

City of San Diego
Clean Syringe Exchange Program Facilitation Committee
Minutes of the Meeting

March 6, 2003

12:00 p.m.
Civic Center Plaza
1200 Third Avenue, 9th Floor Conference Room
San Diego, CA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the chair, Jim Dunford, at 12:04 p.m.

Members Present:

Daniel Bess
Jim Dunford
Mike Franz
Debra Fischle-Faulk
Sandy Keaton, Alternate for Cynthia Burke
Robert Lewis, Alternate for Fran Butler-Cohen
Linda Lloyd
Jim Varnadore
Leslie Wade

Staff Present:

Lisa Foster
Staajabu Heshimu

Guests Present:

G. Thomas Fletcher
Tim Graham
Dana Humphrey
Adrian Kwiatkowski
Alicia Meszee
Michelle Miller
Jack Monger
Nicole Palmer
Shirley Teas
George J. Wade
Mary Whisenant

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of February 6, 2002

The minutes of the February 6, 2003 meeting were approved as corrected (a typo) and will be posted to the City web page.

3. Status Reports

a. Family Health Centers of San Diego – Fran Butler-Cohen/Bob Lewis

Bob Lewis distributed the latest statistics from the downtown site and the first set of numbers from the new North Park site. During this period, the program experienced a one-night high of 54 visits including three new clients which kept staff very busy. In North Park, of the six clients so far, two have entered detox programs as the result of CSEP referrals. In response to a question, Mr. Lewis said that staff tries to minimize clients' standing around waiting their turns by asking them to return during slower periods, usually around 8:00 p.m., or to walk around the block rather than waiting in front of the program mobile.

With respect to the new North Park site, Mr. Lewis said community members occasionally stop by to ask questions and that the clients are coming in during the last 45 minutes of the service hours, about 12:15 p.m. so perhaps over their lunch hour. The CSEP is operating while children are in school, beginning at least an hour after school starts and ending at least an hour before school lets out.

With respect to the two "repeat clients", Mr. Lewis said these were clients of the downtown facility utilizing the North Park van. In response to a question, he said client addresses are self-reported and a unique identifier tells staff what program each client is using.

Responding to a question about locating a third program in City Heights, Ms. Heshimu announced that she had been told by the Council District 3 Chief of Staff that the planned city Heights CSEP would not be opening at this time. In response to a question, Sandy Keaton said 75 clients would allow SANDAG to obtain the data needed for evaluation of the CSEP. Daniel Bess asked if the one-year timeframe for the pilot would end February 14, 2004 – a year from the date the North Park site became operational. Ms. Heshimu asked if funding was the limiting factor. Mr. Lewis said that Family Health Centers of San Diego (FHCS) had some program savings due to the late start-up of the program at both sites. Their contract would be extended based on the savings but at this time he did not know how long the funds would last.

A member of the community asked if people from City Heights are expected to utilize the North Park program and if Council member Atkins would be notified if this turned out to be the case. Mr. Lewis said staff continues to track the addresses of clients utilizing the program. Mr. Varnadore asked about the confusion on the timeframe of the pilot. Mr. Lewis explained that he needed to know how long he was expected to make the existing funding last. Dr. Dunford asked how much time is needed to gather the data needed for a complete evaluation. Ms. Keaton stated that SANDAG had always preferred that all the data not come from a single site. She said the contract also calls for a three-month follow up.

Leslie Wade asked when committee members would see the data on where clients live. Ms. Keaton said they could pull the demographics from the downtown site but she wasn't sure what the variables were. Mr. Lewis said address data was collected by zip code and a close intersection. Ms. Wade said she was also interested in seeing other client demographics. Ms. Keaton said she could have an interim report at next month's meeting.

In response to another question from Mr. Varnadore about the program timeframe, Mr. Lewis said that there was just one bucket of money, the amount of the original grant from Alliance Healthcare Foundation (AHF); that money must cover all program costs no matter how many sites or clients there are or how much time is needed to gather the data. He said both AHF and FHCS D were currently looking for other funds to extend the program.

Dr. Dunford recalled that we were originally looking to enroll 1500 people and noted that only 246 had been served to date at the downtown site. Ms. Keaton said that all the numerical goals needed to complete the research have been met at the downtown site; and if the program can enroll at least 75 people at the North Park site for three months, the evaluators would have the required data for a scientific study. She said SANDAG is tracking who is using the program, how often they come and where they come from. In addition, they are tracking the drug use behavior of 75 clients.

Mr. Lewis said usage of the North Park site may be low because of a citizen's videotaping each session which may be intimidating to potential clients. Adrian Kwiatkowski said FHCS D is working with the SDPD to try to curtail the videotaping.

Mr. Kwiatkowski also announced that he had recently been appointed Director of Community and Government Relations for FHCSO and may be replacing Mr. Lewis as Ms. Butler-Cohen's alternate representative to the Facilitation Committee; Mr. Lewis would continue to attend and be a resource to the Committee.

b. San Diego Police Department – Lt. Cesar Solis

Ms. Heshimu announced that Lt. Solis could not attend today's meeting and there is no report from SDPD.

c. San Diego Association of Governments – Dr. Cynthia Burke

Sandy Keaton said SANDAG staff will visit the North Park site for the first time on March 7. In response to community concerns the two interviewers will be situated so they are not so visible to the public.

d. City Manager's Office – Staajabu Heshimu

Debra Fischle-Faulk said that the City Council's Land Use and Housing Committee will take up the issue of whether there should be regulations governing the siting of future syringe exchange programs, and that the LU&H Committee will most likely expect to receive guidelines from the Facilitation Committee. Ms. Heshimu will contact the LU&H Committee Consultant to see what they want from this Committee, and when.

4. Community Impact Subcommittee Report

Dr. Dunford reviewed efforts to date and said that he received responses to the draft survey prepared by Mr. Varnadore from only two committee members; he summarized those comments in a handout which was distributed via e-mail and at the meeting.

Mr. Varnadore said he was disappointed that only two people responded to the draft survey and that he disagreed that baseline data was needed; he also disagreed that the survey needed to be scientific, saying that what we are trying to do is develop a methodology for quantifying emotional response to the program.

Dr. Dunford said this is a beginning, a work-in-progress; in response to community concerns, we are trying to understand how community people feel about the program.

Ms. Wade added that we are trying to determine if the program results in “actual” negative impact to the community. She said there is always about new social services programs in a community, that sometimes these fears turn out to be true, other times they turn out to be false. We need to know the real impact, and then to be able to determine what to do about it, whether to stop the program, move it, or change it in some way. She said she is not wedded to the idea of a survey but agrees that we need some mechanism to measure community impact.

Mike Franz said that his experience is that neighbors of these kinds of programs feel empowered when they are able to have regular meetings with staff and when they know they are being heard. Dr. Dunford said the question may be what more do we need than a complaint line. Mr. Varnadore said he wanted some mechanism put in place before we put the program up elsewhere. Ms. Wade suggested that if we can come up with a model the City can use elsewhere, and for other programs, that would be a goal.

A meeting of the Community Impact subcommittee was set for March 27 at noon.

5. Roundtable/Public Comment

Dr. Dunford noted that it seemed that most comments and questions were made and asked during the earlier agenda items; there was no further roundtable/public comment.

6. Next Meeting – May 1, 2003

The May meeting will take place as scheduled.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:25 p.m.