

West Alabama Rural Action Commission – Health Committee

Greene County Meeting

June 6, 2008

Attendees:

1. Ruthie Thomas, proxy for Mayor Steele
2. Coretta Kirkland, Greene County Health Department
3. LaBridgette Ellis, CEO for Whatley Health Services
4. Patti Fuller, Greene County Extension Office
5. Daniel Thompson, Greene County Health Department
6. Myra Marzette, R.N. – Greene County Hospital
7. William L. Johnson, District 3, Greene County Commissioner
8. Freddie Meriweather, Greene County Board of Education
9. Roy Dalton, WebMaster, Eutaw Online
10. Melvin Jolly, Greene County Department of Human Resources
11. Barbara Martin, Greene County Board of Education
12. Daphne Williams, Public Health Social Worker
13. Annie Armistead, Forkland, AL.
14. Connie Tyree, Eutaw, AL.
15. Matilda Abraham, Boligee, AL
16. Robert Koch, Eutaw, AL
17. Robert Biggs, Forkland, AL
18. Jeanetta Campbell, Forkland, AL
19. Jennifer Watkins, Greene County Board of Registrars
20. John Woods, Forkland, AL
21. Elaine Clark, School Nurse, Greene County Board of Education
22. Brenda Speights, Greene County Housing Authority
23. Iris Sermon, Greene County E-911 Commission District
24. Pamela Moody, Area 3 Nurse Administrator, ADPH
25. John Brandon, Family Practice Physician = Co-chair of Committee
26. Jeanette VanderMeer, UA Nursing Faculty = Co-chair of Committee

John Brandon asked everyone to introduce themselves and who they represent. Then, he provided a brief description of Governor Riley's Alabama Rural Action, Jeanette VanderMeer discussed the purpose for today's meeting and provided details about the previous health committee meetings hosted in Pickens, Fayette, and Lamar Counties. She told the group that she and Dr. Brandon were "facilitators" for today's meeting and they would be available to support each county as they identify and target their health issues/concerns. The West Alabama Rural Action Commission (WARAC) has adopted three initiatives for the region: (1) Providing the KidCheck Program in each of the seven counties, (2) develop of a Health Resources Directory for each county, and (3) development of a Health Council in each county.

Next, Dr. Brandon asked the attendees to identify the health resources in Greene County.

Health Resources in Greene County:

1. Physicians (3) and Physician Assistants (2)
2. County hospital and nursing home, plus a physician's clinic
3. Nurse Practitioner one day per week at Health Department
4. County Public Health Department in Eutaw
5. School nurses (2 RNs and 1 LPN) for four schools
6. Maude Whatley Health Services provides a Federally Qualified Health Ctr.
7. Dental and mental health services provided
8. Podiatrist services three days/week
9. Pharmacies (2)
10. Optometrist services for children through Alabama Sight Savers Program
11. Ambulances (2), plus rescue unit owned by the county
12. Public nutrition program through the Extension Service, plus meals at Senior Citizens Ctr. & Meals on Wheels. Also, nutrition program in the Public schools.
13. One dialysis center
14. West AL Transportation System is a public system that operates on need, But no regular routes. Works with Area Agency on Aging.
15. Website for the town of Eutaw.
16. Department of Human Resources in Eutaw.

Barriers/Problems with Greene County Health Care System:

1. More specialists making visits to the county such as ophthalmology and oncology
2. Expanded public transportation services
3. More primary medical care, with local access to pre-natal care and delivery services
4. Prescription medication support through education related to choosing a Medicare plan, plus financial assistance with drug costs
5. Currently, the majority of HC services are located in Eutaw so outreach is needed to the smaller communities in the county.
5. Need more health screenings and follow-up services
6. Improved collaboration/cooperation between Maude Whatley and hospital
7. When residents leave the county for health care, their \$\$\$\$ go with them.
8. Need expanded EMS, plus mental health services and services for special needs populations

Other Discussion:

Dr. Brandon elaborated on the KidCheck program in Bibb County which is an ongoing collaborative effort between the Board of Education (Dr. Alesa Judd), Sight Savers of Alabama (Jeff Haddox), and the BC/BS Caring Foundation. Through this effort they provide extensive screening for children in elementary school such as height, weight, vision checks, B/P, cholesterol and blood sugar. Volunteers provide the screening efforts and the costs are covered by grants and monies raised by the county residents. At the screenings, they also identify which children are not covered by health insurance and provide information about the Medicaid All Kids program and the BC Child Caring Foundation.

LaBridgette Ellis said that Maude Whatley is interested in assisting with a KidCheck initiative in the Greene County schools. She said they are currently providing some health screening in Hale County elementary and middle schools (Akron, Sunshine, and Greensboro), with some financial assistance from Alabama Power Company. She also volunteered to provide the dental screenings.

Dr. VanderMeer mentioned there are several nursing programs in the area and students could be used to assist with the KidCheck initiative. She mentioned the University of West Alabama in Livingston and Stillman, Shelton, and the UA program in Tuscaloosa. What makes for a successful KidCheck program is a local resident who is passionate about the health of children in that county. Dr. Alesa Judd is the driving force behind the program in Bibb County and she is willing to work with other counties to get KidCheck started.

Next, the group talked about formation of a Greene County Health Council. The group discussed the need for more coordination and cooperation among the various players in the county. Mr. William Johnson, County Commissioner, expressed a desire to develop a local health council to be able to address health care needs in Greene County. He asked for a show of hands of those who would be interested in forming such a group. Dr. Brandon asked “who is not at today’s meeting and would need to be included”? The group decided the following need to be invited to a meeting to discuss formation of a health council: EMS, mental health, physicians, pharmacists and those who work with the special needs populations. Dr. Brandon said Alabama Power Company has community facilitators to assist with such efforts. He said Becky York works in that capacity in Pickens County.

A brief discussion of the need to develop a Health Resources Directory took place. Dr. VanderMeer circulated a ring binder with copies of two such directories. In some counties, the Extension Services office provides assistance with development and maintenance of such a directory. The Alabama Office of Rural Health has agreed to work with the WARAC-Health Committee to choose a template for a county health directory and to provide assistance with development of an electronic version.

Dr. Brandon told the group about the upcoming regional meeting of the WARAC, scheduled for Friday, 06/13/08, from 10 a.m. till 2:00 p.m. at Mercedes. Everyone attending today will be invited to attend the meeting to network and learn from folks from the other 6 counties.

Minutes from today's meeting will be sent to the Greene County Health Department for distribution to all attendees, plus other interested persons.

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