

Social service agencies fear for survival – (EXCEPT from article)

Author: Ashley Hungerford

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ahungerford@mdjonline.com

MARIETTA - Doing more with less: This is the resounding refrain these days for many agencies and nonprofit groups that serve the poor and underprivileged.

Last week, three state social service agencies were able to breathe a temporary sigh of relief when Cobb Chairman Sam Olens put off cutting county funding to the groups.

Olens, who serves on the boards of two of the three agencies at issue, said he was not trying to show any dissatisfaction with the agencies.

“The agenda item was simply to express my frustration,” he said. “Before we start having furloughs and laying off county employees, I think it’s more important that the impact be felt by the state agencies we give subsidies to.”

Citron said his group has already lost \$700,000 in state funding this year, and is anticipating more cuts in April. He said he was completely surprised by Olens’ Feb. 11 letter warning of the cuts.

And he fully intended to call a vote on the cuts on Feb.24.

“I wanted to give them time to adjust to the cuts by doing it now instead of later down the road,” Olens said of the agencies: Cobb/Douglas

“When revenues decrease and the money leaves our system, we’re unable to offer the services. If no services are available, the people we help (deteriorate) further. And many could commit offenses as a result of their mental health.”

- Tod Citron,
executive director of Cobb/Douglas Community Services Board

Public Health, the Cobb/Douglas Community Services Board, and the Cobb county Division of Family and Children Services.

The cuts, effective July 1, would have been for 2009 and 2010, totaling \$2.9 million.

The Cobb/Douglas Community Services Board stood to lose \$769,565 in county money over the two

years. The agency offers mental health, developmental disabilities and substance-abuse treatment and services.

“When revenues decrease and the money leaves our system, we’re unable to offer the services,” said Tod Citron executive director of the CSB. “If no services are available, the people we help (deteriorate) further. And many could commit offenses as a result of their mental health.”

The Community Services Board is also responsible for mental-health services at the county jail, though Citron said he would rather help people before they end up in jail.

“I have been here for 10 years and this funding has always been in place,” he said, “I didn’t expect this cut.”

And as the economy has declined, the group is getting more requests for services. The most common call lately is from people dealing with depression, Citron said.

The county money, he said, is “critical for what we do.”

‘At the end of the day, the people we serve are Cobb County citizens. It’s critical that these resources be in place. For me, it’s no different that having available a library, the fire department or teachers.’

- Tod Citron,

executive director of Cobb/Douglas Community Services Board