



Capital Area Human Services District Public Forum on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment

April 23, 2014

Capital Area Human Services District (CAHSD) held its Annual Public Forum on Thursday, February 27, 2014, 9:30-11:30 am at Capital Area Human Services District located at 4615 Government St. Bldg. 2 in Baton Rouge, LA to gather input and ideas from the public throughout its seven parish area concerning substance abuse prevention and treatment. The goal of the Forum was to outline specific community needs so that strategies can be developed to address key issues that will enhance the regional recovery oriented system of care. A total of 139 individuals attended the meeting.

The agenda included a presentation of CAHSD's key strategic initiatives and services, public discussion and comments, and an overview of the Office of Behavioral Health's statewide initiatives. A poster session provided informational exhibits, and attendees had an opportunity to dialogue with CAHSD's behavioral health staff and other community professionals working in addiction recovery and prevention services.

Poster Sessions of the District's Programs

- Adult and Children's Crisis Services (Marianne Hebert)
- Best Practices in Gambling Treatment (Matricia Green)
- Building Capacity in a Rural Community to Promote Healthy Behaviors (Shevella Carter)
- Client-Centered Approaches in Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (Amy St. Germain)
- Multi-Sector Proven Practices for Managing Behavioral Health Crises (Jan Kasofsky, PhD)
- Developmental Disabilities Services: Providing Supports and Building Coping Skills to Prevent and Fight Addiction (Scott Meche, PhD)
- Life Can Be a Puzzle: CAHS Behavioral Health Outpatient Services Can Help (Karla Muzik)
- Enhancing Life Skills to Include Gambling Prevention for Youth (Linda Lamendola, Josette Guillory)
- A Community-Based Approach Designed to Improve Adolescent Birth Outcomes through Collaboration and Coordination (Kawanda Briley, Terrelle Foster)
- Improving Treatment Outcomes of Women Recovering from Addictions (Donna Matthews)
- It's Never Too Early: Intervention with High Risk Infants and Toddlers (Rhonda Norwood, PhD)
- Just the Facts – Community Planning with CCYS Data (Charlene Gillard)
- Prevention and Treatment Services on the West Bank, Iberville Parish (Bert Allain)
- Relax to Learn: Mindfulness in Education (Joan Stewart)
- Saving Lives and Families from Addiction (Yolanda Mulkey)
- School-Based Behavioral Health Services (Bethany Sclafani)
- Community Model to Engage Adolescents in Substance Abuse Treatment (Debra Reed)
- Total Health Program: Integration of Primary and Behavioral Health Care (Jamie Roques)
- Permanent Supportive Housing Program (Magellan Health Services)



The Forum was opened by Jan Kasofsky, PhD, CAHSD Executive Director. She welcomed participants and recognized the representatives from legislative offices, local coroners, and city council members and CAHSD Board members. She stated that the Forum engages community stakeholders and leaders and solicits ideas to support resources and services for addiction issues in this community.

William Clark, MD, East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner provided some opening comments focusing on the recent increase of heroin deaths and other health consequences of drug use in East Baton Rouge and the surrounding areas.

Dr. Kasofsky provided a presentation on CAHSD's key strategic initiatives and services.

Vivian Gettys, CAHSD's Division Director for Prevention, summarized CAHSD's key activities in response to last year's public forum recommendations.

Rochelle Head-Dunham, MD Interim Assistant Secretary of the Office of Behavioral Health, provided a presentation summarizing priorities for delivering and financing behavioral health services for Louisiana's children and adults through the Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership system and the Federal Block grant.

Tonja Myles, CAHSD's Community Outreach Coordinator, facilitated the Forum discussion with specific guided questions to generate input. The public comments included the following:

What Needs to Happen To Prevent Drug Use?

- Community and parent training about the effects of drugs.
- More safe and drug free events.
- Prevention programs for young parents.
- School presentations on the effects of drugs by younger presenters.
- Educate the community on dangers of drug and alcohol use.
- Target younger age groups for prevention services.
- Afterschool programs.

What Would Enhance Substance Abuse Treatment?

- More treatment programs in prison.
- More 12 Step programs.
- Include family members in treatment.
- More AA/NA meetings and other support groups.
- Substance abuse and mental health treatment professional training programs.



- Establish community network for increased communication.
- Distribute information on the dangers of prescription drug abuse.
- Include churches to increase awareness about substance abuse issues in the community and available resources.

What Brings People Into Treatment?

- Court systems – Although clients are frequently resistant initially, court ordered treatments provides an opportunity for clients to admit their problem and become engaged in services.
- Family members – Some clients want to improve their family relationships. By seeking help through treatment and by making an attempt to change, clients have the chance to reunite in a positive way with loved ones.

What Would Encourage People To Enter Treatment?

- Better education and prevention services regarding drug use.
- Shorter waiting times.
- De-stigmatize mental illness, substance abuse/addiction, and gambling addiction through public service announcements and education.
- More training for staff in different treatment modalities.
- Treating the whole person, assisting individuals with housing, employment and legal problems.

General Suggestions For CAHSD:

- Increase outreach and peer support.
- Better educate family members on intervention techniques and avenues for clients to enter treatment.

WHO Should Be Involved? Churches, Legislatures, Law Enforcement, Landlords, Neighborhood Associations, Judges, Judiciary, Recovering Communities, Consumers, Mentors, Teachers, School Board Members, PTA, Parents, Office of Public Health, Local Businesses, Teenagers/Youth & Family Members, and the Government.

The Forum adjourned to the poster sessions after comment sheets and suggestions were gathered.