

The Fayette County Board of Health met on Tuesday, November 8, 2005, in the Public Meeting Room of the Fayette County Administrative Complex, 140 Stonewall Avenue, Fayetteville, Georgia.

Board of Health Members Present:

John DeCotis, PhD
Thomas Faulkner, MD
Lynette Peterson
Lyn Redwood, RN, MSN
Michael Strain, MD

Staff Members Present:

Carolyn Callison
Merle Crowe
Rick Fehr
Rodney Hilley
Carl Knapp
Dennis Davenport, Attorney

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Strain called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM September 13, 2005: Motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Dr. Faulkner, seconded by Ms. Peterson. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS / PUBLIC COMMENT:

Developmental Disabilities Task Force Update: Ms. Redwood discussed the Developmental Disabilities Task Force (DDTF). She said she had worked with this Task Force to improve conditions not only for developmentally disabled adults (DDA), but also to add space and alleviate crowding for Environmental and Physical Health. She said the effort to add space for the health department had been successful, with the help of the county. She said the effort to add space for the center for DDA had not been as successful. She mentioned that various community representatives had been on the DDTF and that numerous meetings had been held. She said conditions in the current building were deplorable. She mentioned that the DDTF had researched ways to obtain funding for a new building. She said meetings had been held to attempt to obtain a Community Block Grant, and that a grant writer had been contacted to write it. She said the county would have to sign on to the grant, that she had met with the county manager and that as a result of that meeting, the long-term county plan included a building for developmentally disabled people.

She mentioned that an open house had been held in December, to raise awareness of this need. She said all local public officials, the Chamber of Commerce, and various stakeholders in the community had been invited, with a so-so turnout. She said one of the problems that arose was that Community Block Grants are assigned by a point system, and that Fayette County had a very high per-capita income ratio, which makes it very hard to be successful in getting grant funding. She said while in process of deciding on a grant writer and seeking funding, the current building's owner decided to sell it. A search for a new building ensued, and one was found at 125 Bradford Square, where a defunct program had vacated the building. She said some necessary changes in the building were currently in process. She said the expected

move-in date was sometime in December. Mr. Dean Roach, Developmentally Disabled Center Director, said construction was under way, that he had consulted with the builder, and that he also felt that they would be in the building by December. He offered to show the building to board members.

Ms. Redwood mentioned that funding for this group was requested from the county every year. She said that more Medicaid waivers were being released to assist developmentally disabled people, so they could be admitted to programs of this type. Mr. Roach Fayette County had contributed funding for support for the past four years, and this year's funding amounted to \$58,000. He said Fayette County had given \$5000 to provide furniture and equipment for the new building. He said more funding would be requested as time went on.

Mr. Whitlock, president of *Exceptional Ops*, said that Medicaid was funding about 925 waivers a year, but that demand grows at a pace of 750 new cases a year just from people graduating from high school, in addition to the statewide backlog of 6000. He said there was a backlog of 100 cases in Fayette County, so the need for services was exceeding capacity. He hoped that private providers might be enticed to locate in Fayette County. He mentioned that Mr. Greg Dunn had attended some local meetings. Mr. Whitlock felt that Fayette County paid taxes that were not returned in benefits. He wanted the commissioners to approach the state for a fair return. He said Fayette County's per-capita income actually disqualified it from certain grants. He mentioned that the DDTF might be better served by someone not so closely involved with it and praised Ms. Redwood's efforts. Ms. Redwood stated she would like to step down as DDTF leader and offered to hand it off to her successor.

Ms. Jennifer Griffin asked if the new building would allow more people to be served, and if so, how many. Mr. Whitlock also wanted to know how many consumers would be served in the new building. Mr. Roach explained that it was not possible to give a figure, because slots depended on funding by Medicaid waiver to pay for support staff, not building capacity. He said that current requirements went by staff-to-consumer ratio, currently set at 7-to-1, not a square footage requirement per consumer. Ms. Redwood emphasized that staff-to-consumer ratio was set by the state.

Ms. Janet Smola said there currently was a private provider, complete with staff, ready to come to Fayette County immediately, but there was no building available. She said if there was no donated space, this provider would need to sign a lease for 3 years and felt unable to meet a commitment of that length. She wondered if the DDA facility would be large enough to share with this provider. Ms. Peterson mentioned a Presbyterian church that might be able to help.

Ms. Linda Dukes commented that there were almost no opportunities for DD adults once they were out of high school. She said there should be transportation for DD adults should a job become available. She expressed frustration at this population sitting home watching TV when they were anxiously awaiting employment and transportation to that employment. Ms. Redwood listed many various methods DDTF had employed to bring attention to this issue: newspaper articles; committees formed; meetings held; contact with new employers to encourage them to hire DD adults.

Dr. DeCotis made a motion that the board support the efforts of the DDTF; seconded by Ms. Peterson. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Smola volunteered to assume the chair position, contingent upon approval by her board.

Environmental Health (EH) Fees: Mr. Fehr presented the board with updated information regarding proposed Environmental Health fees. He offered to answer questions. The board had a few questions regarding how the fees were arrived at; Mr. Fehr explained that fee increases were based partly on the US Bureau of Labor inflation rate.

Ms. Redwood wondered if site review was the reason fees were going up. Mr. Fehr said that was part of the reason, that there were many considerations, and that the board would make the final determination of fees. Ms. Redwood said it was better to spend money on the front end, in site review to get septic systems right to begin with, than on the back end when systems fail.

Dr. DeCotis asked how the increase in funds would be spent. Mr. Fehr explained that the plan was to add staff, which was the greatest part of the budget, and possibly to add needed equipment. He mentioned that some fees had remained at 1999 levels, and that in light of state budget cuts, fee increases appeared to be the only way to fund staffing at adequate levels. Dr. DeCotis said that the school system had had an \$18 million cut in the last three years; he understood that the health department was in the same position. He made a motion to approve the fee increases. Ms. Redwood seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. There was no further discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no further public comment.

NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business.

STAFF REPORTS: **Ms. Callison** reported that the vacant public health nurse position had been filled by Ms. Amy Chancey. She said Ms. Chancey had over 25 years of experience; an extensive background in neonatal ICU; pediatrics; newborn nursery, and lactation consulting. She said it was hoped that Ms. Chancey would be a resource in re-starting the Babies Born Healthy, Perinatal Case Management, Pregnancy Related Services programs.

She said over 3600 doses of flu vaccine had been administered to date. She said the first shipment of vaccine had been received in early October and that vaccination of high-risk patients began on October 11th. She said the supply was depleted by October 17th, due in part to the loan of 200 doses to another county health department, to referrals by private sector physicians and a higher demand in general. She said the manufacturer had said the bulk of the vaccine order would not be received until November 1st; however, Ms. Berry, Clinical Services Supervisor, called the manufacturer and the balance of the order was received on October 21st, just in time to begin vaccination of the general populace. She said this was the first year that preservative-free vaccine for adults had been received; that since demand was not known, only 100 doses had been ordered and that it had gone quickly. She mentioned that she was still in process of doing off-site flu clinics. She mentioned that currently there was no more flu vaccine for the general public, with the exception of 150 doses of preservative-free pediatric vaccine. She said a newspaper article had been placed to encourage parents of children to bring them in.

She mentioned that on November 4th, District 4 county nurse managers culminated six month's effort in putting together the Capstone Presentation through Emory University's *Leadership Institute in Emergency Preparedness*. She said Peggy Berry, Cynthia Grant and she had

presented Fayette County's plan for a special needs shelter. She said if a disaster occurred in this county, now there was a plan in place to offer a site for people who have special medical needs, along with Red Cross shelters. She said after viewing presentations from other counties, further plan modifications would be made. She mentioned that she had applied for a \$7000 grant from Coweta-Fayette EMC, to allow the purchase of special needs cots, which would be higher than usual cots and allow for placement of an IV bag or special medical equipment. She said the grant request would come before the EMC board November 20th.

Mr. Fehr and Mr. Davenport reported on septic system requirements. Mr. Davenport updated the board on the definition of "bedroom," which became an issue when plans were submitted for Environmental Health (EH) review. He explained that about 1995 the permitting process meant submission of plans to Environmental Health, which then determined the number of bedrooms from the plans. When construction reached 70 to 80 percent, EH staff walked the structure to determine if number of bedrooms matched submitted plans, and inspected the still-open septic system. He said this process served the community well, but that about 1998 the definition of bedroom changed from "any room that could be expected to be used for sleeping purposes, furnished with a closet and accessible to a bathroom without going through another room primarily used for sleeping purposes" to "any room designed primarily for sleeping purposes." He felt that changing the definition of bedroom changed the permit application process such that developers had only to state the number of bedrooms when plans were submitted, and permits were then issued based upon that statement. When EH staff subsequently went to inspect the structure, only the septic system would be inspected, since no plans were in hand to verify number of bedrooms. This new process led to submission of plans with three bedrooms and other differently-named rooms that could be used as bedrooms; such houses would then be advertised as 5 or more bedroom homes. He recommended that EH staff determine what room was a bedroom and issue the permit accordingly, regardless of the designation of "bedrooms" on the plans, and that EH staff walk the structure as well as inspect the septic system. He felt that the current process allowed under-sized systems to be installed, which invited problems. Mr. Fehr said the requirement that plans be submitted with permit applications should be instituted December 1st.

He updated the question of the sewer system between Tyrone and Fairburn, and said that one question was responsibility for repair of a break in the line. He said his research into the existing agreement stated that any break up to the flow meter on the Fairburn side was its responsibility; any break on the Fayette side of the flow meter was Tyrone's responsibility; it also stated that Tyrone could contract with Fairburn to maintain the line if they chose to do so.

Mr. Davenport further updated the board on the question of drain fields being placed too close to creeks. He said that a 25 foot setback was a state standard, with some qualifications. He mentioned that Tyrone's representative, Mr. Amos, said Tyrone maintained this standard. He said that until 3 or 4 months ago, Fayette County had the same standard, but that the current standard of 25 feet was measured from a 50 foot buffer, not the creek bank. He said if the creek was in a 100 year floodplain, the 75 foot buffer was measured from that.

He said the last issue he researched was facilities which have capacity of 10,000 gallons a day. He felt that this was the hot button issue of the day; with 2 such systems on the books already, with another one on the way. He said the state either has or was going to take over permitting of these systems, so the question became regulatory capacity by local boards of health. He said the state encouraged local boards of health to be involved with the permitting process and

felt that this board should certainly do so. He said the state would have the final say-so but involvement would mean this board would have detailed information on such systems. He said Fayette County was meeting with the water committee the next day, and the board of Commissioners were also struggling with the same issue. Ms. Redwood expressed concern about county ownership of community septic systems. Her concern was that developers would install community systems to increase density on soil that would not support individual systems. She wondered if Fayette County could prohibit this type system, even if they are approved by the state.

Mr. Hilley said that there was a proposal for the state to permit facilities with a capacity of over 2000 gallons a day, and that it appeared that this proposal would pass. Mr. Fehr recommended that community systems be monitored by EH, and said he did not know how other local EH departments handled inspection of such systems.

Mr. Davenport explained that failure of such a system could be impossible to correct, and that it would be better to own the system from the beginning, to assure proper maintenance and prevent possible failure. He did not know if the county would favor ownership. He said that the county probably could not prohibit these systems, but certainly could put regulations in place to ensure safe and effective operation. He mentioned Fayette County's land use plan, and that it regulates density, so the question of using a community system to get around regulations becomes a moot point. Mr. Fehr said that these permits are issued by the state. The board decided that it needed to be involved with regulating septic systems over 10,000 per day, and wanted to work with the board of commissioners. Mr. Davenport said he would meet with the water commission the next day and pass along the board of health's desire to be involved. Ms. Redwood requested to see the proposed regulations, when complete.

Mr. Davenport mentioned existing homes which might have undersized septic systems. He felt that EH would become aware of these systems at some point. He recommended that a procedure be put in place in the event that EH becomes aware of an undersized system, perhaps a letter of notification to the current homeowner, who would have to decide action to be taken. He said if undersized systems came to the attention of EH, before any action would be taken, each case would be brought before the board for its individual decision. He felt that the board would need to gauge the level of response received from the owner upon notification, and if that response would be deemed proper cooperation. If not, the board could then provide direction at that time. Ms. Redwood asked if number of bedrooms was reviewed in the event of a system failure. Mr. Fehr replied that a permit would be issued and on occasion homeowners would indicate that they had more bedrooms than those permitted. He said plan review during the inspection would greatly reduce the problem.

Mr. Davenport reported that he had received a response to his letter to Mr. Pierce and Mr. Seay, regarding transfer of the Swanson Valley community septic system. He said the response came from an attorney, who did not understand why the board of health inserted itself between a conveyance between Mr. Seay and Mr. Pierce and Swanson Valley homeowners. He felt that the attorney probably did not have a complete set of facts, so he planned to respond to this letter and explain the circumstances. He felt that there would be an ongoing dialog and said he would keep the board updated.

Mr. Fehr reported that EH had moved to Suite 200, due to the desire of the county to move them to make room for the Marshall's office in Suite 205.

ADJOURMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Peterson, seconded by Ms. Redwood. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 am.

Michael Strain, MD, Chair

Merle Crowe, Secretary