

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
HEALTH POLICY & PLANNING COMMISSION

November 6, 2015

Santa Fe, New Mexico

I. This regular meeting of the Santa Fe County Health Policy & Planning Commission (HPPC) was called to order by Chair Judith Williams at approximately 9:00 a.m. on the above-cited date at 2052 Galisteo Street, Santa Fe, NM.

II. A quorum was established with the following members present:

Members Present:

Judith Williams, Chair
Reena Szczepanski
AnnaMaria Cardinalli
Don Reece
Vivian Heye
Bonnie Keene
Carolyn Roberts
Kim Straus
Anna Voltura

Member(s) Excused:

John Abrams

County Staff Present:

Patricia Boies, Director, Health Services Division
Rachel O'Connor, Director, Community Services Department
Kyra Ochoa, Health Services Staff

Others Present:

Kristin Carmichael, Community Health, Christus St. Vincent
Desiree Valdez, NM Department of Health, Health Promotion
Maire Claire Voorhees, Santa Fe Prevention Alliance
Shelly Mann-Lev, Santa Fe Prevention Alliance
Andres Mercado, Santa Fe Fire Department Community Protection Initiatives

III. Introductions

Those present introduced themselves.

IV. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was adjusted to accommodate the presenters, Santa Fe Prevention Alliance.

Commissioner Roberts moved to approve as adjusted. Commissioner Straus seconded and the motion passed without opposition.

V. Approval of Minutes: September 4, 2015 and October 6, 2015

Commissioner Reece moved to approve both sets of minutes as presented. Commissioner Cardinali seconded and the motion to approve the minutes of the September 4th and October 6th 2015 meetings were unanimously approved as submitted.

VIII. Matters from the Commission and Staff

A. Director's Report

Ms. Boies said the HPPC and the County Community Services Department have formed a Health Care Assistance Program Working Group to consider other ways to help the indigent within Santa Fe County with their health care expenses, including co-pays.-pay, etc. The first meeting is planned for Tuesday, November 24th at 9 a.m.

The 2014 legislation (SB 268) that implemented the Safety Net Care Pool and revamped the health care assistance fund requires that hospitals have written financial assistance policies that are publicized. Ms. Boies said staff is talking with Christus to obtain a copy of their policy to share with the public, especially those calling with questions about health care assistance. Transparency from Christus would be helpful on this front.

Chair Williams agreed that since they are the largest provider it is essential to have Christus' policy. She further recommended obtaining the indigent care policy from all the community-based providers. Ms. Ochoa said staff is collecting policies from providers.

Referring to last week's Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) meeting, Ms. Ochoa discussed the \$82 million in additional Medicaid costs to the state in 2017. That sets the context for why the state is looking to consider additional sources of money for Medicaid.

On the uncompensated care issue, an LFC evaluator reported that uncompensated care has significantly dropped for hospitals in New Mexico as well as across the country. Applications for the safety net care pool in calendar year 2015 were 30 percent lower than the previous year. Uncompensated care accounts for less than 7 percent of hospital expenses. This very informative report can be located on line.

Chair Williams mentioned at that same LFC meeting there was a presentation on early childhood/child care. The report indicated that child care has no impact on 3rd grade performance. Pre-K however is making a difference.

Commissioner Straus pointed out that the 3rd grade reading proficiency studies did not take into account the impact on the family for having child care which enabled the parents to work or go to school.

In the past the County's mobile health van provided flu shots. This year it has been very difficult, stated Ms. Boies. DOH is understaffed and even though the County's RN, Kati Schwartz, has been trained to administer the shots, the required emergency kit to address adverse reactions has not been available to the County.

DOH representative Valdez said DOH is experiencing a shortage in their nursing staff and were unable to provide assistance to many counties.

Ms. O'Connor said staff is exploring other avenues, adding that the County values the relationship they have historically had with DOH in this regard.

Ms. Boies said the County has contracted with the Santa Fe Community Foundation to do an online version of the report card/indicators on the *Health Action Plan*.

Kelly Gallagher will provide a presentation regarding the legislative process and how to influence health policy at the state level at the December 4th HPPC meeting.

The January HPPC meeting will be January 8th. An update on the mobile response team from PMS is planned.

Ms. O'Connor provided the following updates from Community Services and the Health Department.

- The Public Safety Department will be posting for a second position re-entry specialist assisting in Medicaid enrollment and to help with behavioral health issues
- An RFP will be developed with Corrections for intensive case management for those leaving the jail
- The senior services strategic plan is near completion – the plan overlaps the *Health Action Plan* in food and nutritional content of food
- A partnership may be formed with Rio Arriba to assist in maximizing senior benefits
- An evaluation of Teen Court is underway
- The Stanley Cyclone Center, an equestrian center, opened last week

VII. Presentation

A. "Alcohol Taxes Save Lives and Money"

Shelley Mann-Lev, Director Santa Fe Prevention Alliance, noted that the second priority in the *Health Action Plan* is reducing alcohol abuse, and one of the items that appears under that priority is supporting an increase in excise tax. SFPA is involved in a statewide initiative and are seeking HPPC's endorsement.

Maire Claire Voorhees, SFPA, presented "Alcohol Taxes Save Lives and Money" starting with contextual background:

- New Mexico is ranked number one in the country for alcohol-related deaths, a position held for 30 years
- 16.4 percent of all deaths in NM are alcohol-related

- NM has a high rate of early initiated drinking – children choosing to drink at 13 years or younger
- Santa Fe County has a particularly high rate of early initiated drinking
- Children drinking at 15 or younger are shown to have a greater percentage of adult onset alcohol-related problems
- CDC estimated an annual \$2.2 billion cost to NM for alcohol-related harm
- The current alcohol excise tax, which has been flat since 1993, collects annually \$45 million

Ms. Voorhees said studies have shown that if the excise tax were increased by 25 cents per drink: lives would be saved; it would prevent underage drinking; reduce alcohol dependence and abuse; reduce violence; create jobs; provide local funds for prevention, intervention and treatment and could also address the 2017 gap to continue health care coverage under Medicaid.

Increasing the excise tax by 25 cents would raise \$54 million for the state. The state legislature will look at impacts on the countywide DWI programs if the excise tax were raised, stated Ms. Mann-Lev. The group Alcohol Taxes Save Lives and Money is interested in that money going for education, treatment and potentially first responder cost.

Currently, the excise tax is levied on volume of alcohol and different for each type of alcohol. The state collects \$45 million; if the tax were increased it would be \$54 million.

Ms. Voorhees said the CDC recommends increasing alcohol taxes to reduce excessive drinking and harm and cites the most effective strategies of addressing alcohol are reducing outlet density or raising the excise tax. The two populations most impacted by the tax are the excessive drinkers and youth drinkers. CDC states the increase in alcohol tax will reduce: motor vehicle crashes and fatalities, alcohol-impaired driving, mortality from liver cirrhosis, as well as violence, sexually transmitted disease and alcohol dependence.

In New Mexico 49 percent of the population do not drink and 18.9 percent of the state's population are identified as excessive drinkers. If the tax were approved, excessive drinkers will pay \$51 more a year with casual drinkers paying approximately \$10 a year. The concern about crossing the state border to buy cheaper alcohol was addressed by Ms. Voorhees. The tax will apply to the sovereign nations within New Mexico. Ms. Mann-Lev noted that cigarette and gasoline taxes are handled differently.

Ms. Voorhees asked for the HPPC's support for the resolution to move this initiative forward. She noted that this initiative has advanced the conversation about alcohol in the community.

Youth are accessing alcohol in their homes or the homes of friends, stated Ms. Voorhees. Ms. Mann-Lev said, "we live in an environment that is saturated with alcohol and not necessarily monitored."

Ms. O'Connor said she and Santa Fe County DWI Coordinator Lupe Sanchez met with Association of Counties Director Steve Kopelman to discuss this issue. There are concerns from

A discussion about what is a regressive tax ensued. Also, Ms. Mann-Lev agreed to provide data on the income levels of the state's excessive drinkers.

Commissioner Keene said the shortage of health practitioners in the state needs to be emphasized and tying the tax to educate and attract more practitioners may be valuable.

VII. Matters from Commission and Staff

B. Other Matters from the Commission

Chair Williams recognized Santa Fe Firefighter Andres Mercado. He said SFFD would be helping out with the flu clinics.

Ms. Boies asked the Commissioners to review the Commission roster.

IX. Future Agenda Items

Kelly Gallagher presentation on legislative process.

X. Announcements

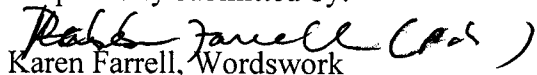
Next HPPC meeting is on December 4, 2015 at the 2052 Galisteo Street location.

This meeting was declared adjourned at approximately 10:30 a.m.

Approved by:



Judith Williams, Chair
Health Policy & Planning Commission *Reena Szczepanski*

Respectfully submitted by:


Karen Farrell, Wordswork

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I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 14TH Day Of January, 2016 at 01:47:59 PM
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1784056
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Geraldine Salazar
Deputy  County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM



the DWI Affiliate that there could be shifting of funds away from the affiliate. The overall impact of an increased excise tax could bring about positive changes in drinking patterns. She noted that Commissioner Holian is interested in bringing forward the resolution.

The HPPC did not discount the health/community value that may be attained from an increase in alcohol-excise tax and offered the following comments to increase, inform and improve upon the reports credibility:

- Document where youth drinking is initiated – family-initiated drinking and otherwise
- Employ caution in citing an increase in tax to lessen underage drinking – especially if the youth is stealing or gaining access to alcohol through family and friends
- Improve and better connect the data to the said result of saving lives
- Improve the language regarding any causation – better identify the vulnerable drinking population and how the increase in taxes would affect them
- Employ caution in the extrapolation that raising taxes saves lives
- Include other reasons to raise taxes: studies show an increase in tax will reduce consumption
- If the bottom line is decreasing access to youth and alcohol abusers, provide better data that increasing the tax is the appropriate route
- Identify where the new tax money will be used
- Strengthen citations of data
- Include other states' comparison data on alcohol tax
- If credibility is questioned support will weaken
- Be mindful of the history of Prohibition
- Develop a stronger case to support raising the excise tax
- Frame as a use tax for prevention, education, treatment and health care

Commissioner Szczepanski remarked on the state's decimated behavioral health system over the past few years and the resources available to the vulnerable, adding that an increased excise tax is regressive. The legislators look to SFPA as the experts and she was pleased that funding included expansion of alcohol treatment but cautioned that that specificity is needed when talking to the legislature. She recommended aligning the investment in behavioral health to demonstrated community needs. She encouraged SFPA to couple the data on the importance of treatment and prevention. She suggested that a new distribution for treatment and the Medicaid component be earmarks within the bill.

McKinley County's excise tax is 5 cents higher than the rest of the state. Ms. O'Connor said Gallup started a detox center which was crucial in reducing fatalities, particularly pedestrians from DWI and death from exposure.

Ms. Mann-Lev said the alcohol industry will be fighting this initiative and Commissioner Voltura said that industry will present data to counteract the SFPA's data. She advocated a different approach with a focus on treatment and education programs.

Ms. Ochoa said there appears to be support for the general thrust of the proposal but the data is not communicated well. Perhaps the proposal could be reworked and brought back to the HPPC for later endorsement.