

**MCSSA DISTRICT IV MEETING**  
**April 28, 2005**  
**Hosted by Kalamazoo County**  
**at Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services**

Sherry Thomas-Cloud welcomed District IV MCSSA/MCSSW representatives, directors and board members. Introductions were made all around. The two groups conducted business meetings in the morning and reconvened for lunch.

Guest Speakers: Making It Work Co-Collaborators: Gaylyn Barnum and Jack Mekemson, Goodwill Industries; Ellen Kissinger-Rothi, Housing Resources; and Sherry Thomas-Cloud, Kalamazoo County.

**I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 10:10 a.m. by President, Susan Bailey-Carman**

**II. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES**

Mel Haga made a motion to approve the January 27, 2005 District IV minutes. Jay Bortz supported the motion. Motion carried.

**III. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Adult & Health Services - Liz Krause/Willa Kenoyer**

Briefly discussed QCC training to providers for home care and the Michigan Direct Care Work Initiative Grant. Jane Curtin discussed clarifying the single point of entry for Medicaid. The Adult Medical Program was supposed to end in January and reopen in July but may reopen sooner due to low enrollment. The long term care initiative proposes taxing people with home mortgages \$1 to prevent seizure of estates for Medicaid costs. They are going to pilot the single point of entry program for seniors with three counties or centers to see how it goes. This will begin in June; the counties have not been decided yet.

**B. Automated Systems - No report**

**C. Board Member Development - Sue Hoffman**

Discussed new programs to expose board members to possible new funding sources; i.e., HUD and MSHDA. There are funds out there; we need to look outside the box. Staffing of medical care facilities was discussed; most are currently not operating at recommended staff to resident ratios; most are higher. Cuts to their funding will generally mean staff cuts. They also discussed the impact of Medicaid cuts, the Feds are looking at block grants and reducing the administrative rate and/or capping benefits. It is questionable if TANF reauthorization will be reduced.

**D. Child & Family Services - B. Jay Bortz/Marc DelMariani**

Discussion centered around establishing boilerplate language for the Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. They ended up opposing the bill as it gives too much authority to the volunteer. Ms. Hoffman indicated that they applaud the program in Barry/Eaton. CASA's get a minimum of 80 hours of training in the court system. Mr. Bortz said this is not spelled out in the boilerplate. Don Rewa indicated that in Barry County the CASA program falls under DHS Volunteer Services. They house them in their office. The Eaton County program is much larger, but CASA and DHS work well together despite occasional personnel issues. Mr. DelMariani said one of the problems is CASA's have the right to override the caseworker's plan for the kids. Ms. Thomas-Cloud said this could open the department up to liability. Ms.

Hoffman said it is not the CASA's responsibility to solve the family's problems; their role should be of oversight only. The advantage of CASA is they can see the kids more often than the caseworker and can provide additional insights. The kids might feel closer to the CASA because of this than they do the caseworker. Ms. Hoffman and Mr. Rewa will check with the head of their CASA program to find out what might be driving the need for boilerplate language before the next meeting.

**E. Conference Planning - B. Jay Bortz**

Conference locations were discussed. Next year's Legislative Conference will be at the Radisson again, and we will again have lunch at the Capitol but will get more space than this year. It is widely believed this format is an improvement over the nighttime reception. Ms. Thomas-Cloud suggested having a panel of legislators present their views and be available for questions rather than each county individually speaking with the legislators, since all the members of MCSSA have the same priorities. Ms. Krause thought the original intent of this forum was to inform new representatives of our concerns and said that Marianne Udow had directed the membership not to make this forum political. Ms. Thomas-Cloud said that the legislators have some responsibility to us as voters and our agendas. Ms. Krause suggested we do follow-up with the local representatives in the community after the conference.

- F. Employment, Education & Training - No report**
- G. Planning & Development - No report**
- H. Standard of Living - No report**
- I. Constitution, By-Laws & Platform - No report**
- J. Nominating Committee - Chris Kadulski**

We need to elect four members to the Board of Directors. Ms. Bailey-Carman opened the nominations. Marc DelMariani and Don Rewa were nominated and approved as Type B Representatives and Mel Haga and Willa Kenoyer were nominated and approved as Type A Representatives. Of these four, the Board of Directors will name one to the Advisory Committee and one as an alternate.

**K. Scholarship - Chris Kadulski**

Discussion centered around eligibility for the scholarships, which is currently restricted to the children of DHS employees, MCSSA staff, MCF staff, and board members. Currently any human services field qualifies and Mark DelMariani mentioned it should require a social work major. Mr. Kadulski agreed. They looked at the possibility of including means testing as a criterion. Ms. Hoffman said there are scholarships available for the needy, while this scholarship is available to those who might not qualify for other assistance. Ms. Thomas-Cloud added that points should be awarded for community service. They further discussed how to raise more money and market the scholarship better. The scholarship amount is now \$7000 and they would like to raise it to \$10,000.

**J. Meritorious Awards - No report**

**IV. CHAIR REPORTS**

**A. Board of Directors - Susan Bailey-Carman**

Ms. Bailey-Carman said it is time to reelect Chris Kadulski to the Nominating Committee. Sherry Thomas-Cloud nominated him and the nomination was supported and approved. We also need a board member on the Nominating Committee. Sue Hoffman nominated Barbara Rider and it was supported and approved. It is also time to elect District officers. Susan Bailey-Carman

was nominated and approved as President, Loren Snippe was nominated and approved as Vice President, and Phil Larson was nominated and approved as Secretary/Treasurer.

**B. Executive Committee - B. Jay Bortz**

Ellen Speckman-Randall is leaving MCSSA after eleven years to accept a position with the State and to care for her terminally ill husband. The Executive Committee will meet next month with MCMCFC to address their contract, which is a large source of the Association's income, and the renewal process. Shelley and Kathy are planning a reception for Ellen and they suggest donations to the scholarship fund as a gift idea. Barbara Rider asked if they are able to rename the scholarship for Ellen. Mr. Bortz indicated this has not been decided yet and they will discuss how best to honor Ms. Speckman-Randall at the next meeting, as well as what is owed her in benefit payouts, etc. This change can be an opportunity to reevaluate MCSSA's direction and redefine the Association goals. They plan to try to contract an interim director without benefits to cover the renewal of the MCMCFC contract. Volunteers will be needed for the search committee.

**C. Advisory Committee - Mark DelMariani**

The members expressed appreciation that Director Udow will be staying with DHS and urged her to let staff know as well. Jeanine Diller, Federal Liaison discussed grants and foundation funds and is working with the Casey and Mott Foundations. The Foster Care Performance Based Initiative is a Baltimore model rewarding families for kids staying in the same school district, limiting the number of moves, etc. They discussed cuts to daycare and an extra \$15 million from fraud. Legislators need to be convinced that more staff are needed for daycare. Marianne Udow is well aware of the problems with the contracting process and will convene a workgroup on changes that can be made. Budget and staffing exceptions have now been approved and we have an \$8 million deficit. The results of the IV-E audit were shared. Of 12 cases that were reviewed, only eight were correct. This means the state did not pass. The Feds can't say what is wrong; the suspicion is this is being driven by revenue.

**D. Legislative Committee - Sue Hoffman**

The members opposed most of the bills presented at the last meeting. Representative Rick Shaffer was the speaker; he talked about taxing food and members disagreed and said to tax services instead as food has too much effect on the lower income population. In Detroit, nursing homes are behind on eligibility criteria. This is a staffing issue as well.

**ROUNDTABLE :**

No discussion

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.