



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 6, 2008

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

Re: Public Meetings Report: Proposed Closure of the Pima Health System Attendant Care Program and Transition of the Services to Contracted Community Agencies

As the Board will recall, staff has recommended the Pima Health System (PHS) Attendant Care Worker Program be closed by transitioning services it currently provides to well qualified private community home health care agencies. A proposed structured and coordinated plan to close the Program has been developed, and if implemented, will be closely monitored to ensure clients and their caregivers are smoothly transitioned and vital continuity of service is maintained.

Transferring clients with their respective Attendant Care Workers will provide community agencies with the caregivers needed to service the additional clients, and therefore provide incentive to these agencies to accept even the most complex cases.

As directed by the Board at its December 18, 2007 meeting, PHS staff organized three public meetings. The meetings were held over a span of three months and designed to receive input from PHS Attendant Care Program clients, family members, Attendant Care Workers, and other interested members of the public regarding the proposal to close the PHS Attendant Care Worker Program. The proposal and plan were described in my November 27, 2007 memorandum to the Board (copy attached). The public meetings were conducted as follows:

1. Friday, January 25, 2008, 10:30 a.m. at the Herbert K. Abrams Public Health Center, 139 South Country Club.
2. Saturday, February 9, 2008, 10:30 a.m. at the El Rio Neighborhood Center, 1390 West Speedway.
3. Wednesday, March 5, 2008, 6:30 p.m. at TMC Senior Services at Avalon Skilled Nursing (formerly El Dorado Hospital), 1400 North Wilmot Road.

Also, as directed by the Board:

- Each client receiving Attendant Care services and each individual Attendant Care Worker was provided direct verbal notice of the proposed transition of the program.

- Contract language has been drafted and reviewed by the Pima County Attorney's Office assuring that agencies provide continuity of care by continuing the established matching of clients and Attendant Care Workers.

Should the Board decide to approve the proposal, staff will increase quality assurance activities to ensure continuity and high quality services are provided by contracted community provider agencies.

In addition to the public meetings, staff has provided ample opportunity for input, including individual surveys and dedicated email and phone access for comments. This input is included in the Attendant Care Program Transition Proposal Report, which is provided for your review.

Board of Health

The Pima County Board of Health considered the issue at its April 16, 2008 meeting including information contained in a document entitled "Quality of Life and Care Attendant Care Workers Transition Plan Statement and Proposals." The document is contained in Appendix C of the report.

Staff's presentation to the Board of Health included the transition proposal, the process PHS staff followed as they sought to elicit public input during the period the public meetings were conducted, and the proposed implementation plan should staff's recommendation be accepted by the Board. Comments opposing the measure were made to the Board by a representative from Chairman Richard Elias' office and a representative from the Pima County Interfaith Council. Following discussion of the proposal and comments received, the Board of Health voted to recommend to the Board of Supervisors closure of the Attendant Care Worker Program and transition of the services to contracted community agencies.

Proposal Considerations

On December 1, 2007, PHS's Attendant Care Program included 557 Attendant Care Worker/client matches. Since that time 197 caregiver/client matches, or 35 percent, have voluntarily transitioned to private agencies. Follow-up calls by staff to those who transferred indicate that 95 percent are satisfied and had no issues with the transfer; the other 5 percent had issues that were successfully addressed by the contracted agency. A total of 360 caregiver/client matches remain with PHS.

Staff has noted that contracted community agencies are offering options for Attendant Care Workers which include the following:

- Consumer-directed models of care, which provide the client more control and choice regarding service delivery
- \$500 sign-on bonus for Attendant Care Workers

- \$11/hour wages (PHS Attendant Care Workers currently earn \$9.60 per hour)
- “Match any competitor’s wage”
- Paid time off
- Benefit options including health, dental, and vision
- 401K Retirement Plan
- Mileage reimbursement
- Bilingual office staff
- Back-up caregivers
- On-call support 24/7
- Maintaining the same work schedule
- In-home orientation

If Pima County were to offer similar wage and benefit options for its Attendant Care Workers, the overall cost impact to the County would be \$5.0 million. Cost analyses have been completed for two options:

1. Transitioning the program to contracted community agencies.
By transitioning the Attendant Care Workers to contracted community agencies, a projected savings of \$1.2 million would be realized. This savings would be achieved primarily by reassignment of the nurses and other permanent Pima County staff from the program into open positions within Pima Health System that are required by AHCCCS and are key to the long-term viability of the Plan.
2. Retaining the program with added benefits and an increased wage.
Retaining the Pima Health System Attendant Care Program with added wages and benefits for Attendant Care Workers would result in a projected additional expense of \$5.0 million.

As required, the transition proposal has been submitted to AHCCCS Administration and has their approval for implementation pending Board of Supervisors’ direction. Attached for your review is the original transition proposal under cover memorandum of November 27, 2007, and a follow-up report with my memorandum dated February 19, 2008.

A letter requesting AHCCCS approval for a Fiscal Year 2006/07 equity transfer from the Acute Plan of \$1,053,088 to fund the Community Services System has been submitted and approved. This fund transfer eliminates the Community Services System fund deficit.

After funding the Community Services System for Fiscal Year 2007/08 (approximately \$900,000), the projected amount available to transfer to the General Fund is \$3.4 million. This request can be made to AHCCCS after the final audit, usually in November or December.

PHS is now responding to the AHCCCS Acute Care Plan bid process. Plans awarded AHCCCS Acute Care contracts will span the next five years. Because of the competitiveness of this

process and current market conditions, it is possible funds to support an equity transfer next year may not materialize. More information associated with a future potential transfer should be available reasonably soon.

Please find attached a staff report in notebook format describing the proposal, public input received during and proximate the public hearings, cost analysis, and other information the Board may find informative and helpful.

CHH/jj

Attachments

cc: Dennis Douglas, Deputy County Administrator, Medical and Health Services
Karen Fields, Director, Pima Health System