



## Human Services Advisory Council

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The Bergen County Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC), established in 1980, is comprised of professionals, consumers and advocates who represent the interests of twenty population groups in Bergen County including:

- developmentally disabled
- elderly
- HIV/AIDS affected persons
- juveniles/families in crisis
- low income individuals/families
- mentally ill
- physically disabled
- single parents
- substance abusers
- the homeless
- veterans
- victims of abuse, neglect and abandonment

The HSAC is the primary advisory group to the County and State Departments of Human Services. Its goals are:

- to maximize financial resources available for human services
- to promote an efficient, effective and coordinated human service delivery system

The HSAC's primary functions are:

- planning
- advocacy
- resource allocation
- program review

All functions of the Council are based on policies which encourage broad community involvement, open competition, and fair decision making. These guiding principals provide accountability for the use of public dollars.

## **PLANNING**

To plan effectively for a coordinated system and to deliver services to the citizens of Bergen County, HSAC members:

- assess community needs
- analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the delivery system
- maintain an inventory of resources
- project future needs
- recommend and implement changes

## **ADVOCACY**

HSAC members advocate for improved services:

- research issues and develop position papers
- testify before state legislative committees and at public hearings
- dialogue with legislators and the County Executive at HSAC sponsored briefings
- write commentary on proposed legislation to local, state and federal elected officials

## **RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

The HSAC, working collaboratively with several planning bodies, develops and/or endorses allocation plans totalling in excess of \$9 million for human service programming.

The priorities for all allocation recommendations are based on filling service gaps identified in the planning process, avoiding duplication of services, fostering coordinated services and rewarding efficient and effective performance.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW**

HSAC members conduct annual reviews to ensure quality of program and compliance with contractual obligations. Contracted services currently include:

- adult and child day care
- home care and respite
- community education
- emergency services
- diagnostic and treatment services
- protective services
- employment directed services
- care management
- transportation services



## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The keystone of the HSAC is volunteer participation from the public. Efforts are made to assure the broadest possible community involvement in all phases of the Council's work.

HSAC members receive extensive training on the functions and policies of the HSAC. All members participate in program reviews of contracted services and serve on at least one of the Council's seven committees.

Upon the recommendation of the HSAC, the County Executive appoints members to the Council with the advice and consent of the Board of Chosen Freeholders.