

FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
November 30, 2011
Potomac Building, Room #14
5:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

Council in Attendance: Dr. Kathy O'Brien, Judge Karen Abrams, Krisanne Bentley, Sheriff Tim Cameron, Kimberly Gregory, John Helldorfer, Kathy Lacer, Bob Reeza, Ella May Russell, Elizabeth Schaffer

Other attendees: Ashley Croyle, Buffy Giddens, Iris Shedrick for Laura Joyce

A significant number of individuals from the community also attended.

Absent: Bella Wright, Judge Christy Chesser, Rona Harding, Lanny Lancaster, Nancy Luginbill, Sue Sabo, Judge Greg Wells, Heather Bauer, Sarah Ruest

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Dr. O'Brien at 5:02 p.m.

SART report: the Forensic Pediatric Nurse program has been completed.

Child Advocacy report: There was a 50% increase in sexual abuse cases and a decrease in physical abuse cases in November. The move to the new building will take place on Dec. 18th.

CRT report: Covered 13-15 cases this month. There were a lot of repeat cases and there has been some increase in cases.

It was discussed that training on domestic violence's impact on children will be scheduled for January. The case review will be conducted in February. Sheriff Tim Cameron explained he's awaiting permission to use the treasurer's office space as the co-location for the DV group. The location is ideal in that there will be less exposure to the general public and the Sheriff's Office is in the same building. The FVCC has agreed to send a letter of recommendation for the space to be utilized as the co-location of the DV group. It was also discussed that Sue Sabo, the HR Director, will schedule a presentation of the FVCC with the Board of County Commissioners for the first week in February.

A group discussion was conducted on changes to current domestic violence legislation that the FVCC members would like to see. Judge Abrams proposed legislation that prevents DV from invoking marital privilege not to testify if married after assault but before trial. This allows the victim to not testify against the alleged abuser. Legislation for DV shelters was another suggestion. Bob Reeza would like to see domestic violence defined in legislation. He explained that there is a difference between peace orders and protective orders and it can be confusing. It also creates incorrect statistics. Buffy Giddens suggest broadening the definition of hindering/obstruction (i.e. alleged abuser persuades the witness/victim not to testify). And make it an additional charge. Judge Abrams brought up the point as to why harassment is not included in DV-only in peace order. Bob Reeza suggested that there be a specific charge for domestic violence instead of, for example, 2nd degree assault. Also increase the penalties for repeat offenders.

Dr. Kathy O'Brien brought up the fact that there is no required certification for domestic violence providers. She would like to push for legislation that certification is required to provide domestic violence services. She also pointed out that many of the programs are not properly funded either. Another point that she discussed is that there is an increase of adults coming out about being abused as a child due to the awareness being heightened as a result of the Penn State & Syracuse events. Another suggested legislative change is changing the protective orders to include that "the order is valid until court hearing" because currently it expires on a date which could come before the court date. Bob Reeza suggested that legislation be changed to allow commissioners hearings of the aggressor until the victim can get a protective order. He also explained to the council that they are currently working on re-vamping the computer service in the cop cars which would give the ability to print out un-served orders and serve the defendant during a traffic stop for example. Dr. O'Brien recommended that current legislation be reviewed in order to determine the suggested changes to legislation.

II. Next Meeting / Adjournment

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 25th at 5:00 pm-Potomac Bldg, Room #14

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Submitted by: Kristan Thomas, Recording Secretary