

Minutes

Virginia State Board of Social Services Poverty Committee Meeting

**Our Health Incorporated
Winchester, VA**

June 18, 2008

Attendees

Trudy Brisendine
Jim Schuyler
Peppy Linden
Maggie Luca
Margaret Schultze
Commissioner Conyers
Nettie Simon-Owens
Marianne McGhee
Patricia Rengnerth

Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Chair Trudy Brisendine at 9:00 a.m. Members were thanked for their attendance.

Minutes

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Linden) and seconded (Mr. Schuyler) moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Motion carried with all in favor.

Previous Business

Hunger-A critical issue

Raising Awareness through the Food Stamp Diet

Ms. McGhee felt using the poverty diet as a method to bring attention to hunger had been overly used in the past and the committee may want to look toward creative ways to bring attention to the hunger issue.

Ms. Luca mentioned a recent news article which told of faith communities that are gathering food for the needy.

Another suggestion was to collaborate with other agencies to address reducing transportation costs.

Ms. McGhee shared a project creative brief entitled *Be Alright, When Money's Tight Series*. The project scope would include brainstorming sessions, broadcasts, flyers, mass emails, news and views articles, press releases, podcast interviews, etc.

The advice series would target Virginians who are struggling to make ends meet and may be facing more hardships with the worsening economy. The series would address issues of energy, food, transportation, child care and housing.

Goals include raising awareness of the department's assistance programs, not for profit, and faith-based assistance programs within target audiences and raising awareness and generating media interest in reporting on the increasing number of Virginians requiring assistance. At the same time, it would underscore efforts to help people achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.

Strategies would include developing and distributing materials and media outreach focusing on each of the five key issues. It would highlight existing federal, state and local programs and resources and leverage community partnerships to help raise awareness through the distribution of materials or communications.

Members of the committee felt a more sensitive and accurate name for the project would be *There's Help when Money is Tight*.

It was advised that the VDSS launched a food drive the previous day (hosted by Benefit Programs) due to the Central Virginia Food Bank emergency situation.

Overview of State Poverty Reduction Initiatives

Mr. Schuyler shared a media advisory entitled *Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity*. Religious, business, and community leaders from across the political spectrum came together on May 7 for a series of panel discussions focusing on the growing public will to reduce poverty and the importance of new partnerships in combating poverty.

He advised that evangelical Christians are on the front lines when it comes to helping those most in need.

Mr. Schuyler mentioned that the Clasp had done an article on poverty in April. Members could view this at www.clasp.org.

Next Steps

Ms. McGhee was asked to provide additional information on the "When Money's Tight" concept at the Committee's August meeting.

Commissioner Conyers felt it important to invite regional directors to the Poverty Committee meetings in the future.

Minutes
June 18, 2008
Page 3

Ms. Luca asked about Podcasts. Ms. Simon-Owens responded that Podcasting is one of the issues on the SBSS agenda for today..

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Submitted by Pat Rengnerth