



Suncoast Continuum of Care

Continuum of Care Meeting

April 15, 2020

Location: Teleconference via Skype

Presenters: Lynette Herbert, Sarasota County Health and Human Services; Commissioner Misty Servia, Manatee County; Krystal Fraizer, City of Sarasota ; John Annis, Barancik Foundation; Susie Bowie, Manatee Community Foundation; Megan McWilliam, Department of Children and Families; Joshua Matlock, Career Source Suncoast; Kleisha Bryant, Early Learning Coalition

I. Welcome

Chris Johnson welcomed those on the call to the General Continuum of Care Meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

Chris asked those present to submit an approval of the February 19, 2020 meeting minutes to lauren@suncoastpartnership.org.

February 19, 2020 meeting minutes were approved as they were written.

III. COVID-19 Community Response Panelists

Chris introduced a panel of individuals working in various organizations throughout the community to provide updates related to the community response of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lynette Herbert of Sarasota County Human Services (SRQ HHS) Department provided updates from the Department Health and Sarasota County Health and Human Services. Lynette data presented today can be found on [Florida Department of Health's website](#) and [University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation](#). Sarasota County HHS is using these websites to view projections and statistics on COVID-19. It is projected May 3, 2020 will be the peak day for using resources in the State of Florida. Currently, Sarasota County has 241 cases of COVID-19, 9% of those tested tests positive for COVID-19, and Sarasota County has 16 deaths as a result of COVID-19. SRQ HHS is currently comparing local data to the State of Florida. Two data points SRQ HHS is tracking are death rate (SRQ-6.6%, FL-3%) and the hospitalization rate, which is two times the rate of State of Florida (SRQ-33%, FL-14%). Lynette indicates the capacity of our hospitals and needs for hospitals is being closely monitored, and at this point with SRQ HHS is predicting zero shortage for the peak date predicted.

Department of Health Epidemiology staff and the Agency for Health Care Administration are working with elder care facilities to ensure they are inspected daily to reduce the infection of the older population. Lynette explained SRQ HHS was able to purchase private lab tests and conducted 1000 over the last two weeks by holding a testing site in the Twin Lakes park. The next phase is to include neighborhoods or populations who may not have had access to these tests previously. Neighborhoods such as the Newtown area, Nokomis, and North Port are being looked at to set up accessible sites for testing.

Additionally, the Homeless Isolation Sheltering Plan (included in minutes) was rolled out last week after a COVID-19+ individual was released from the hospital and needed a place to



Suncoast Continuum of Care

stay. A hotel was provided to this individual to self-isolate and paid for by the Department of Health. The Self-Isolating Guest Rules and Hotel Protocols are included in these minutes.

Along with the Isolation Plan, a feeding plan for vulnerable populations is being developed. Home deliveries through Meals on Wheels, Senior Friendship Center, and All Faith's Food Bank have assisted to ensure vulnerable populations are able to have access to food. Regarding the homeless population, the County is working to get Personal Protective Equipment to providers working with the homeless population, so they can continue to provide services like meals. The County remains open to ideas of how to improve existing plans in this area.

Krystal Frazier, Interim Homeless Response Coordinator, the City of Sarasota is currently working on three portable toilet and handwashing stations. The first location is at 9th Way and Cohen Street, Sarasota, FL 34236 in the grass lot behind The Salvation Army Sarasota, the second location will be at the Resurrection House, the 3rd location will be at the City Hall parking lot. These stations are being implemented due to public restrooms not being kept up during the pandemic. Additionally, the handwashing stations will provide clients necessary sanitation. The City of Sarasota is working closely with the two main feeding providers, Streets of Paradise and PACE Homeless Ministries, to ensure CDC guidelines are being followed by providing individually prepackaged meals to clients. The City of Sarasota will be providing these organizations and clients with PPE and hand sanitizer.

Additionally, the Homeless Response Team is pushing to have temporary shelter provided to the 35 identified high-risk clients. The majority of the City of Sarasota staff is primarily working from home but is continuing to meet bi-weekly to provide support to the CoC and homeless service providers.

Chris Johnson asked if there was anything to share with the group with how the officers are operating on the street. The Sarasota Police Department have an Operations plan where officers are going to "hot spots" to ensure those congregating are not in groups of 10 or more and provide education to those clients on available services and urge them to go the emergency shelter.

Arthur Levin asked for the hours of the portable toilets. The toilets will be open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

John Annis of the Barancik Foundation in Sarasota County explained the Barancik Foundation is working with Gulf Coast Community Foundation to establish a COVID-19 response fund to provide funding to service providers and meet the needs of clients in the community. The Barancik Foundation looked at existing and previous grants to make them less restrictive for critical needs, so they are flexible for service providers. Weekly phone calls are happening to ensure philanthropy is meeting the needs of the community.

Chris thanked the Barancik Foundation for their prompt response to the needs of the community.

Susie Bower of the Manatee Community Foundation indicated there has been an overwhelming response to the needs of service providers. The Manatee Community Foundation has established a Manatee County COVID-19 Response Fund to support health and human service organizations providing essential services in Manatee County, such as:



Suncoast Continuum of Care

housing needs, food security, childcare for first responders, and technology needs. There has been a need to provide technology assistance so operations can continue remotely.

In addition, there are individual donors who express interest in funding specific needs. For instance, equitable education is providing goods and services to those homeless or low-income children who do not have access to laptops and/or Wi-Fi so they may continue their education during this time.

The Manatee County School District has equipped 25 buses with Wi-Fi to travel to remote locations and low-income neighborhoods so those children can complete their schoolwork during this time.

MCF is providing ongoing education to community partners on engaging with donors during this time to ensure longevity of operations. Susie indicated nonprofits should not be afraid to ask donors for funding during this time.

MCF is hosting a virtual meeting for child welfare partners as this need will expand during this pandemic. Community Foundation partners want to hear from non-profits so they may meet the needs of the community.

MCF is working with Manatee County to potentially set up hygiene stations for the homeless. Manatee County is working on the infrastructure behind these stations and MCF is committed to fund the daily cleaning of these stations in Manatee County.

Chris thanked Susie and indicated the hygiene stations are extremely important to have setup during this time.

Megan McWilliams of Department of Children and Families (DCF) indicated 96% of staff is currently working from home. Megan presented data that covers the Suncoast Region (Pasco to Collier) and is not specific to District 12 (Sarasota & Manatee). Megan indicated 90% of documents are submitted online, but drop boxes are set up outside DCF offices to accept paper applications for benefits.

From the first two weeks of March compared to the first two weeks of April there has been a substantial increase for benefit applications. Staff has been appropriated to other areas in order to expedite benefit application responses and meet the needs of the community.

DCF has also applied for Federal waivers for recertifications so those recipients up for recertifications do not have to recertify at this time. Also, DCF has received approval to allow online ordering of groceries be covered under the SNAP benefit program to remain in line with CDC guidelines and safer at home orders. DCF has accepted and received approval to waive most requirements for acceptance on food assistance. Currently, DCF is accepting client statement of loss of income and identification as verification of need.

DCF is continuing to push for additional waivers for customers to make life easier during this time.

Josh Matlock of CareerSource Suncoast shared the local and state impact of COVID-19 regarding unemployment, the response, and plans for recovery. Josh compared today's unemployment crisis to the 2007 recession. At the end of 2007, unemployment was at 4.7% with weekly claims 10-11,000. In 2009, those weekly claims jumped to 20-30,000. In 2010, the unemployment rate jumped to 11%, with the highest claims week being 40,000.



Suncoast Continuum of Care

In the 4th week of March, 228,000 unemployment claims were made. These are not all the claims that needed to be submitted because the infrastructure could not handle the need. The unemployment caused by COVID-19 has happened all at one time, and the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) is working with partnering agencies to increase the capacity of the infrastructure. All states in the county must authenticate each individual claim through Social Security Administration, which is causing significant delays in responses to unemployment claims. Paper application claim submissions are being accepted to offset these delays.

At CareerSource Suncoast, staff is being trained to work with DEO to assist in resetting PINs for those applying for unemployment. CareerSource has the paper applications available at their locations as well as envelopes for application submission. Federal Express is also providing the printed application and will mail the application at no cost to the customer.

Currently, unemployment compensation is operating as it was prior to the pandemic. If a person is initially denied unemployment, they will need to resubmit their application as DEO is working on setting policies and guidelines to roll out the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation package. Those currently on unemployment and getting to the 13-week mark on their unemployment must apply for the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation to have their unemployment benefits extended and additional 13 weeks. If someone is not eligible under current unemployment compensation rules, they should apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program. This program assists those who have been impacted by COVID-19 until December. DEO has put in a request for \$250 million for workforce development with CareerSource applying for \$1.5 million to assist in putting people back to work once this is all over.

Arthur Levine asked if there were any local statistics; Josh explained CareerSource Suncoast would not have that information until further down the road. Arthur asked how many people are on staff; Josh explained they have 70 employees locally.

Right now, DEO is the organization responding to the unemployment crisis as best they can and is awaiting guidance from the federal government and Department of Labor. Josh provided a link for resources for employers and individuals, <https://covid19.floridajobs.org/>

Kleisha Bryant of Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County is continuing operations remotely. Currently, families do not have copayment fees and extended redetermination appointments during this time. First responders and healthcare workers may receive free childcare through a referral process for up to 3 months regardless of income.

In Sarasota County, local donors are interested in assisting in additional fees that may incur for this population. More information on this is available through their [website](#). As of yesterday, Early Learning Coalition has received 11 referrals for this program. Those interested or eligible for the first responder/healthcare worker childcare may submit a request to informationrequest@childcareconnectionsarasota.org. In Sarasota, there are 132 childcare providers and 92 are closed. The ELC is in constant contact to the open childcare providers in order to connect first responders/healthcare workers to these providers.

The ELC has received three new referrals for homeless families in the month of April. In January, the ELC served 11 new children, February 7 new children, and March 8 new children.



Suncoast Continuum of Care

IV. Suncoast Partnership Updates

HUD NOFA

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, delays in the CoC Program funding is expected. Suncoast continues to advocate on behalf of service providers to get this funding contracted and out to service providers.

PIT and HIC

CSIS Team is developing a final report on the Point-in-Time (PIT) and Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) for distribution. Federal deadlines for these submissions have been pushed back, but Suncoast Partnership is working diligently to get these numbers out to the community.

V. Discussion

During the panel a question was asked regarding the how the provision of hotels for homeless clients was occurring. Lynette Herbert indicated the plan would be distribute with the CoC Minutes.

VI. Adjournment

CoC Meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.