

The Fayette County Board of Health met on Tuesday, May 9, 2006, in the Public Meeting Room of the Fayette County Administrative Complex, 140 Stonewall Avenue, Fayetteville, Georgia.

Board of Health Members Present:

John DeCotis, PhD
Lynette Peterson
Judi-ann Rutherford
Michael Strain, MD

Staff Members Present:

Carolyn Callison
Merle Crowe
Rick Fehr
Rodney Hilley
Peggy Monkus
Dennis Davenport, Attorney

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Strain called the meeting to order at 7:27 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM March 14, 2006 : Motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Ms. Rutherford, seconded by Ms. Peterson. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS / PUBLIC COMMENT:

Developmental Disabilities Task Force Update: Ms. Janet Smola, Chair of the Developmental Disabilities Task Force (DDTF), updated the board on current progress. She asked the board for its support on ideas for DDTF activities. She mentioned that the *Fayette County Market Assessment* report was commissioned by and paid for by *Exceptional OPS*, a support group formerly known as *Special People of Fayette County*, now numbering over 100 members. This group meets the second Tuesday of every month at the 1279 Medical Building. The current committee will be limited in scope, consisting of Janet Smola, Amore Kok, Laine Lizotte, and Attorney Greg Rogers. The committee is currently seeking a member from the medical field. Ms. Smola offered the report to any other non-profit organization that would like it, as such research can be very expensive and she would not like to see funds wasted to provide the same information.

The 126 page *Fayette County Market Assessment* was commissioned by the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University and a summary was given to the board. Ms. Smola will provide a full copy of the report to the board through Ms. Crowe. The survey utilized the latest census information and cost \$15,000. It revealed several facts: Fayette County had over 13,000 citizens with disabilities; more than half were working age 18-64 and job placement opportunities were one of the most pressing needs for this population. Fayette County was listed as one of the top 20 places to live in the United States—except for disabled people, where it is near the bottom of the list. Reasons given for this fact are lack of money and that disabled people do not vote.

There are other issues, but DDTF has chosen to concentrate on the most pressing problem of getting disabled people to work. The primary barrier is lack of transportation, so a grant

was written to United Way to provide transportation vouchers. Grant approval is pending. *Fayette Community Options* is currently the only transportation provider in Fayette County, and it is full, so other service providers must be found. This will be difficult due to high rent prices. 6,000 feet of space has now been donated rent-free for 15 months at Governor's Square by the *World Vision Organization*. Panasonic has agreed to outfit media needs and GA Power has agreed to provide a microwave and refrigerator. A year from now county funds will be needed to support the program that will be supporting 50 disabled people.

Ms. Smola mentioned Fayette County School System's collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce members as an example of how important it is for communities to collaborate. She said that collaboration between service providers and private business would be necessary to reach a workable solution. She mentioned that State Senator Ronnie Chance had lobbied the state legislature to successfully obtain 1500 Medicaid vouchers, but that was only a start. She asked that the Board recognize that such efforts cannot be done alone and that it request support from local entities. Dr. DeCotis commented that the report statistics were very telling regarding and that collaboration was the best piece.

Ms. Peterson asked what definition was used for disability; Ms. Smola replied "any disability that impairs the ability to be employed," thus a physical inability or visual impairment could be included. The misperception about Fayette County is that everyone has money and thus no problems. Investigation proves that there *are* people who need services, and transportation to work is a first step. Surrounding counties place human services under one roof: Senior Services, Disabled Citizens, DFCS, the Health Department and so on, where citizens have easy access, and which allows for sharing of resources. She asked to report to the board every couple of months. She felt that it would be important to meet with the Board of Commissioners as well.

Ms. Smola requested permission to write a press release for the task force. The board thought it was a good idea and agreed. That press release would be sent to the board for approval prior to release. The board also wanted to know if there was already collaboration with other service providers, possibly to utilize the Sams School bus or church busses and that possibly retired individuals might offer to drive those busses. The Sams School refused permission to use their bus, but Ms. Lizotte, as coordinator of *Fayette Transportation Initiative*, will pursue other options, including private transportation. This will be a community wide effort.

The board decided to review the full report and follow up with any questions next meeting before making a motion of endorsement. They thanked Ms. Smola for her work.

MCINTOSH TRAIL APPOINTMENT: Ms. Crowe requested the board re-appoint Mr. Ken Schall to the McIntosh Trail Board, per McIntosh Trail staff request. Motion was made by Ms. Rutherford, seconded by Ms. Peterson. The motion passed unanimously, there was no discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Gordon Furr expressed concern due to septic spray disposal in the area of Sandy Creek High School's new running track, and concern regarding oversight of community sewage systems in Tyrone. Dr. DeCotis said the city of Tyrone had offered a free hookup to their sewage system, and it was now a budget item being worked out.

Mr. Terry Whitlock expressed concern about the vacancies on the McIntosh Board and asked the board to help fill them.

FOOD SERVICE REGULATION CHANGES: Ms. Peggy Monkus, Environmental Health Specialist, presented information regarding changes to the state food inspection regulations set to be effective February 15, 2006. In 1980 there were 11 restaurants in the county. At that time Environmental Health had one staff member, who dealt with on-site sewage management, food service, tourist accommodations (one campground, one hotel), and general complaints, ranging from dirty swimming pools to an abundance of squirrels; one environmentalist could handle these programs. Today there are 228 restaurants open with 12 pending, and 29 public schools which must be inspected. Staff consists of 6 EH specialists with 1 more to be added. EH now administers these additional programs: Injury Prevention, done mostly through Safe Kids and on staff's off-time; Swimming Pool Inspections; West Nile; Avian Flu; Emergency Response and the Smoking Act of 2005.

Enforcement of the new food service regulations, based on the US FDA food regulations of 2001 and 2005, was due to begin November 15th, but is now on hold. This is not a new program; it is followed by the Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, California and US Departments of Agriculture. Current inspections are "point in time," meaning EH staff evaluates the food service provider at that moment, like a snapshot. Inspections can take from ½ hour to 4 hours, are done at off-peak times and scores are numerical. New regulations will be risk-based, meaning staff will check delivery of food, temperature at delivery, how long the food sat before being put up; proper storage; defrosting procedures; preparation of the food; holding temperatures; cool-down time and hazardous analysis of critical control points (HACCP Plan). A HACCP plan means following a dish all the way through the process, from cooking to being served. Environmentalists must now be trained on the HACCP plan and pass an extensive test to qualify.

Inspection times will range from 2-6 hours, and be done at any time, meaning perhaps 1:00 am and letter grades will be the norm. Kitchen layouts, equipment and hot water needs are currently listed on a one-page plan review; the new application will be 19 pages, will be NSF (an industry standardization), and a menu-driven plan review. The new application will review kitchen layout, hot water needs, and cold and dry storage. There are too few hand-wash sinks on most of the plans currently under review, contributing to cross-contamination of raw and cooked food.

Impact of the new regulations will include costs to create window-cling stickers or plaques showing the letter grade given, must be posted on every door or drive-through window, and might include as many as 4 at any one restaurant. There will be a monetary fine if these are removed. An effort is underway to find a way to print these window cling stickers at a lower price, as EH must provide them. Examples of these letter grades were shown. Restaurants that receive a grade of U can only receive a grade of C at the next inspection, which might be on their door for a period of 60 days. This is a big consideration for the GA Restaurant Association. Increased inspection times will mean staff might be tied up at a food service establishment for an entire day, unable to perform other job responsibilities. Such changes as flexible hours and evening inspections will mean the necessity of hiring at least one more environmentalist. The board had no questions.

OFFICE SPACE NEED: Ms. Crowe remarked that Ms. Monkus had done an excellent job of pointing out changes in the health department. More staff and more room will be essential

to maintain current standards. Ms. Callison and Mr. Fehr addressed various examples of how duties and issues are changing.

Ms. Callison pointed out that extra space was obtained in Physical Health when EH moved upstairs: an exam room, which allow the addition of another nurse, and a conference room, already too small. The LPN being sought will have to work in the library, as there is no clinic room available. Lack of an exam room means that additional RNs cannot be hired, despite need, as RNs must have a clinic room to work. Due to HIPAA regulations, charts must be created for some one-time visits, therefore numbers of charts are increasing exponentially and space to store them is crucial. District staff members often need to work out of this office; only makeshift space is now available. Ms. Callison hopes to consult with Andy Carden of Senior Services for advice, since he has been successful in obtaining a new building. Fayette County Health Department is considered a member county of the Greater Atlanta area and will participate in the *Cities Readiness Initiative*: by March 2007 it will be necessary to prove that the health department can dispense the national stockpile to the entire population of Fayette County.

Mr. Fehr thought that Fayette County had been wise in planning for the future, when it built the Justice Center with an additional floor not currently in use. Environmental Health's most pressing current need is adding staff to deal with food service regulation changes, but no space is available to house that staff member. He mentioned that Peachtree City provides space for 2 staff members, but might not be counted on for the future. Ms. Crowe clarified that state law requires the county to provide health department space, but not what kind or how much. He felt that now is the time to anticipate and provide for the future. Directors will consult with others in the district who were successful in obtaining a new building.

Dr. DeCotis mentioned that all governmental agencies face the space issue due to funding cuts and unfunded mandates, and that it was important that the board be kept aware of such needs. He proposed that staff explore options, put together a plan and present it at a future meeting. He commended Peggy Monkus on her work with school cafeteria staff in conforming to the new regulations.

STAFF REPORTS: Mr. Fehr said that the current proposal to increase EH fees would be presented to the Board of Commissioners after he had worked with the Fayette County Finance Director, and he was not sure when it would be presented.

Ms. Callison reported that the Henry County Health Department dietitian, Kiki Smalley, Licensed Dietitian, had transferred to Fayette County Health Department. She will be able to accept referrals from local private physicians. She will also look into opportunities for outreach into the community.

There were no further staff reports.

Dr. Strain asked Mr. Fehr what was to be done regarding the sewage situation in Tyrone that Mr. Furr had brought before the board. The board instructed Mr. Fehr and Mr. Davenport to send a letter to the state EPD and report back to them; if an answer was not received within 2 weeks to go higher. The letter will be presented to Dr. Strain for his signature and sent out to the board prior to mailing. The board felt that it was inexcusable to allow this situation to continue.

Ms. Grace Caldwell, Tyrone Council member, pointed out that the system in question was inspected once a year by the state EPD, and that neither Tyrone nor the county health department has jurisdiction over it. She said the council had met with Ronnie Chance and did not want the state to approve community systems because they obviously did not work properly. She said both Mr. Chance and Representative Virgil Flood were aware of the problem, and due to the lack of jurisdiction over community systems citizens of Tyrone were unable to get redress when there were problems. Ms. Rutherford said if there was no response within 2 weeks she would call Mr. Chance herself. She felt that it was important for local communities to get this issue on the agenda; that the state EPD was abdicating its responsibility to force proper disposal of sewage and that this issue needed to be on the legislative agenda. Dr. DeCotis pointed out the YWCA had to hire a company to clean up Lake Edith because the state EPD would not take action to clean up the sewage flowing into it, and that there had been another situation with Swanson Valley subdivision community system where no state action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Peterson, seconded by Ms. Rutherford. The motion carried unanimously. There was no other business. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 am.

Michael Strain, MD, Chair

Merle Crowe, Secretary