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September 1997

MHSC Calls for Prevention

A Letter from MHSC's President

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." No matter how many times we've heard that old adage, we don't seem to take it very seriously. Oh, yes, we're all in favor of immunizing babies against childhood diseases like polio and measles, and some of us get flu shots every fall.



Michael L. Kasler, President

But when it comes to other areas — like child abuse, crime, violence, substance abuse and juvenile delinquency — we, as a community, haven't yet made a substantial commitment to prevention. We're still relying on the cure — which is usually illusive and frequently non-existent.

The Metropolitan Human Services Commission believes, based both upon our own work and on the research of others, that prevention is worth the pound, whether you measure the pound in dollar or human cost. Studies show, for instance, that when we

spend one dollar on prevention, we can save between \$4 and \$5 on drug abuse treatment. The savings in human cost are less easily calculated, but, clearly, the quality of life of someone who doesn't abuse drugs or alcohol will be better. More work needs to be done in our community to support and coordinate prevention activities around issues of substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, violent crime, child abuse, and domestic violence.

Why these issue areas? Because there are natural connections between substance abuse and all of these other serious prob-



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lems. If we, as a community, can successfully support substance abuse prevention and link it to other problem areas, we can improve the health of our community.

The connections between substance abuse and other problems are well-documented. For example, in the case of child abuse, parental substance abuse has been identified across the country as a major factor that contributes to the abuse and death of children. In one urban area, 2 out of 3 parents of abused or neglected children tested positive for cocaine. There is a similarly high correlation between alcohol use and crime, including domestic violence. One community reports that three-quarters of the men charged

with domestic violence tested positive for alcohol and half for illicit drugs. And, some states have documented that half of their prison populations were using drugs when they committed crimes.

Given these connections, what should we be doing? First of all, we should all be supporting the community's new framework for substance abuse prevention, "Promise of a New Day." It provides a comprehensive approach to both prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including county-wide strategies for education, media, the workplace and neighborhoods.

Supporting the framework means that each prevention agency, the public health departments and mental health board, the



United Way, every school, police department, church and community association needs to declare its intention, coordinate its efforts, provide resources and track progress toward reducing the harm from substance abuse.

Second, we should be coordinating prevention activities around these interrelated areas, linking



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substance abuse prevention to other efforts to prevent child abuse, violence and juvenile delinquency. Such coordination will promote lasting effectiveness of the efforts, delivering programs and services through multiple channels — through school-based curriculum, media, community policy and parent intervention. The payoff will be greater than any single approach. Coordination will also result in the better use of resources available to human services programs.

We know a lot about what works, although there is still room to improve ways of preventing unhealthy behaviors. We need to move forward to make prevention work. We need to evaluate the results in order to improve and then put in place what works. It is through this work that our community will achieve real, enduring improvement in people's health and lives —by the ton, not the pound, not the ounce.

Beard Joins MHSC Board

Jonathan Beard has joined the MHSC Board of Trustees as a United Way designee. Beard is the Executive Director of Columbus Compact, Inc., which is involved in improving the quality of life in central city neighborhoods. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in public administration from OSU.



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MHSC Completes Review of Elderly Services

Having completed its review of elderly services funded by property tax levy funds, MHSC in August suggested that the Franklin County Commissioners consider placement of a 0.85 mill levy on the November ballot. The MHSC Board chose the 0.85 levy, which will generate about \$15 million per year, from five possibilities developed by the



Franklin County Office on Aging (FCOA). The possible levy requests ranged from renewal of the current 0.75 mills to a 1.0 mill request, all with a term of five years, to continue the Senior Options program. The recommended levy would increase annual property taxes for a \$100,000 home by \$7.71 to \$26.03.

MHSC's Standing Committee for Levy-Funded Human Services considered the FCOA request as part of its ongoing monitoring of human services systems funded by property tax levies. FCOA, through one central telephone number, provides a wide range of services to the elderly and their caregivers.

These services include information, referral, advocacy, homemaker services, meals, respite care and minor home repairs.

Figure 1 (on page 6) presents the breakdown of FCOA expenditures for 1996. People who receive services are charged a copay amount dependent upon their income and assets. In 1996, Senior Options served about 3,000 people each month, most of whom had an annual income under \$14,000 and assets less than \$20,000, as shown in **Figure 2 (on page 6)**.

According to Committee Chair Tony Celebrezze, "The unique aspect of Senior Options, and its strength, is that services



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Standing Committee Members

- Anthony Celebrezze, Jr.**, Chair
Dinsmore and Shohl
- Marty Anderson**, Vice Chair
Sowald, Sowald & Clouse
- Chuck Adams**
Public Policy and Management Office, OSU
- E. William Butler**
The Police & Firemen's Disability & Pension Fund
- Virginia Colson**
Children's Services Consultant
- Dean Conley**
Public Issues Management, Inc.
- Jerry Friedman**
OSU Medical Center
- Michael Dave**
Columbus Public Schools
- Kevin Osterkamp**
Roetzel & Andress
- Ronald Sams**
Children's Academy
- Claire Sawaya**
Project Control Systems
- Charleta Tavares**
Ohio House of Representatives

Pro tem representatives

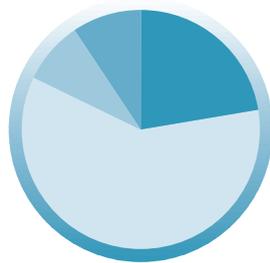
- Peggy Mativi**
Chamber of Commerce
- Hubert Snead**
AFL-CIO

are client-driven.” Celebrezze explained that each client receives an individual assessment and receives only those services needed, rather than a pre-packaged set. The Committee’s report, which Celebrezze presented to the MHSC Board at its August 1st meeting, made a number of findings and recommendations in five issue areas: services, needs, outcomes, finance and administration and amount and term of the levy. Copies of the Standing Committee’s report are available by calling MHSC.



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figure 1



Direct Services Expenditures

- **22.61%** Information & Referral, Assessment & Case Management
- **8.13%** Program Grants
- **6.01%** Other Direct Services
- **63.25%** Core Services

Total \$10,141,526

figure 2

Distribution of Clients Enrolled in Core Services

1996

Annual Income	Liquid Assets		All Core Service Clients
	\$20,000 or less	More than \$20,000	
\$14,000 or less	84%	9%	93%
More than \$14,000	6%	1%	7%
All Core Service Clients	90%	10%	100%



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Children's Cabinet Sets Goals

The Franklin County Children's Cabinet has set 3 goals to guide the community's work on improving the condition of children. Franklin County Commissioner Dorothy Teater,

"...we agreed on 3 priority goals, with a set of objectives under each one.

I believe that we have made good goals."

Schools; MHSC has been involved with its implementation and evaluation. The program places mental health and child welfare workers in 4 elementary schools to work with children at risk of truancy. According to a study released by OSU College of Social Work's Dr. Denise Bronson, Care

who chairs the Cabinet, remarked that, "At our April meeting we agreed on 3 priority goals, with a set of objectives under each one. I believe that we have made good goals."

The Cabinet will now focus on developing indicators to measure progress made toward meeting these goals.

The Cabinet will also continue to oversee the implementation of Care Connection, a collaborative effort of FCCS, ADAMH and the Columbus Public

The Cabinet's Goals

All children have a place to live that is safe and adequate to meet the housing needs of the child and family.

All children grow up in the care and responsibility of their parents or in a permanent alternative that provides a nurturing, stable home through adoption, kinship or guardianship, where basic needs can be met.

All children upon reaching adulthood will have developmentally appropriate skills and knowledge necessary to support themselves and their families, and to understand their community and other cultures.



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Connection completed its pilot period showing positive results.

Bronson, who conducted a rigorous evaluation of the program, reported her findings to the Children's Cabinet. Her study concluded that the most at-risk students in the program showed substantial improvement, with

half as many absences after receiving Care Connection services. Services provided included prevention and intervention strategies designed to identify reasons for high absenteeism and helping families and children to resolve them.

Both FCCS and ADAMH have committed to continue the program in the 4 schools (Weinland Park, S. Mifflin, Windsor Alternative and Main Street) for next year. There is continuing discussion about expanding it to other schools, both in Columbus and in other districts.

Need stuff?

MHSC has office equipment it no longer needs and would like to donate it to a nonprofit organization. If you are interested in any of the following items, please give us a call at 224-1336.

- Quattro Pro for Windows 5.0
- Compaq Deskpro 386 (no hard drive)
- 14" mono & svga monitors
- Pentafax fax machine
- Canon Faxphone
- Canon 35mm camera



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MHSC 1997 Award Winners Honored

At its annual meeting, MHSC honored 4 individuals and 1 organization for their work toward improving the lives of area children. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and Carla Bailey received the Grace Kindig Award for their volunteer efforts. CASA volunteers advocate for abused, neglected and dependent children in Franklin County courts. Bailey is the founder and executive director of Special Ties, a non-profit organization that serves as an advocate and support system for families and their children who have special needs.

A trio of human services professionals were also



left to right: Carla Bailey, Enid Weaver and Rita Soronen



left to right: Diane Bennett, John Hahn and Linda Day-Mackessy



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recognized for their work, particularly around child care issues. Receiving the Barry Mastrine Award were Linda Day-Mackessy, Diane Bennett and John Hahn. Day-Mackessy, the Metropolitan Child Care Director of the YMCA, has focused on creating quality child care programs in collaboration with community groups. Bennett, Executive Director of Action for Children, and Hahn, Director of the Franklin County Department of Human Services, were honored for their work on the Early Childhood Care and Education Council.

Save the date

MHSC, in conjunction with the YWCA and Church Women United, will present Lisbeth Schorr, author of **Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America**, at a lecture and luncheon on November

November						
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6. Schorr, who is the head of the Harvard University Project on Effective Intervention, has spent the past seven years studying large-scale social programs in an effort to identify what works to transform inner-city neighborhoods and

communities. *Common Purpose*, which will be published in September, has received outstanding praise from Marian Wright Edelman, Judith Viorst, T. Berry Brazelton and Robert Coles. Plan now to join us for lunch. Invitations will follow in early fall.



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Symposium Sends Message: "Focus on People"

Nearly 200 human services funders and planners attended the symposium on outcomes sponsored in May by MHSC, the Columbus Foundation, United Way and the OSU College of Social Work. Keynote speaker Eve Berry, of the Grantsmanship Center, presented the planning process MHSC had developed with her help.

According to Berry, "One of the key strengths of this process is its focus on people and their conditions." She explained that often in her work with nonprofits throughout the country she finds that agencies focus on their own survival instead of the people they serve. "In this day and

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”

age," she continued, "human services providers and funders have to be able to document the change in people produced by their programs. Evaluating that change is part of a complete planning process, not an isolated, one-time event."

During the day, symposium participants worked in small groups led by local facilitators to apply the

process in planning new programs for a fictitious neighborhood agency. Beginning with the observed status of the area's elderly people, participants developed goals, objectives and strategies to improve their condition. They then moved on to suggest ways to evaluate the impact the new programs had on the condition of the elderly.

MHSC President Michael Kasler was pleased with the event's success. "The day was a good start in addressing the joint concerns of funders and providers about the use of outcome evaluation. The participants posed good questions and raised some important issues."



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Questions or comments should be referred to Michael L. Kasler, President, or Claudia Herrold, Communications Specialist, Metropolitan Human Services Commission, 360 S. Third Street, 3rd Floor, Columbus, OH 43215-5481, 224-1336.

