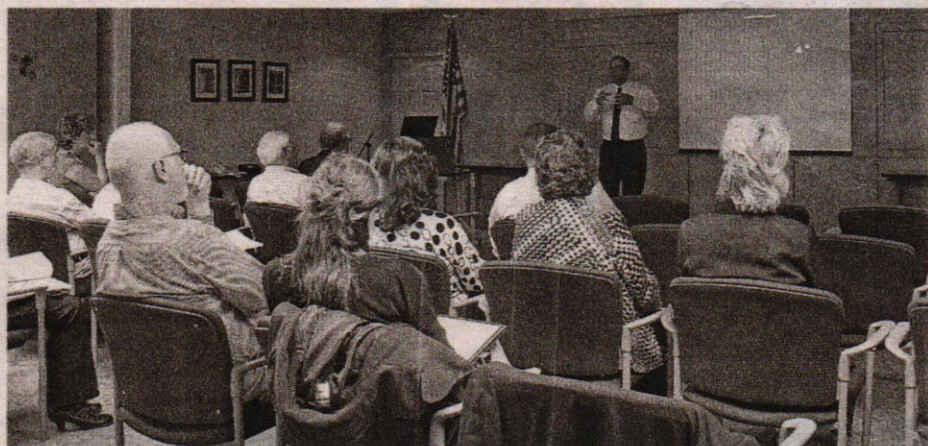


Garrett County Health Planning Council Meets Monthly



Each month a dedicated group of people meet to discuss emerging health issues, current local health trends and accomplishments and challenges related to health in Garrett County.

Garrett County Health Planning Council's (HPC) mission is to insure a high quality effective integrated community care system that is responsive to the needs of the people of Garrett County. The group includes permanent members from local health care, public health, and county government as well as many consumer representatives.

Meetings are normally held on the fourth Thursday of each month, with the November and December meetings moved to the third Thursday due to the holidays. Meetings are open to the public, and are held at 8 a.m. at the Garrett County Health Department (GCHD) conference room.

Anyone interested in participating on the Health Planning Council may call 301-334-7700 or 301-895-3111. There are currently consumer member vacancies.

Agenda topics are determined by health issues currently being faced in the county. For example, at the most recent HPC meeting, the group was updated on the Af-

fordable Care Act and enrollment in Qualified Health Plans in Garrett County.

Garrett County residents receive assistance with signing up for health care by four agencies, Community Action, Department of Social Services (DSS), Health Department, and Mountain Laurel Medical Center.

Unlike other locations in Maryland, Garrett County set up the system so that clients can seek help where they are already receiving services. Front-line staff at these agencies are trained to assist their clients. If they have questions, clients are referred to a specially trained navigator, who is also a part of the staff within the agency.

"I think the great thing about our community is how we partner," said Bonnie Paugh, Navigator at the Health Department. "I don't think we realize what a great community partnership we have. We do such a good job of working together here."

For more information about signing up for Medicare or a Qualified Health Plan, call one of the following locations: Community Action Committee 301-334-9431, DSS 301-533-3046, GCHD 301-334-7720 or Mountain Laurel Medical Center 301-533-3300.