AMERICAN SAMOA HEALTH PLANNING NEWS

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ASHPDA receives grant awards

ASHPDA Director Charles McCuddin has received a notice of two grant awards for the American Samoa Health Planning Agency for 1981-82, from US DHHS Region IX office in San Francisco. The two grants are the HSA grant of $122,500 and the SHPDA grant of $161,020.

The US DHHS has awarded a total of $283,520 to the Agency to continue the full range of health planning and development functions prescribed by the federal and local law.

Because of uncertainty of future funding for the Agency after 1983, the ASHPDA will concentrate primarily on those functions and activities aimed directly at the improvement in the efficiency of the Territory's health system, and health status of the population. The Agency staff are presently revising the Annual Implementation Plan which will address only top priority recommendations for the improvement of the Territory's health system to deliver quality services appropriate, acceptable, and accessible at reasonable cost to the people of American Samoa.

maua tupe mo ASHPDA

Na maua e Charles McCuddin, le faatonu sili o le ASHPDA, se faaaliga mai le Malo Tele, e faapea ua pasia vaega tupe se lua mo le ASHPDA a Amerika Samoa mo le 1981-82. O le aofa'i o le tasi vaega tupe e $122,500 a'o le isi e $161,020.

O le aofa'i o ia vaega tupe e lua e $283,520 ua tu'uina mai e le Malo Tele e faaauau ai feau ma galuega tau fuafuaga mo le soifua maloloina e pei ona taua e le tulafono.

Talu ai ona o le lē mautinoa lelei le tulaga o tupe mo lenei porokalama pe'ā uma le 1983, ua fuafuaina e le ASHPDA e faia na'o galuega sili ona mana'omia mo le fa'aleleia o galuega a le Matāgaluega Soifua Mālōlōina auā le soifua manuia o le atunu'u. O lo'o galulue nei le ASHPDA e fa'atinoina na'o ni fautuaga mo le fa'aleleia o le Matagaluega ina ia latou mafai ona faia tautua lelei, taualoaina, tatau ma le talafeagai ai ma se tau mo tagata o Amerika Samoa.

1981 american samoa annual implementation plan

American Samoa's Health Action Plan for 1981-82 is now available.

The Health Action Plan is the Territorial Annual Implementation Plan which provides the basis for the ASHPDA to perform the agency's mandated functions under P.L. 93-641.

The TAIP, based on the American Samoa Plan for Health, contains objectives and recommendations emanating from the Plan health goal areas. Those goal areas include health system organization & management, health Planning, financial self-sufficiency, and cost containment.

The TAIP objectives and recommendations were selected because they were the ones most likely to improve the health of the Territory's residents and the health care delivery system. Other important considerations were (1) the short-range economic and political feasibility of implementation (2) the cost in relation to the health benefits to the community and (3) the unique needs of the Territory.

Because of limited resources of the Territorial health planning program, the 1981-82 TAIP addresses only five objectives of high priority areas. In order of priority, with the highest priority first, the 1981-82 TAIP objectives are:

(1) Territorial Health Planning

Although the Plan for Health contains no goals or objectives related to the health planning function, the TAIP considers this objective highest priority. Recent events at the national level have placed the future of this essential function in grave jeopardy. The existing Territorial Health Planning program is entirely federally funded. President Reagan's administration is proposing to phase out this program by the end of FY 1982.

Because the health planning function is deemed an essential health enabling service in the Territory, the following goals and objectives have been included in the 1981-82 TAIP at the highest level of priority for immediate attention:

Goal: To ensure the availability of a health planning program best suited to the special needs of the Territory.

Objectives: (a) By January 1, 1982, the Executive Branch of the American Samoa Government will include an organizational element responsible for carrying out territorial health planning under local auspices and the final ASG budget proposal for FY 1983 will include an appropriation sufficient to finance the health planning program. (b) Chapter 32, Title 21 Revised Code of American Samoa will be amended to provide authority for a revised health planning program designed specifically to meet the needs of the Territory, by February 1982.

(2) Off-island Medical Care Costs

Goal: Patients will be referred to institutions outside the Territory for diagnostic, treatment or rehabilitation services only when a panel of medi-

cal doctors, selected by their peers for that purpose, determines, based on accepted criteria, that such necessary care is not available within the Territory, except in extraordinary circumstances.

Objectives: By November 1, 1981, the Director of Health will have adopted a plan of action for reducing the annual rate of increase in total off-island medical care costs.

(3) Institutional Health Planning

Goal: Management capabilities and methods at the system, subsystems, and program levels should be such as to assure efficient and effective administration of the Department, and delivery of services.

Objective: By July 1, 1982, the Department of Health will have adopted a five year institutional plan to become effective as of October 1, 1982.

(4) New Health System Financing Plan

Goal: The increasing costs of developing, maintaining, and operating the Territorial Health System should be financed in part through increased health care revenues.

Objective: By Septemper 1, 1981 the Governor will have approved a new health system financing plan for American Samoa and will have appointed a committee to pursue implementation of the plan.

(5) Health Care Financing Information System

Goal: The increasing costs of developing, maintaining, and operating the Territorial health system should be contained through the prevention of unnecessary services and facilities, and by the most appropriate use of limited resources.

Objective: A financial data system similar to that required by the federal annual hospital reports will be developed and operationalized by the LBJ Tropical Medical Center, by October 1, 1982.

health care financing need study report available

A complete report of the study on health care financing needs of American Samoa is now available at the ASHPDA's office.

A three-month study was conducted by the San Francisco consulting Firm of Siegel & Associates, under the sponsorship of American Samoa Health Planning & Development Agency.

The report has provided pertinent information not previously available on the health financing needs of the Territory. American Samoa Government key decision-makers in the Governor's Office, Office of Planning & Budget, Department of Health, and the Fone have discussed the report in several meetings with ASHPDA Director Charles McCuddin and Consultant Gerald Siegel.

American Samoa Government health care costs have increased about 90% over the last eight years, the study revealed. The total cost increases would have been greater if funds had been spent or set aside for full maintenance of LBJ's plant and equipment.

The study indicated that cost increases were due to inflation, increased salaries and wages, and off-island care.

American Samoa Department of Health is funded from three basic sources; U.S. Department of Interior Grants (DOI), other federal grants, and ASG local funds from taxes, etc. In FY 1979, local ASG funds provided 37 percent of the total budget, and DOI plus other grants funded the remaining 63 percent. Over the next three years the ASG percent and amount has steadily increased, while the DOI share has decreased. In Fy 1982, the sharing is virtually on a 50/50 basis.

The report shows that the cost of health care is substantial, and even more so when other cost item outside of the budget are considered. Health care costs are likely to continue to increase at a rate greater than government as a whole unless services are reduced or costs constrained. In either case, DOH will be competing with other departments for the decreasing DOI share and the ASG general fund. DOH is more heavily dependent on those sources because it obtains relatively small amounts from specific federal grants which appear to be getting smaller because of administration cuts. Moreover, DOH recovers only a relatively small percentage of its costs from the fees collected from services at LBJ. Given these circumstances, the financial future contains many uncertainties for DOH and its financial viability is far from secure.

The report sets forth a set of financing objectives the DOH can carry out to insure its financial viability. It also describes the various alternatives for achieving financing objectives.

When these objectives are achieved, the American Samoa Government will have $2.8 million, the total of $6.5 million represents over 90 percent of the total budget with the remainder from specific federal grants.

A copy of the report was submitted to the Governor, Fono leaders, Director of Health, and other appropriate Government officials. The American Samoa Health Coordinating Council has reviewed the report and has approved the recommended financing objective and the financing plan in principle.

A copy of the report is available for the public upon request.

doing something about off-island medical care costs increase

Off-island medical care costs increase is a significant problems facing the ASG Health Department. In Fy 1980, off-island medical care was the third largest cost item in the Department of Health budget. The average annual rate of increase in off-island care costs since Fy 1976 is 31.3% per annum. In addition, the annual rate of increase is also increasing. The average annual increase between FY 1976 and FY 1978 was 20.8% while the average annual increase between FY 1978 and FY 1980 was 29.4%.

The Department of Health has less control over the cost of off-island medical care than any other component of health care costs. Furthermore, the Director has no plan of action to constrain these costs and does not have adequate information to form the

basis for development of such a plan.

Since the American Samoa plan for Health rates off-island care cost increases as a high priority, the ASHPDA has devoted a great deal of time and resources to assist the Department to do something about this problem.

Efforts toward resolution of the problem are presently underway. The ASHPDA has begun a three month study conducted by Gerald Siegel of the Siegel & Associates financial analysis consulting firm, to assist in analyzing the off-island care problem.

When completed the analysis should contain a thorough and factual understanding of referral patterns, an investigation and evaluation of alternative ways of reducing costs, a recommended approach, and a recommended implementation plan.

All this information and recommendations will be presented to the Director of Health for his decision in formulating a plan of action to reduce off-island care costs increases. The information will also be made available to the public and other appropriate ASG officials.

crisis counseling services for cyclone esau victims

A recommendation was made by US Public Health Service Team that visited American Samoa in May 1981, that crisis counseling services should be provided to respond to the emotional consequences of cyclone Esau that hit Manu'a islands in March 1981.

While in American Samoa, the team led by psychiatrist James Jaranson conducted an assessment of the need for counseling services in the Manu'a islands. Dr. Jaranson reported that there is a significant number of individuals with emotional distress problems because of cyclone Esau. Dr. Jaranson has recommended that counseling services should be provided for these victims.

On the basis of Dr. Jaranson's report the American Samoa Health Department has already submitted an application for federal funds under Section 413 of the Disaster and Relief Act, to provide such services. The Department has asked for $87,000 to set up the program which will require professional personnel from outside to train the local mental health staff in proper counseling techniques. The application has been submitted directly to FEMA at Region IX, San Francisco.

When the application is approved, the Department will be able to set up a program which will respond not only to the emotional consequences of Cyclone Esau, but develop a crisis intervention system to meet the needs of future disasters.

american cancer society samoa branch to hawaii

Local Committee of American Cancer Society will be in Hawaii during the week of August 10-15, 1981 for fund raising. They plan to raise money primarily among the Samoan Community in Hawaii through the Fa'a-Samoa malaga approach, personal, organizational, and church contributions. They also plan to sponsor a lu'au at which a local band will feature Samoan songs and traditional performances.

The Committee will send a group of 20 headed by Chairman Dr. Nofo Siliga, Vice-Chairman Tofiga Tufele, and local attorney Pele Ivi. Traveling with the group also will be TV manager Fulifuli Taveuveu, special assistant Gus Hanneman, and members of the Lauli'i Youth Band.

Hawaii fund raising is part of the Committee's continuing effort to raise money needed to operate the local unit financially independent from Hawaii. Presently the local unit is part of the Hawaii Division of the National Cancer Society.

The Committee plans to do a similar fund raising activity with Samoan Communities in the mainland. A date for the mainland trip is not known yet, but will be set after Hawaii fund raising.

All proceedings from the fund raisings will be used to provide programs aimed at reduction of and prevention against conditions causing cancer disease in American Samoa.

annual meeting

More than thirty members of ASHCC and guests attended the annual meeting on July 17, 1981 at the Port-O-Call Room of the Rainmaker Hotel.

Among the honored guests were honorable Governor Peter Tali Coleman and Mrs. Coleman, Mrs. Tofiga Tufele, Director of Health, Dr. Nofo Siliga and Mr. Gerald Siegel, ASHPDA financial consultant.

ASHCC Chairperson, Fa'au'uga Achica commended the Council on its successful efforts to increase hospital revenues, stressing the timelines of the action. Mrs. Achica noted the worldwide economic situation and the efforts being taken in the United States to reduce waste and excess federal spending, and stressed the need for American Samoa to shoulder its fair share of the economic burden of providing health services to her people.

Mrs. Achica also expressed her concern of the possible phase out of the national health planning program and urged that local support be formed to continue the health planning program if federal funding for the program was discontinued.

Governor Coleman, in his remarks to the gathering, emphasized the need for people to be aware of and to adopt healthier habit, including good nutrition, physical fitness, and methods of coping with stress and to discard such unhealthy habits as cigarette smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. The Governor referred to his own decision to pay more attention to his health and urged others to follow his example.

ASHPDA Director, Charles McCuddin thanked to ASHCC members for their active involvement in the planning process and their continuing assistance in the implementation of the Plan for Health. Regarding implementation of plan recommendation, McCuddin noted that the role of the staff and Council is often misinterpreted. While these two entities have a clear mandate to develop plans and make recommendations, they have no authority to implement those plans, other than their limited regulatory function, and therefore, without the full cooperation and commitment of those responsible for implementation the impact of the plan-

ning program is limited.

Mrs. Achica also expressed her deep appreciation for the efforts of the members and staff during the past project year invited the group to enjoy the delicious Samoan dinner complete with two juicy, crunchy, roasted suckling pigs which she had donated for the special occasion.

Governor Coleman addressing the ASHCC during annual meeting