

METRO-MOBILITY TALKS

Transportation Coordination Network

STAYING CONNECTED WITH EMERGING NEEDS

Evidence that the Transportation Coordination Network (TCN) of the Coastal Bend continues to reach out and create partnerships among transportation providers and health and human service providers was realized at the recent 2009 Health Policy Summits held in Jim Wells and Bee Counties.

The summits, touting “Connecting Rural Counties of the Coastal Bend.....in Response to Emerging Needs” were an opportunity to create community based strategies that addressed emerging health and transportation needs for residents in rural counties, as well as set priorities and solutions in the specific health related areas of Access to Care, Teen Pregnancy, and Obesity.

TCN members, along with participants from other sponsoring entities that included Coastal Bend Rural Health Partnership, Community Action Corporation of South Texas, and Texas Department of State Health Services, visited regional county meetings, mailed invitations, and issued electronic notices in an attempt to invite community leaders, advocates, consumers of services, and residents. The summits, were well attended with over 130 registered participants.

The summit in Alice was facilitated by Mark Casanova, VP & COO of CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital – Alice and in Beeville the Honorable Susan C. Stasny, Precinct 2 Commissioner, Bee County Commissioners Court, welcomed participants. A presentation addressing “Setting the Stage – Emerging Health Needs of the Coastal Bend” was provided by Sam B. Cooper III, director of the Office of Title V & Family Health for the Texas Department of State Health Services and Steve Wright, transportation coordinator for the Public Transportation Division of the Texas Department of Transportation presented, “Setting the Stage – Emerging Transportation Needs of the Coastal Bend”.

The full day agenda offered participants the opportunity to view one of a Video Series addressing the State of Obesity “Growing Community”. Presentations addressing the State of Rural Transportation in the Coastal Bend were provided by David Garcia, manager of transportation for Kleberg County Human Services: Paisano Express Rural Transit, Gloria Ramos, executive director for Rural Economic Assistance League: REAL Transit, and Alex Rodriguez, transportation manager for Bee Community Action Agency: Bee Transit. Dr. Diana F. Bill, director of Health Services for Community Action Corporation of South Texas presented on “The State of Access To Care”. Information on “The State of Teen Pregnancy” was delivered by Ms. Belinda Flores, project coordinator for the UT Prevention Research Center, UTHSC – Houston, School of Public Health.

The Honorable Yvonne Gonzalez Toureilles, District 35 of the Texas House of Representatives provided the keynote address for the summit in Alice. Representative Toureilles stated “Tackling emerging health care needs, increasing access to quality and affordable health care, reducing our region's teen pregnancy rates and reducing obesity, particularly among our children, are issues with no clear cut geographic boundaries. Let us not forget the importance of reliable transportation in accessing health care. Many of us take a trip to our doctor's office for granted. We simply hop in our car and we drive there. However, for many of our elderly citizens who do not drive, a simple trip to the doctor's office or pharmacy can be a weekly or monthly struggle. These are serious issues that merit serious discussion.”

After breakout sessions on each area of interest, the Texas Health Institute out of Austin was able to assist TCN in polling participants. TCN Chair Martin Ornelas stated, “By using a survey, designed to collect information on transportation related questions, we will ultimately help guide revisions and develop the Coastal Bend's 2010 Transportation Coordination Plan for our region.”

If you have any questions regarding this or other Metro-Mobility Talks articles please contact us at ccmpo@cctxmpo.us or visit our website at www.corpuschristi-mpo.org.