



Rural Health Community Systems, Inc.

Meeting Minutes February 3, 2010

Thanks Nan

Present:

Everett Ferguson-Chairman

Jeanie Tomkalski

Dave Hopkins

Staff:

Betty Wattenberg & Art Jones

Tim Marshall, Reporting Sec.

Mike Sprague

Al Lewis

Nan Hammes

Tina Goodwin

Excused:

George Bliss, Vice Chair, Bob Rajskey, Jennifer Reed

Call to Order

Chairman Ferguson called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. and thanked Nan for hosting the meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Mike Sprague, Second by Tina Goodwin approving the minutes of the annual meeting. All in favor, Motion Carried.

2010 Budget Discussion:

The Network Consultant indicated that we were notified in December at the beginning of the fourth quarter that we would be cut 12.5% out of our fourth quarter or last year's grant funding. The fourth quarter ended at the end of January and we are currently beginning the new fiscal year.

The projected budget for this upcoming fiscal year (2/1/2010 – 1/31/11) has also been cut by 12.5%, this will put us at \$160,334. (See adjustment). Staff have met and conferred with representatives from Ira Davenport Memorial Hospital and State Office of Rural Health and determined where we can make cuts to continue operations for the upcoming year. However it is important to remember the overall grant funding is dependent on legislative budget approval. There was some discussion that the legislature will not pass the 2010-2011 budget until following the November elections. This is a rumor. There are many professional organizations out there that are promoting this as a possibility.

Tim asked, "So we continue to operate as if we have a budget with a 12.5% reduction?" He asked what happens if the Rural Health Funding is cut completely by the New York State legislature, is Ira Davenport out that money? The Network Consultant stated that the Grant is Federally initiated and New York State is a 'pass-through'. Yes, Ira Davenport does up-front the money and in the past they may have had to wait for far too long, however they were always reimbursed for the total amount.

For all intents and purposes *Rural Health Community Systems, Inc* has been advised to carry on our planned course of action. Our operations will be reimbursed by the grant quarterly. The Network Consultant indicated that her contacts realize that Ira Davenport Memorial Hospital is a key player in this and that the State will make good.

Another financial scenario might be as follows. If funding does not come along as expected Ira may tell us to tailor back our expenditures until funding arrives. Art indicated that we have done this before and Ira is very good at working with us on this issue.

Everett asked for a point of clarification, is the 12.5% cut for only the fourth quarter of last year's budget or for the whole budget for last year. Betty said it was for only the fourth quarter of last year's budget as well as for this year's (2/2010 to 1/2011) budget. Everett asked Betty to keep the network updated on this issue.

Coordinator of Network Initiatives:

Art Jones provided the partners with a copy of his monthly report. He discussed the various albeit different programs that he has been involved with over the past month. Art reviewed the E-PCR program, Jasper and Woodhull were approved by Regional Council at the previous meeting. The Coordinator of Network Initiatives has heard from the E-PCR developer indicating that the program will work with "Windows 7" and

everything seems to be working very well. He took the Heart Code System to the Southern Area Ambulance Association meeting where it was met with much enthusiasm.

Addison and Hornell has purchased "Auto Pulse" units as a result of the *Rural Health Community Systems* "Pit-Crew" and Quality Improvement Conference (2/08) A little history . . . This rural health network presentation for Steuben County Emergency Medical Services was held at our expense at the Bath Country Club. It was highlighted by cutting-edge technology including the AutoPulse, King Laryngeal Tube, and Rescue Pod devices. Hornell's unit is new and Addison was able to get a refurbished unit.

Art reported on the 10,000 links program and Brenda Yoman, A.H.A. facilitator from Atlanta is training at the library. Art passed around copies of the new promotional posters and palm cards for the "10,000 Links in the Chain of Survival" program. RSVP will be helping us put together over 1500 promotional and informational mailings. Art will be speaking at engagements designed to advance "10,000 Links in the Chain of Survival". The Coordinator of Network Initiatives spoke about a presentation that Savona Fire Department focused on Heart Pumps. There were about 40 participants in attendance and CME's were provided.

Jeanie reported that Art assisted the Red Cross with a United Way Grant-Making interview to promote two Red Cross grants with United Way. One was Baby Sitting Program and the other is CPR & First Aid Training. The hope of this grant will be to train all the volunteer fire departments and ambulance corps in the entire county for little or no cost. Part of this would be to train at least one trainer at each Corps to continue ongoing training for that department. As they understand the grant, recipients need to be members of the United Way. She reported that Art was beneficial in documenting the need and explaining why this is so important. Jeanie felt that based upon the presentation they should be able to secure the grant for an additional two more years. This plays right into the rural health networks "10,000 Links in the Chain of Survival" project. **Thanks Jeanie!** Keep that count going.

Red Cross is already receiving calls from departments wanting to qualify instructors. Tina asked if the grant has already started. Jeanie indicated that they already have funding from a grant that will end in June. They have re-applied for the grant which would cover the next two years and have included additional items such as the free training. The grant is a two year cycle. The Baby Sitting Program numbers were crazy from the past year and this helps support the grant. Mike said that if Jeanie was able to get him some information he would forward it on to fire and ambulance corps. Mike was asked if he would also take information on the 10,000 links program to the EMS Corps as well? He indicated that he would.

Jeanie indicated that they also have agreements with National for CPR and First Aid Training with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Betty asked if she would track their CPR Training numbers? Jeanie said yes.

Organizational Involvement:

The Coordinator of Network Initiatives spoke about a request from Cardiac Life Products. They would like to partner with us on the 10,000 links project. In addition that corporation would like to identify ways to become more involved with RHCS as well as perhaps a membership on our network.

There was much discussion on a private for-profit, out-of-area agency being a partner on the network. Al stated membership is probably not recommended due to other vendors wishing to participate. The Network Consultant said that for profits can participate as long as they don't profit from their membership. Therefore the network could not do business with Cardiac Life. Everett stated that each of us provides a letter of intent before membership and is filed as part of our funding. He felt that any agency asking to be a partner should outline their reason for wanting to be a member. He is concerned about Cardiac Life using their position on the board to make sales. Mike asked if our funding is only limited to our grant, could RHCS accept vendor fees as an opportunity for corporate sponsorship, which would sustain the network or an affiliated group. This may be a system to facilitate the sustainability of our different programs.

Everett asked would they get a vote on the decision making process? Mike said no. The Network Consultant said in regards to 10,000 Links, we are asking for sponsorship and once we had any corporate sponsor we would put their logo on the marketing materials. A Sponsor is different then a Partner.

Al Lewis spoke about the United New York Ambulance Network (UNYAN) and how they involve their corporate sponsors.

Al suggested that there could/should be an upfront annual sponsor fee if they want to be involved as a non-voting member. Everett asked if we have consensus, non-voting member, the fee will be listed as a donation and it would be upfront. This will provide them with the opportunity to have their logo listed on our marketing materials.

Tim indicated that we need to propose a By-Law adaptation to delineate Corporate Sponsorships and their rights. Al can share with Betty what UNYAN uses for their corporate statement. Betty asked what we are going

to tell Cardiac Life Products in the meantime? Everett stated we should tell them that we are developing a policy for 'for-profit' organizations with a sincere interest in EMS. The rural health network meetings are open to the public. Cardiac Life Products representative is welcome to attend our meeting if he wishes. The Network Consultant would rather draft a proposed policy before vendors are invited to attend our meetings. Tina asked if we have anything currently on Corporate Sponsors. The network is in the process of sending out promotional letters, specific to the 10,000 Links Project. Consensus was to tell them to support the 10,000 Links Program at this time.

ID System Update:

Mike updated the partnership on the ID System. Mike has \$30,000 to develop the Steuben County Public Safety ID Program through Homeland Security Grant Program Funding. The contract for that funding should arrive about June and then we could move forward with the program. Next Thursday night he has a vendor coming in to talk to the County Fire Chiefs Association. He hopes to establish a committee to outline what the ID will look like and the needs of all the agencies.

There was discussion about WMD Protection for EMS workers. Mike provided an overview of the Homeland Security Grant Program. Everett asked about the Printer that was purchased for the Sheriff's Department by the rural health network specifically for the provider ID project. Mike stated that the unit is not only dead but it is no longer supported by the vendor. Mike indicated that the Grant will help to replace that unit. In the last three years or so Art has taken over 350 photos which the sheriff's office processed for EMS IDs. This was done as a courtesy to the EMS Volunteers. There needed to be an efficient method of delivering the photos to the EMS Volunteers in Steuben County.

10,000 Links in the Chain of Survival:

The Network Consultant thanked Art, Jeanie, Nan and Tim for their active participation and support for the program. Betty stated we need to provide training to 9 people per day for the next three years. She stated there is a need for clerical help to get the promotional part of the project done soon.

The network needs help in soliciting groups for presentations and help with recruiting more trainers. Red Cross Train the Trainer course is 16 hours if you already have CPR, or 24 Hours if you need the baseline and also Train the Trainer. There is a need for facilitators for the AHA Friends and Families Program. Jeanie stated that she would ask anyone who becomes one of her trainers in the new Fire Department and Ambulance Corps program to teach at least one open course per year in their community. There is still a need to help with marketing "10,000 Links in the Chain of Survival". If every Partner spoke to every one of their immediate contacts to market the program, it would spread a lot faster. Promotion will be ongoing for the next three years. Betty asked each member to sign up for needed areas of support. Tim indicated that if we trained 11 in January we have to now train 555 in February instead of 278 to catch up. Mike said that we all need materials in order to push the program. Materials were distributed. Tina felt that the information about the fire department Train the Trainer needs to get out as soon as possible. Art said we need to focus on anyone that has not had the program since 2005 when the criteria changed. Dave felt that we need to focus on schools to help with the numbers. The Network Consultant responded that we have recruited two Volunteers who will be carrying the message to the schools.

New Business:

Al reported on changes to the (GML) General Municipal Law 209-B for Advanced Life Support intercepts. Advance ALS Intercepts require highly trained and skilled individuals. There are not many in Steuben County, or other rural areas and those that are here work for a proprietary or municipal organization. Currently under 209-B, Volunteer Fire Department Ambulances cannot bill for services unless they separate their fire and ambulance operations. Independent and proprietary ambulances can bill, but under GML and municipals can bill under 122. The Governor is looking to eliminate billing of ALS intercepts, if this legislation passes ALS fly-car programs will go away.

Al has a meeting scheduled in Albany with some other Ambulance representatives to discuss this with the Governor's budget staff to take another look at this. Apparently the Association of Towns & Counties are in support of this change. Mike asked wouldn't this fix the case of fire district agreements for billing. Al stated that we are the only State that allows for intercept reimbursement and this goes back 25 years to legislation that Amo Houghton was able to pass. Al said that because 209-B prohibits the billing by fire based ambulances, Amo Houghton was able to convince them that as long as they are prohibited under law then this limits Medicare recipients from taking advantage of their Medicare benefit unless they do it with intercept billing. Then Medicare

changed their policy because they realized that the ALS provider was not transporting. Now only the Transporting agency can only submit the bill to Medicare. If this goes away then the Fly car program will go away. If this becomes an issue then the patient will have to be transported from one ambulance to another. This doesn't impact Downstate as much as it will Upstate.

Steuben County:

The group recognized Tina Goodwin as the Steuben County Employee of the Month. Again Everett thanked Nan for hosting this month and next month's meeting. The Sheriff's Department will be hosting a Friends and Families program in March for Members and Families.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:22

Next Meeting
Wednesday March 3, 2010 @ 9:30 A.M.
Steuben County Office Building
Conference Room F-1
Hosted by RSVP