

ASPA Luncheon

Friday, February 1, 2008
12:00 Noon

Auditorium of the State Office Building
(north of the State Capitol Building)

Representative David Clark

House Majority Leader

John T. Nielson

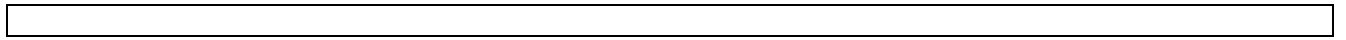
Governor's Advisor on Health Reform Issues

You are invited to come and learn about the status of health care reform legislation and what it would mean regarding health care changes in the state.

Please make your reservations early. The luncheon will be catered. Reservations or cancellations must be received no later than Tuesday, January 29th. No shows will be billed. Limited parking is available—please carpool or ride public transportation where possible

The cost of the luncheon is \$12.00 for ASPA members, \$15.00 for nonmembers and \$6.00 for students. Cash or checks accepted.

Please call the Center for Public Policy and Administration, University of Utah, at 581-6493 or e-mail jrandall@cpga.utah.edu for reservations.



ANNUAL ASPA LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW

By Tricia Jack

Center for Public Policy & Administration, University of Utah

NOTE: A few paragraphs in the BUZZ can never capture all of the knowledge and wisdom that is dispensed by our luncheon speakers. Members and colleagues are encouraged to attend these activities to receive the full benefit available to participants.

Four delegates from the Utah Legislature attended January's ASPA luncheon:

- Senator Patricia Jones (D), District 4
- Senator Howard Stephenson (R), District 11
- Representative Carol Spackman Moss (D), District 37
- Representative John Dougall (R), District 27

Each of the panelists took time to explain some of the issues they expect to be addressing in this year's session. They promised us an interesting and important year, with factors of education, health care and economy being key areas to watch.

Senator Patricia Jones started by encouraging all to become involved politically. She listed some issues she felt would be important:

- *Health System Reform.* Senator Jones praised the Financial Stability Council for the plan they have put together, calling it a "wonderful model."
- *Immigration.* This has had a lot of attention at the federal level but must now be addressed in the states.
- *Air Quality.* Senator Jones called this a "sleeper issue" but is becoming increasingly important.
- *Substance Abuse.* Legislators are interested in this and can fund drug and family courts that have been proven to address so much of this crime.

Senator Jones is sponsoring several bills this year including:

- SB 61 (Financial Literacy Education) which creates a passport for K-12 that covers how to handle credit, bankruptcy, how to save, how to buy a house, etc. This bill includes a fiscal note to teach teachers how to teach and assess financial education.
- SB 44 (Penalties for Failing to Secure a Load or Littering on a Highway) which increases the fine for failure to secure a load.
- SB 140 (Education Advisory Council) which intends to help municipalities and counties become involved in education.

Senator Howard Stephenson spoke about two areas he thinks will be important in this year's session:

- *Tax Reform.* Home values have escalated rapidly and some people were hit hard. He explained that while we do need some tax cuts, these must be designed well enough to stimulate the economy.
- *Education, especially teacher pay.* Senator Stephenson is sponsoring SB 35 (Differentiated Pay for Teachers), which allows math and science teachers to get more than the regular pay

schedule. He is also sponsoring SB 39 which would create a Math and Science Education Task Force to tackle some of the issues in this area.

Representative Carol Spackman Moss's background in education was reflected in her areas of concern:

- *Class Size Reduction.* Representative Moss is sponsoring a bill in this area. She explained that English writing skills are getting worse all the time and she is appalled at the quality coming out of professional offices. The huge class sizes now inhibit the ability of some students to learn and changes the way that teachers teach.
- *International Baccalaureate.* Representative Moss is sponsoring HB 266 to help pay for a program for the International Baccalaureate. Schools with IB and AP are always in the top ranking. The State currently gives money to Advanced Placement programs but not for the International Baccalaureate. This rigorous program gives students one year of college credit and includes service learning opportunities.
- *Bullying and hazing.* Representative Moss is sponsoring HB 325 (Bullying and Hazing) that would require school districts to have specific policies to prohibit bullying and hazing.

Representative John Dougall felt that the big issues this year are just what we would expect – public education, transportation, healthcare, and tax:

- *Tax and Revenues.* Representative Dougall indicated that everyone is watching the economy and we are starting to see a slowing of the growth. He is sponsoring several bills related to taxation including HB 52, HB 58, HB77 and HB 251.
- *Transportation.* In Utah county and Washington counties, transportation is a huge problem, and will create a huge expense over the next 20 years, probably around \$20-\$30 billion.
- Representative Dougall is also sponsoring HB 309 (Election Information Amendments) which affects voter information.

All of the panelists were informative and interesting and we wish to thank them for giving up their time right before session to come and talk to us!

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Tentative Schedule of ASPA Luncheon Topics for 2008

March 7	Legislative Follow-up
April 4	Transportation
May 2	ASPA Awards/Public Service Recognition Week

COUNCIL CORNER

Pauline Zvonkovic
Adjunct Professor, University of Utah
ASPA Council Member

Perception vs. Reality – Utah’s 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness

Recently I had the chance to discuss with a group of graduate and senior students of the University of Utah the plans for a 200+ unit housing complex which will be home to chronically homeless families and individuals. One student questioned the logic of placing so many poor residents into a single project. He surmised that “it will simply become a slum.” His reaction surprised me. I thought he would have known how much has been learned from past public policy and that community leaders would never allow a project such as this to go forward if it would be doomed to such a fate.

But then I realized how little most residents really know about the work being done to address the problem of homelessness in Utah and how the nation as a whole has begun to address the problem of homelessness. Despite all the articles written about new strategies and programs many people remain unaware of the changes taking place since the federal government began to push for an end to chronic homelessness. I thought I would give BUZZ readers a quick update on what has been accomplished to date nationally and in Utah. Although there is a long way to go, there is much to be celebrated.

Congress enacted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77) in 1987. Under provisions of the act the federal government has provided over \$5.1 billion dollars in aid to address homelessness between 1987 and 1994. It was not lost on the Congress that despite the enormous investment, the number of homeless persons in the U.S. was increasing. Pressure to address the problem grew and a number of programmatic changes were enacted, including the creation of the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The CoC program requires communities to develop a comprehensive, locally driven approach to address homelessness. Although successful in Utah, many communities throughout the country struggled with the program’s requirements. Generally funds continued to be granted to support existing shelter and service delivery systems. Criticism remained because the numbers of homeless persons continued to increase and nationally we were managing homelessness, not ending it.

Then in 2002 the Bush Administration revived the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). The goal of the USICH was to bring a full spectrum of federal agencies together to create a coordinated response to homelessness and in particular, chronic homelessness.

A "chronically homeless" person is defined as an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Not only was the USICH to bring federal agencies to the table, it also aimed to promote a new way of addressing homelessness by encouraging state and locally elected leaders to develop state 10-Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness and become involved in ending homelessness. The main tool used to achieve this was the development of permanent supportive housing projects. Such projects would separate housing from supportive services enabling a chronically homeless person to be given safe and secure housing up-front. Once housed, the individual would be offered an array of services to address issues of substance abuse, mental and physical health and other conditions leading to their incapacity.

This approach had been developed by Sam Tsemberis in New York as the "Pathways to Housing" program. The benefits of the approach were documented by Dr. Dennis Culhane.

Dr. Culhane found that housing chronically homeless people and then providing supportive services actually costs the service system about the same amount as providing services to persons living on the streets. Street homeless use emergency rooms, are often repeatedly jailed for minor offences and use other emergency resources far more often than persons who are housed and provided case management. The initiative became known as the "Housing First" program. The USICH began to heavily promote changing the paradigm of homeless service delivery systems and Housing First has shown dramatic results.

Using the Housing First approach Portland has experienced a drop in overall homelessness from 5,103 in 2005 to 4,456 in 2007 (13% decrease). Westchester County has had family homelessness decrease 57%, from 690 in 2002 to 297 in 2006. Homelessness in Denver decreased 13 % from 4,444 in 2005 to 3,954 in 2007 and chronic Homelessness decreased 36 percent from 942 in 2005 to 602 in 2007.

Locally, the State of Utah stepped up to the plate and, thanks to then Governor Olene Walker, agreed to change the makeup of the State's Homeless Coordinating Council to better coordinate resources. The Council was revised to bring together state agency administrators, local service providers and other key decision makers. The goal was to mirror the USICH's Council with agency heads who have the power to influence policy and direct staff. Once established, the Council began meeting to assess what their agencies could provide to eliminate homelessness in Utah.

After Governor Huntsman took office he endorsed the work of the Council and named Lt. Governor Gary Herbert as chair. Utah's Division of Housing and Community Development provides staff to the Council. Over the last three years the Council has accomplished a great deal. Utah has adopted its own 10-year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. Throughout the State, local homeless coordinating councils chaired by locally elected officials have been established and each is developing their own 10-Year Plan. Additionally, committees have been formed to look at the existing homeless service system by areas of interest. These include mental health and substance abuse services, discharge planning to look at persons being released from institutions, housing, and workforce services.

But beyond plans, actions have been taken that have shown remarkable results. Over two years ago, four homeless service agencies started a Housing First pilot project involving 17 chronically homeless persons. The project was modeled after New York's Pathways Project. The Road Home (Salt Lake City's main homeless shelter) has reported the following results.

Prior to the inception of the project, The Road Home provided 11,237 nights (30.79 years, an average of 2.2 years per person) of shelter to 14 of the project participants, going back to 1998. Three of the participants had never stayed at The Road Home, living on the streets, in Detox, and in motels. Once housed, residents were offered an array of services to address their many chronic conditions: alcohol and substance abuse, medical care, counseling and obtaining benefits from SSA or other assistance programs.

Over the first two years of the project The Road Home has provided shelter to 121 individuals in the beds that would have been used by 14 of the Pathways participants, based on average use for this group of individuals. Other agencies show a great shift in their available resources as well. Previous to the project 12 of the participants used 250 months (20.83 years) of General Assistance benefits at a rate of \$261.00 per month. During the project, 9 of the 17 participants obtained Social Security disability benefits; two participants were already receiving Social Security benefits and three additional participants are in the process of applying for Social Security benefits. During the project, 7 of the 17 participants were approved for Medicaid and three for Primary Care Network benefits.

Other successes include the development of a series of new housing projects specifically to house chronically homeless persons. The Housing Authority completed the 100 unit Sunrise Metro Housing Complex in 2007 and to date over 86 % of the residents who entered the project remained housed (10 moved, 3 passed away). The project has 24/7 on-site management and to date the residents are overwhelming happy with their apartments.

In February, another 84 units of housing will be completed. The Grace Mary Manor housing project located in South Salt Lake will house chronically homeless individuals with 24/7 on-site management. Both of these projects incorporate a range of on-site supportive services for residents. Case managers have seen dramatic reductions in alcohol use by resident clients and their willingness to take part in program services continued to increase.

On the horizon are two additional projects which will see an additional 250+ units of housing come on line within the next two years. Thus, over 450 units of housing will have been developed since the adoption of the State Plan in Salt Lake County. In rural areas, pilot projects are underway which will increase the ability of homeless persons to access local resources to meet their needs allowing them to remain in their communities instead of relocating to larger urban areas for services.

This, then, brings us back to the initial question: Are we creating more slums with this approach to homelessness by concentrating persons in poverty into one location. My answer is “no” for the following reasons:

First, in the past, high density, low-income housing complexes were placed in areas where residents had little or no access to services. Such projects were not designed to integrate residents into neighborhoods, nor were they constructed to enhance a neighborhood with buildings that were architecturally beautiful or with amenities for residents to use. This is not the case with the projects created to address the State’s 10-Year Plan. All of the projects are designed to enhance the community and offer residents a home they can be proud of.

Second, the projects are planned, owned and operated by local agencies that care deeply about their residents and their community. These agencies are morally committed to seeing that homeless individuals and families are given safe, secure housing with the full intention of having their clients permanently leave homelessness. Such commitment was never evident in the housing projects built under urban renewal.

Third, the funding for projects such as Robert Taylor Homes and others had no real conditions placed on expenditures used for construction that would guarantee residents safe, secure, housing appropriate to their needs. Today, affordable housing projects are costly and require sponsoring agencies to find financing from multiple funding agencies. Each funder requires extensive reporting requirements. Project sponsors can ill afford to fail with so many funders looking at their programs and projects. One failure could limit support for new projects being approved—hurting the very population they are committed to serving.

Finally, the projects will not fail because the clients and managers will not let them fail. There is a severe lack of affordable housing in Utah, especially along the Wasatch Front. These new apartments are a precious resource and until there is an adequate supply of housing affordable to people of all income levels throughout Utah, projects such as these will be constructed and well cared for by their sponsors. After all, these homes represent so much for so many that have so little.

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