered if it would be helpful to use the remaining \$4,000 of the CHAC grant through SUCAP to retain a facilitator/mediator to work with Mercy, SWCMHC and SJBHD. Bern Heath responded that he didn't believe that would be the best use of the funds. No decision was made on this point.

Marsha Porter Norton expressed and acknowledged concerns about the current model development process. She inquired about the role of CHAC in the model development process. She believes the CHAC is a good reviewing group for any model proposed, and expressed her hope that any plan would not be presented as a "final plan." She stated that the CHAC needs to have input in the model especially if the CHAC is expected to be the lead entity in running a HSD campaign. She expressed her hope that all the groups can come together.

**The third item on the agenda concerned the grant application submitted to the Colorado Health Foundation.**

Marsha reported that Jenny Wrenn had done an excellent job on writing the application. A grant was submitted by the CHAC on January 15<sup>th</sup> to hire staff for the effort including consultants; to explore an 11/09 ballot initiative and to engage community support. The plan at the time of writing was targeted towards a November 2009 election. If an 11/08 election date is selected, then, the CHF will need to be kept in the loop.