

Summary – Health, Housing and Human Services Committee Meeting

January 9, 2018

Committee Members Present:

Sharon Bulova (Chairman)
Penelope Gross (Vice Chairman)
John Cook, Braddock District
John Foust, Dranesville District
Pat Herrity, Springfield District
Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District (Committee Chair)
Jeff McKay, Lee District
Kathy Smith, Sully District
Linda Smyth, Providence District
Daniel Storck, Mount Vernon District

Link to the January 9, 2018 Health, Housing and Human Services Committee Meeting video:

http://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=9&clip_id=923

Today's meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

Supervisor Hudgins welcomed the new County Executive, Bryan Hill, to the Health, Housing, and Human Services (HHHS) Committee meeting as well as the new Deputy County Executive for Health and Human Services, Tisha Deeghan.

The first topic was a presentation on the Opioid Task Force Strategy and Resource Plan.

- Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Director of the Fairfax County Health Department, noted that the Opioid Task Force plan is the result of multiple agencies across Fairfax County and Fairfax County Public Schools working together since July 2017. The plan builds on existing work and addresses gaps in our communities. The Task Force is seeking approval from the BOS to implement strategies included in the plan.
- The plan includes two main goals: Reduce deaths from opioids through prevention, treatment, and harm reduction; and use data to describe the problem, target interventions, and evaluate effectiveness. There are five main areas of focus in the plan: education and awareness; drug storage, monitoring and disposal; treatment; enforcement and criminal justice; and data and monitoring.
- Dr. Addo-Ayensu provided a brief overview of data regarding opioids. Deaths due to opioids has increased dramatically across the nation. Prescription opioids continue to be a driving force in the epidemic. Dr. Addo-Ayensu walked through several maps to show how the rate of overdose deaths have increased throughout the country since 1999.
- Virginia has a lower rate of drug overdose deaths than other states. Fairfax County has a lower rate of overdose deaths than other jurisdictions within the Commonwealth, however the rate of deaths due to overdoses in the county has been increasing.
- Robin Wilson, Senior Health Analyst at the Fairfax County Health Department, provided an overview of the Opioid Task Force Strategy and Resource Plan. She discussed proposed activities in each of

the five areas: education and awareness; drug storage, disposal, and monitoring; treatment; enforcement and criminal justice; and data and monitoring.

- The plan contains a summary of expenditures across the five areas, outlining the use of Carryover funds as well as additions to baseline beginning in FY 2019.
- The plan outlines \$1.1 million in FY 2017 Carryover funds be used for Medication Assisted-Treatment and approximately \$2.5 million for other strategies to address the opioid epidemic. Total Carryover funds requested is approximately \$3.6 million. If approved through the formal budget process, the plan also includes approximately \$4.1 million in baseline spending.
- Activities included in the plan are categorized by those that are currently underway; those with no new funding requested; and those that require new funding.
- Future consideration for strategies listed in the plan include phasing of baseline adjustments; monitoring strategies for effectiveness; and responding to changing circumstances in the crisis.
- Supervisor Herrity urged members of the Task Force to target and deliver communications strategies to where people are most affected in our communities. Traditional communications strategies may not be the most effective. Supervisor Herrity urged the Task Force to utilize the last week of school to communicate and message prevention efforts regarding the dangers of opioids.
- With the closure of the United Prevention Coalition, Supervisor Herrity asked if there was another organization that could help lead drug awareness and advocacy efforts in Fairfax County. Jesse Ellis, Prevention Manager at the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, responded that organizations often have difficulty operating a business model based exclusively on advocacy and awareness functions. The county is hoping that the role that UPC played within the community can be re-established within a larger organization that will offer a more sustainable model moving forward. The county expects to release a Request for Proposals in the future.
- Supervisor Herrity strongly suggested that strategies to address the opioid epidemic should be built into the Consolidated Community Funding Pool priorities. In addition, he has worked with Virginia State Senator Vogel to introduce a bill that would require pharmacies to take back opioid prescriptions that are not used. Supervisor Herrity also urged members of the Opioid Task Force to closely monitor this bill and others being brought forward at the state level. Supervisor McKay echoed this request.
- Supervisor Cook asked members of the Opioid Task Force to develop a concise, one-page handout with key talking points regarding the opioid epidemic.
- Dr. Addo-Ayensu also noted the importance of stigma and how communications strategies are essential to dismantling cultural biases and stigma around opioids.
- Supervisor Storck expressed his appreciation for the plan and noted that Fairfax County needs to keep focusing attention on the issue. Drug courts and access to treatment are critical in our communities.
- Supervisor Gross requested additional information regarding the staff positions, including if they are new positions or existing positions that are being re-allocated. This request was supported by Supervisor McKay.
- Dr. Addo-Ayensu provided clarification on the Community Physician Dialogues noting that there would be outreach to the entire medical field on the sessions, not just Fairfax County Health Department employees. Providers working in hospitals such as Inova will be asked to join in the discussions.
- Laura Yager, Director of Systems Transformation, Fairfax County Executive's Office, provided clarification regarding Emergency Department Recovery Coaches. This program is based on a highly successful model operating throughout Rhode Island. Recovery coaches are certified peer specialists who provide support to individuals immediately after overdose as they exit a hospital emergency

room. This model provides one-on-one support during one of the most vulnerable times for relapse, by helping people connect to clinical and other support systems in the community.

- Supervisor McKay asked when the pilot for the drug take-back program was ending and results made public. He also asked how the Board of Supervisors can ensure that all police stations have a 24-hour drug drop box in the future. Chief Roessler indicated that the Fairfax County Police Department should have the results of the pilot program by the end of February. One issue currently facing the county is a lack of proper storage and disposal for opioids and other drugs. There are opportunities to partner with the U.S. Drug and Enforcement Agency which will be further explored. An update on the results of the pilot program as well as a proposal on how the pilot can be expanded throughout the county will be provided to the BOS in March 2018.
- Supervisor Smyth asked if the Opioid Task Force was involving dentists in outreach campaigns and other strategies. Dr. Addo-Ayensu noted that they are included in efforts along with veterinarians.
- Supervisor Foust asked members of the Task Force whether there were any regional efforts underway to address the opioid epidemic. Dr. Addo-Ayensu noted that Fairfax County is participating in regional efforts being led by the Prince William County Health District. There also are preliminary discussions in the region about how to strengthen data collection efforts pertaining to opioids. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments is doing some regional convening around opioids as well.
- Supervisor Kathy Smith asked for clarifying information regarding the two positions that are involved in the pilot drug take-back program. Chief Roessler, Police Department, responded that if the pilot drug take-back program is expanded countywide, there will be two full-time positions that will collect drugs received via the drop boxes. If there are opportunities for staff to also conduct prevention and education activities, they will do this as well.
- Mary Ann Panarelli, FCPS, also commented on the Substance Abuse Prevention pilots in the six pyramids described in the Opioid Task Force plan. Two positions will be housed at the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board to assist students with treatment; the others housed at FCPS. Positions at FCPS are important to reduce confidentiality issues and to better utilize other FCPS resources available to children.
- Supervisor Herrity noted that the Opioid Task Force plan seems to be missing opportunities to address opioid abuse within the jail. He also requested that county staff research and evaluate private treatment providers and how we increase their availability within the county.

The second topic was a presentation on the Gang Prevention Task Force.

- Bob Bermingham, Director, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, provided an update on the Gang Prevention Task Force plan. \$500,000 in FY 2017 Carryover funding was set aside to enhance gang prevention strategies in Fairfax County.
- The Gang Prevention Task Force met from July through December 2017 to create a plan that builds on current efforts, addresses gaps, and responds to data on gang prevention and suppression efforts.
- Overall, gang activity in Fairfax County remains low. We are currently in a slight uptick in gang activity. This uptick is not unique to Fairfax County – there also has been a spike in gang violence in neighboring jurisdictions. Our jurisdiction has a strong infrastructure in place to prevent gang violence.
- Mr. Bermingham noted that current gang activities and membership is different than a few decades ago. Some children/youth are highly susceptible to gang recruitment and participation. Many youth

have come from communities where there is a tremendous amount of gang activity and have experienced trauma due to witnessing and/or participating in gangs.

- The Gang Prevention Task force is recommending a targeted approach to have the greatest impact on gang activities. Fairfax County currently provides a wide spectrum of prevention services, but it is now important to also focus efforts on children and families most vulnerable to gang activity.
- Jesse Ellis, Prevention Manager, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, provided an overview of the strategies included in the Gang Prevention Task Force report which would utilize Carryover funding. Overall, the strategies would support areas including media campaigns, services for reunifying families, and a crime analyst position in the Police Department.
- Total requested use of Carryover funds in FY18 was \$470,000; there is an anticipated recurring cost of approximately \$650,000 to support efforts identified in the gang prevention plan.
- Supervisor Smith requested clarification on Carryover funding requests and recurring costs for parent liaisons. Mary Ann Panarelli, FCPS, noted that the funding requests for parent liaisons are not to add more positions to the program, but rather to expand the hours of current staff so they can work more evening hours to better serve the community.
- Supervisor Gross asked how El Salvadorian residents in Fairfax County will be impacted by the policy change in their Temporary Protected Status designation and whether Health and Human Services staff were tracking individuals affected by this federal change. Deputy County Executive Patricia Harrison noted that county staff were not specifically tracking individuals on this issue as it is extremely difficult to identify residents by their country of origin. However, health and human service staff were paying close attention to the issue and its impact here on county residents. Supervisor Gross noted that multicultural community-based organizations should also encourage residents to reach out to the county for assistance if needed.
- Supervisor McKay requested a one-page, succinct explanation of all staff positions that are included in the Gang Prevention Task Force report, noting if they are new or existing positions that are being re-allocated.
- Supervisor Herrity asked for clarification that technology can be shared across various divisions within the Police Department to more effectively suppress gang activity. Chief Roessler, Police Department, indicated that technology is shared across the department but also stressed the importance of hiring a crime analyst who could pull information from various systems to strengthen outcomes.

The third topic was an update on Head Start.

- Jennifer Branch, Department of Family Services, provided a brief update on the Head Start program. A site visit by the federal government to Head Start providers in Fairfax County will be conducted during the week of February 12 – 16th, 2018. There will be two teams of federal representatives, some of which will be conducting onsite observations in classroom settings. The annual Head Start report for the county is also now available
- Head Start enrollment continues to increase as well as waitlists for the program.
- Supervisor Gross noted that there are substantial pay inequities among Head Start providers in the county, particularly at Higher Horizons Head Start. She requested a discussion with members of her office, Higher Horizons, and HHS staff to determine how best to move forward to ensure pay equity across providers in Fairfax County.