

Board Pauses On Home Health, Takes Prenatal Care Stand

BY SUSAN USHER

While not forgetting their responsibilities regarding home health care, Brunswick County Board of Health members say they won't immediately pursue a proposed survey of existing services if county commissioners aren't interested in the results.

Home health care was only one of a broad range of topics covered by the board during a 2½-hour meeting Monday night.

Brunswick County Health Director Thomas Blum suggested commissioners may not want to deal with a second volatile health care issue so soon after the debate over choice of a nursing home to locate in the county, especially with budget deliberations coming up.

"When we get into this it may well generate fantastic heat," he continued. "I think the commissioners want to get on to the general business at hand."

"My main concern would be is I have a pretty good feeling—I think all of us do—that they will be prone not to take any action. "Without direction from them I don't think we should pursue it."

But Chairman John Madison and Vice Chairman Fred Lesh said the department shouldn't forget the issue, but they agreed there is no point to pursue a topic commissioners will be reluctant to address. While the department can identify any additional needs for service, only the commissioners can designate one



MARIE BROWN

or more agencies to provide that service.

At the health board's direction he plans to sound out commissioners on the subject individually before the board proceeds any further.

By law the board has the authority to look into the status of existing home health care services in the county and to ascertain whether there is a need for further home health care services.

"I don't know how much service there is so I can't say whether it's adequate or inadequate," the director advised board members. "The



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only way to know is to conduct a survey."

According to County Attorney David Clegg, Blum advised, upon questioning by Vice Chairman Fred Lesh, a resolution recently adopted by county commissioners at the request of Comprehensive Home Health Care Director Ed Harris is simply a statement of procedures involved in designating a home health care agency.

"It in no way told commissioners they couldn't open it up for discussion. It did not dissolve our (statutory) authority." In fact shortly thereafter commissioners also designed Lower Cape Fear Hospice as a home health care provider in the county.

And based on state programming guides issued in August 1984, Blum said he also thinks the department not only has the right, but the responsibility to either provide, contract for or to certify the availability of home health care services.

The department has been audited for compliance on the program item and probably won't be audited until around 1988, he estimated. "I assume if we haven't done it by then we'll be told to do so. That doesn't mean we have to do it now."

Pregnancy Testing

On the heels of three recent instances in which persons brought in specimens of individuals other than themselves for pregnancy testing, the board agreed to a change in procedure recommended by Blum that they hope better reflects the department's goal of helping all mothers-to-

be obtain good prenatal care and deliver healthy babies.

"Fast lab tests are not what we're all about," said the director.

Persons who identified themselves as various clinic patients' parent, husband and teacher brought in the samples, a second-party situation that has occurred infrequently. The parent's case ultimately was determined to be "outright medical fraud," Blum said. But in all cases the health department staff acted according to procedures and with professionalism.

As of now the department will no longer run pregnancy tests on samples for persons other than those who complete an entire first visit in the prenatal clinic. This includes a medical history, lab workup, overview of the nine months of pregnancy and an interview to discuss finances with a hospital social worker of their choice from either or both New Hanover Memorial Hospital or, for the first time, Brunswick Hospital.

Nine months of prenatal service through the clinic costs \$5 on up, on a sliding scale based on family income.

Rise In VD

Blum reported that the department had noted a "significant increase" over the last three or four months in the number of cases of venereal disease reported.

"It is not an outbreak or epidemic," he added, noting that one or two persons appear responsible for a majority of the cases.

In a related action, District Court Judge Wayne Long, in action brought by the health department based on medical evidence in its possession, ordered a man to submit to a physical examination for VD. He had previously refused to submit to a request from the state's regional VD investigator.

Other Business

In other business, the board:

•Inducted new members Marie Brown of Calabash, a school health nurse; and Joseph Stevenson of Supply. State law required addition of a nurse to the board as of January 1985.

•Re-elected John T. Madison, a Shallotte dentist, as chairman, and elected pharmacist Fred Lesh of Boiling Spring Lakes as vice chairman. He succeeds Naomi Henry of Winnabow in the post.

•Observed a moment of silence in memory of sanitarian Tommy S.

Russ, who died Jan. 29.

•Learned the department's first health educator reported to work Monday: Grace Lynn Royal of Butler, a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health Education. She will concentrate initially on two major projects: prematurity prevention and adult health screening.

•Heard plans for a community needs assessment survey of 400 randomly selected households to be conducted next week in conjunction with UNC-Wilmington.

•Heard data reports on the animal shelter, a proposal from Lesh to solicit community involvement in animal adoptions and a plea for a someone to work with the department in sheltering livestock such as cattle that the shelter cannot accommodate.

•Agreed to schedule an informal meeting with county commissioners to review departmental programs.

•Voted to ask County Attorney David Clegg for guidance on how to exempt churches from the septic tank inspection fee.

•Voted to pay \$10 registration fees for an American Red Cross disaster nursing workshop for nurses who volunteered their skills during Hurricane Diana as a special "thank you."

•Heard Blum report that departmental employees are featured in a glaucoma screening slide presentation written and produced by the area health education center in Wilmington and scheduled for use throughout the area.

•Heard that 555 flu vaccine doses were administered this season, an increase of 8 percent to 10 percent.

•Learned that because of a diphtheria/tetanus vaccine shortage, the department will no longer administer shots at age 18 months, but still offers four chances for youngsters to obtain the three-part series before entering school.

•Learned that most ball team concession stands don't qualify as temporary stands and must meet the standards required of fast food restaurants if they continue to prepare hotdogs. If the teams sell only prepackaged items the standards are lesser. The parks and recreation department is working with local teams and health officials on the matter.

Bregoil's Still Trying To Construct Plant Here

Officials of Bregoil Sponge International returned to Brunswick County late last month to discuss its development plans with Federal Paperboard Co., members of the Resources Development Commission of Brunswick County learned Monday night.

RDC Director Michael deSherbinin said Bregoil also renewed its option to buy property in the Leland area.

Bregoil, a small firm that manufactures cellulose sponges that soak up oil and toxic substances, wants to build a plant in the county, investing between \$7 million and \$10 million. But to date the New York based company, which has offices in Virginia and a small plant in Sweden, has been unable to come up with the venture capital it needs to proceed with construction.

Meanwhile, deSherbinin said Tuesday, the firm has discussed its raw product specifications with Federal and made arrangements to analyze Federal samples in Virginia.

The sponges are made from certain waste products of pulpwood and paper mills.

Last summer the Brunswick County Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Financing Authority signed an agreement of "inducement and intent" to support the sale of up to \$10 million in industrial revenue bonds for the project.

Additional financial backing is needed partly in order for the Town of Navassa to receive a Urban Development Action grant of up to \$1.5 million. The grants are intended to stimulate private development and to provide immediate long-term jobs and tax benefits. Navassa intends to loan the money to Bregoil; the town can use the repayments as it chooses.

RDC members also reviewed project and community commitments for UDAG grants Monday, deSherbinin said.

They also discussed plans for a targeted mass mailing in the spring by the Metro Marketing program, a regional promotion effort that has been revived with deSherbinin serving as the group's treasurer. Regional promotional publications will be packaged with local materials and sent to likely development prospects identified primarily through the Economics Resource Council of Bethesda, Md.

The mailings will also include businesses identified in the third phase of a Fantus study commissioned by the Southeastern Economic

Development Commission, the results of which are expected in about 45 days, deSherbinin said. The prospects include businesses likely to be water users and likely to fit into communities within the Lower Cape Fear region.

Calendar Of Events

Thursday, Feb. 14

SPECIAL MEETING of the Holden Beach Board of Commissioners to hire a police officer, to discuss beach access and strand patrol and to review the land use plan, 9 a.m. at the town hall.

DEADLINE to submit applications for state Grassroots arts grants to the Brunswick County Arts Council, which meets in the public assembly building, Brunswick County Government Center, 7 p.m.

GAME NIGHT at the American Legion Post one mile south of Shallotte on U.S. 17, 8 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 15

ANNUAL MEETING of the Cape Fear Council of Governments, at the Sheraton Hotel, Wrightsville Beach, with Secretary of Natural Resources and Community Development Tom Rhodes as speaker. Call the council at 763-0191 for time and other information.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, Harbor Town Seafood Restaurant, Calabash, 6 p.m. social hour and dinner at 7 p.m. Piedmont Airlines executive W.G. McGee will speak. Call 754-6644 to RSVP, \$10 per person.

CHAPTER 36 of the Special Forces Association meets at the Boiling Spring Lakes VFW Post, 8 p.m. Members and all former Green Berets are invited to the meeting. New members are being accepted.

Saturday, Feb. 16

ALL YOU CAN EAT oyster roast to benefit the Friendship Full Gospel Church building fund, beside Boone's Neck Baptist Church, Boone's Neck Road, 44, bring your own knife, starts at 11 a.m.

TOWN CREEK VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD serves pork barbecue and fried chicken dinners at the squad building for \$3 each, starting at 11 a.m. **GAME NIGHT** at the Calabash Volunteer Fire Department, 8 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 18

BRUNSWICK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS meet in regular session in their chambers, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 19

HOLDEN BEACH COMMUNITY WATCH meets in regular session at the town hall, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 20

BRUNSWICK TOASTMASTERS, CLUB 5095 meets at the Ship's Chandelier Restaurant, Southport, 7 a.m.-8 a.m. Guests welcome.

NEW COUNTY DIABETES CHAPTER meets at Brunswick Technical College to hear program on "Diabetes: Focus on Feelings" by Emily Rivenbark. Open to all interested persons.

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For more information, talk to your instructor, or contact:
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