



**HILLSDALE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK**  
20 Care Drive  
Hillsdale, MI 49242  
(517)437-7395 x-106

**Sarah Hartzler, Chair**  
**Tim Kelly, Vice Chair**

**Minutes of Human Services Network**  
**February 17, 2009**

**Attending:**

Terry Vear – Hillsdale Co. Senior Services Ctr.  
Ginny Wood Bailey - Region 2 Area Agency on Aging  
Lesia Pikaart – MI Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative  
Jane Munson – Key Opportunities  
Heather Helman – Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition  
Laura Nye – DHS  
John Robertson – Community Health Agency  
Lucy Booth – Hospice of Hillsdale Co.  
Pastor Julie Carey – Ministerial Association  
Bud Vear – Hillsdale Community Theater  
Sharon Bisher – Hillsdale Co. Community Foundation  
Dave Braxmaier – Hillsdale Co. Sheriff Dept.  
Kellie Schiller – LifeWays

Steve Todd – Community Health Agency  
Ginelle Skinner – Great Start Collaborative  
Amy Chamberlain – Salvation Army  
Lt. Chris Clarke – Salvation Army  
Karen Lewthwaite – Legal Services of So. Central MI  
Michael Derby – Legal Services of S. Central MI  
Kelly Schiller – LifeWays  
Tim Kelly – DHS  
Laura Nye – DHS  
Dave Wallin – Consumer/Veteran  
Sharon Roberts – Early On/ISD  
Joanne Sheldon – LifeWays  
Mark Williams – MSU Extension  
Laurie Brandes - HSN

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

The HSN met at the Senior Services Center on February 17, 2009. Tim Kelly, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:32am. Welcome was extended, and introductions were made.

**II. Approve Agenda**

A motion was made by Terry Vear, seconded by Julie Carey, to accept the agenda as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

**III. Approve Minutes of the January 20, 2009, Meeting**

A motion was made by Terry Vear, seconded by Karen Lewthwaite, to accept the minutes of the January 20, 2009, meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.**

**IV. Agency Spotlight – Hillsdale County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition – Heather Helman**

Heather distributed copies of "Prevention Focus", a newsletter detailing the activities of the SAPC in the past year. The SAPC currently has 16 partnering agencies and many individual community member partners. Funding for 2008 was \$101,690; funding for 2009 will be \$116,587. SAPC is applying for a Drug-Free Communities Grant (federal) in the amount of \$625,000.

At this time, SAPC is participating in a 2-1-1 Prevention Resource Scan, where local agencies are surveyed to determine what prevention resources they provide to the county. United Way has provided an \$800 in-kind grant to assist with marketing of the scan. The scan should be completed this month.

SAPC, in the past year, has held a Town Hall Meeting focusing on underage drinking; they will hold on-site meth education with county retailers; and RUADD (Reduce Under-Age Drinking and Driving) is being offered to 10<sup>th</sup> graders in Hillsdale County.

**V. Project Connect 2009 – Laurie Brandes**

Because of technical difficulties, the prepared PowerPoint was shared verbally. The event was held on January 28, 2009, from 2:00pm – 6:00pm at Luther Hall at Trinity Lutheran Church. If anyone would like a copy of the PowerPoint, please contact Laurie Brandes [brandesl@bhsj.org](mailto:brandesl@bhsj.org).

**VI. Children's Rights Lawsuit Settlement – Tim Kelly, DHS**

For the past couple years, the Department of Human Services (DHS) has been involved in a lawsuit to change Children's Services. The lawsuit was generated by Children's Rights Organization, a group who tries to reform systems through lawsuits. They have sued in 13 different states and the District of Columbia. The settlement was reached in October, 2008, which will cost the State of Michigan \$50million/year for five years

(only a 6% increase over the current budget). It will mean 278 new DHS workers in the state.

Reorganization has happened at the state level; there will be new training requirements for workers; all management-level positions require a master's degree.

One of the key changes has been to increase capacity of licensing relatives and non-relatives for foster care. All relative foster homes must become licensed with 90 days of placement (a 60-day extension may be requested). This includes a background check, a home inspection; the benefit is that the family will receive payments (\$398/child minimum) to be a licensed foster care home.

In the area of adoption, there has to be timelines and increased efforts to achieve permanency. In Hillsdale County, 44 children have been in care for more than 200 days. Efforts will be increased to remove barriers to reunify the children with parents, or moving more quickly to termination of parental rights, or intensifying services. Staffing has been increased to meet these needs.

The lawsuit also is changing caseload standards for foster care workers, POS (Purchase of Service) monitoring workers, adoption workers, CPS investigation workers, ongoing CPS workers, and foster care licensing workers.

At the current time, there are 14 licensed foster care homes in Hillsdale County, with three pending. Tim made a plea for people to consider being licensed to be a foster care home – there is a real need in Hillsdale County!

Several members had questions for Tim about these changes.

## VII. Agency Announcements

- **Jane Munson of Key Opportunities** presented a list of transportation grant renewals that will be submitted to MDOT this month:
  - General funds for operating assistance and two replacement vans – basic system that supplies routes throughout Hillsdale County. Open to public for a fare and as long as there is room on the vehicle.
  - JARC (Job Access) funds to transport to work and/or supply gas vouchers for same.
  - New Freedom funds for target populations including disabled, low income, seniors. Requires local match.
- **Dave Braxmaier of the Sheriff Department** announced that the Chili Cook-Off will be held on February 28, 2009, at Hillsdale High School.
- **Dave Wallin** introduced Chopper Ferguson who spoke about a dinner being held on February 17 at the McCall Center to talk about bringing disabled veterans to Hillsdale County to live in the 650 vacant homes in the city limits.
- **Dave Wallin** spoke about the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. There is scholarship money available – it's too late for this year, but suggests that students participate next year. There also is an Eagle Scout scholarship available, and funding available for Boys State and Girls State programs.
- **Laura Nye of DHS/Drug Court** announced that CTAC (Child Trauma Assessment Center) will be holding an informational meeting, geared toward social service workers, educators, lawyers, foster parents and parents on Tuesday, Feb. 24, from 8:30am – 4:15pm at the Dow Center at Hillsdale College. Contact Donna McLain at [d.mclain@co.hillsdale.mi.us](mailto:d.mclain@co.hillsdale.mi.us) or 437-4446 to register (flyer attached to email).
- **Sharon Roberts of Early On** announced that Great Parents Great Start is conducting a media campaign aimed at parents – tray liners for fast food restaurants containing parenting information, and radio spots.
- **Cindy Rowe of CAA** announced that the VITA program (assistance with tax preparation) is in full swing – people can call CAA for an appointment. Also, CAA and McDonald's of Hillsdale and Jonesville are conducting the "Heat A Home" campaign – all money raised stays in Hillsdale County to help people pay their utility bills.
- **Karen Lewthwaite of Legal Services** shared information she learned at a training about predatory lending and foreclosures. Legal Services will be working with CAA to assist families with threats of foreclosure.
- **Sharon Bisher of Hillsdale County Community Foundation** announced that the deadline for scholarship applications is March 1<sup>st</sup>. Also, the HCCF is teaming with Barrett Insurance to sponsor a free seminar about adequate insurance coverage for non-profits on March 11, from 9am – 10:30am at the Hillsdale County ISD (flyer attached to email).
- **Terry Vear of Senior Services Center** announced the Women's Breakfast is Wednesday, Feb. 18; a blood drive will be held on Feb. 17 at the Senior Center; the Super Spa fundraiser will be March 8 from 12 noon to 5:00pm – Terry has raffle tickets available.

- **Laurie Brandes of HSN** announced that Hillsdale Community Library is hosting the Hillsdale County Big Read, sponsored by funding from the Hillsdale County Community Foundation and MI Center for the Book. The kick-off event is February 28, from 10am – noon at the library – free copies of “The Glass Castle” will be available to the first 100 people who donate a non-perishable food item. A speaker from Ruby Payne’s aha! Process group will be presenting at a community meeting on Wednesday, March 18, at 7pm, and efforts are being made to also have the speaker offer a session that morning for social service providers and educators (see flyers attached to email). Please see the library’s website for more details on the Big Read [www.hillsdale-library.org](http://www.hillsdale-library.org).

### **XIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.

The next meeting of the HSN will be March 17, 2009, at the ISD, 310 W. Bacon Street, at 8:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brandes, HSN Coordinator