

Leaders look to future of domestic violence services in Adams County

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By Beth Kanagy Times Staff Writer

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Since the bankruptcy and closing of longtime shelter provider Survivors Inc., the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) has stepped in to offer domestic violence services in Adams County. That assistance will be coming to an end this fall and the search is on for another organization that can provide the services.

Stakeholders met Friday at the Adams County Library in Gettysburg to discuss the issues that brought the county to this situation and what can be done about it. Community members, representatives from county social service agencies, Adams County Commissioner Jim Martin, Chris Kimple from the office of State Rep. Dan Moul, R-91, and State Rep. Torren Ecker, R-193, were in attendance.

PCADV is seeking other organizations to provide domestic violence and related services to Adams County. PCADV released a request for proposals (RFP) July 15. Those proposals are due on Aug. 15. PCADV Chief Executive Officer Susan Higginbotham said Survivors had been receiving technical assistance from the organization since November of last year.

Anecdotal evidence shared during the meeting indicated Survivors had been in financial distress before then. The RFP timeline does not provide an opportunity for several organizations to come together in a collaborative effort, said Adams County Children's Advocacy Center Executive Director Elida Murray. A collaborative effort would require the approval of several boards of directors as well as extensive planning, she said.

"We are very collaborative in Adams County and it is possible," Murray said.

"Can you extend the timeline?" she asked.

"No," Higginbotham replied, though after further discussion, she said the maximum possible extension would be one week. She added later that The Children's Advocacy Center, YWCA Gettysburg & Adams County and YWCA Hanover are in a good position to continue domestic violence services.

PCADV is the statewide contractor for such services. With state and federal pass-through dollars, it partially funds 59 nonprofit domestic violence programs across Pennsylvania. PCADV was one of three funders of Survivors. Other funds came through Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape and Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD).

Higginbotham said PCCD funding is already earmarked for Adams County for domestic violence services. Help is available while the search continues for an organization to provide services. An emergency hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It provides counseling, safety planning, information about legal options, and assistance in filing for Protection from Abuse orders. The hotline number is 717-420-2135 or 888-547-2405 toll-free.