

Community health depends on community voices

**North Port CHAT Meeting Summary
February 9, 2011**

Present: David Carter, Sam George, Patricia Sheerer, Anne Marie Lupien, David Verinder, Sherry Berry, Susan Owens, Vince Guiffre, Lorna DeRiggs, David Garofalo, Terry Lewis, Kevin Vespia, Don VandeKrol, Barbara Gross, Fay Williams, Rosemarie Sulzbach, Linda Jericka, Monica Becket, Tom Jones, Brenda Szych, Hilary Woodcum, Tom Davie, Mary McDonald, Linda Stone, Ken Alexander, Diane Ramseyer

Welcome and Introductions – Chair, David Carter, welcomed everyone and introductions were provided. Interim City Manager, Terry Lewis, spoke a few words of introduction for the new City Police Chief (as of February 28th), Kevin Vespia.

SMH Plans for North Port – David Verinder was introduced by David Carter. Mr. Verinder is the COO of Sarasota Memorial Healthcare System. He shared information on the challenges the hospital system is facing integrating healthcare reform. This includes creating electronic medical records which “talk to each other”. Most of the physicians still do not use electronic medical records at this point, but, efforts to change this are active and ongoing.

Additionally, they are constructing the “Towers” to replace an aged out hospital area in the Sarasota Main Campus. This is a major project and a large focus for them at this time. However, the services in North Port continue to grow and strive to meet the need. A new double boarded physician (Internal Medicine and Pediatrics) – Dr. Cefalu and an Dr. Hoertz, an OB-GYN have moved in to the condos at on the second floor of Emergency Room Building. They are both staff of SMH.

Mr. Verinder addressed the question of a hospital in North Port, by affirming that the land at the area of Sumter and 75 is still on board for a hospital in the future. He also said that they have made it clear they are open to exploring collaborations with UF and Jackson Laboratories for their project – and North Port is a possibility. However, there are still many other issues to be dealt with – funding (state) and whether or not UF chooses alignment with Hillsborough County or Sarasota County.

He was also asked if there was any talk of a rehabilitation treatment center in the North Port area. He said he would take note of this, but it has not come up in for discussions to this point.

Sam asked if there might be any interest in the SMH Board taking a bus tour of North Port, since many are not from this area.

Updates:

World Wellness and EcoFest – Barbara Gross shared an update on the non-profits who have requested a free table at the event. There is still some availability for additional tables – let Diane know and she will forward to Barbara. Barbara will be sending out the paperwork for those who will

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be having a table soon. The event is free – but, there will be a \$5 parking fee. Use of the Springs will be complementary on those days - March 19-20th.

North Port Coalition for Homeless Students – The group has given out more than 600 backpacks. They are working directly with Schoolhouse Link to get the backpacks out. The school nurse is also keeping stock of clothing and food to students. They are also being connected to the Early Bird Kiwanis’ “Clothes Closet”. Sam indicated he has been told that there is a need for graduation cap and gowns.

Diane and Monica also shared some comments from Forum held in Sarasota on Saturday by the Suncoast Partnership on Homelessness. It was to start their process of developing a 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. They noted it is important for North Port, as well as the southern part of the county in general, to participate in these events to help ensure inclusion in plan, and voice is heard. A focus group will be held by the County’s Housing and Community Development Office on their 5-year housing and homelessness plan on Thursday, February 10th – 5:30 – 7:30 pm at City Hall in North Port. The Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) is a cooperative effort of the city of Sarasota and Sarasota County government and serves residents with affordable housing needs throughout Sarasota County, including the cities of Sarasota, Venice and North Port. The Suncoast Partnership for Homelessness is a non-profit entity, not governmental.

Health Services Committee - Linda Stone, Chair, gave the update. The group welcomed Dr. Cefalu and Dr. Hoertz yesterday, along with Commissioner Jones and Al Lane, Economic Development. They are also working to set a time to give Venice Regional a plaque of appreciation. The group is helping the Knight Owls Kiwanis plan a Health Fair on April 2nd. If you know of any health provider who would like to participate – contact Sam.

Linda thanked everyone who attended the North Port Health Clinic opening on the 2nd. They will be offering OB-GYN shortly. The Sarasota Health Department’s Venice primary care division will be moving to the North Port Clinic. The new building also offers dental services 5 days a week.

Anne Marie shared an update about the North Port Celebrates Healthcare. This is a City-CHAT collaboration to honor the physicians and dentists in our community. The invitations are beginning to be hand-delivered to the physicians and dentists. She is working to find sponsors for the refreshments. If you have any suggestions, please let her know.

In addition to these activities, the group will begin some strategic/action planning in the coming months. They have reviewed their accomplishments and projects which are still in process.

- Create advocacy for increase healthcare access
 - North Port Emergency Room advocacy -DONE
 - Advocacy for Pediatricians - DONE
 - Welcoming Healthcare, supporting expansion - CONTINUING
 - Discussions with developers on Medical Condos - DONE

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- Community Education on Special topics
 - H1N1 in past
- Advocacy for Dental Health Services – Dental Sealant Project – ON-GOING
- Updated Health and Human Services Directory – ON-GOING

April 16th – Healthy Start Baby Shower in North Port – this will be the first one in North Port – another is held annually in Sarasota. This is an opportunity for service providers to share information, along with door prizes.

The group also hopes to learn more about Dr. Gross's Epiphany Insurance Program.

NP-ASAP – NP D-Fy (Drug-Free Youth) continues to grow. There are 88 formal members, with about 50 applications to move through the process. More businesses are joining as partners. Another screening event will be Friday. The first event for members-only will be on February 19th at Treasure Lanes. Keep aware of the fact that we would also like to offer opportunities for internships for members, too.

On February 26th, members of NP D-Fy and SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) will be doing a community scan – looking at how tobacco and alcohol advertising is displayed in the community. This is part of a grant from the state, and will provide some funds for additional D-Fy resources and supplies.

March 5th – Prescription Drug Take-Back Day at Police Department 10-1 pm.

They are looking for additional membership for NP-ASAP (Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention).

Monday at 1:00 pm, the City will be issuing a proclamation in support of the SafeRx Campaign for Responsible Prescriptions. CHAT members are asked to come and accept the proclamation. Tom Jones expressed the Commission's commitment to helping where it can, address this growing issue in our community and surrounding areas.

SCOSA's Shining Star Banquet will be on March 24th. Local student, NP D-Fy member and SWAT Member, Kris-An Hinds will be honored.

Prescription Drug Data base – Tom Davie shared that the Prescription Drug Monitoring Database is in jeopardy as a result of the governor's proposed budget and statement that it is not a role for government. The suggestion was made that community members share their opinion on this with the governor's office. It was the outcry from community member in the past 2-3 years that finally passed the legislation after other failed efforts. The Office of Drug Control, which secured the funding for the project, along with a significant amount of grant funding for other drug prevention services, was absolved by the governor as of the beginning of January.

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Dates to Remember

February 19th – 5-7pm – NP D-Fy event at Treasure Lanes

February 26th – NP D-Fy Community Service Project

March 1st – 6:30 pm – NP-ASAP/NP D-Fy meeting - North Port Family Services

March 3rd - 4:00 pm – Health Services Committee – North Port Family Services

March 5th – Rx Take-Back Event at Police Dept.

March 9th - 4:30 pm - Next CHAT– North Port Police Department

March 19-20 – World Wellness Ecofest – Warm Mineral Springs (CHAT Table)

March 30 – North Port Celebrates Healthcare - Reception to honor our Physicians and Dentists.

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