

County of Los Angeles – Department of Mental Health
OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Thursday, February 24, 2011

~ Approved Minutes ~

Please note the minutes are a brief summary and not a word for word transcription of events at this meeting.

Larry Gasco Chairman, Presiding

I. Call to Order – Larry Gasco

- The meeting was called to order by Larry Gasco
- Roll Call – Canetana Hurd
Attendance recorded as follows:
Absent Excused: Greg Thompson, Victoria Sofro, and Phillip Chen
- Approval of Minutes – Larry Gasco
ACTION TAKEN – December 2010 and January 2011 minutes were unanimously approved.

II. Chairman's Report – Larry Gasco

- **Executive Committee Meeting Report** – Delores Huffman reported on the meeting held February 10, 2011:
Briefing – Commissioners spoke about issues and logistics at the joint meeting held January 27. Overall, it was concluded the meeting was energetic and interesting. Discussions involved the day-to-day functions of addressing Probation cases and implementation of PEI evidence-based practices.
Volunteer Awards Program - Mia St. John, Boxing Champion, Writer, Philanthropist, and Advocate of mental health awareness and suicide prevention is the featured guest for the 12th annual awards program. The date and time is May 26, 2011 from 5-9 pm. Participants on the award committee is Delores Huffman, Vicky Sofro and Barry Perrou. The location is pending.
Retreat – The date for the annual retreat is Saturday, June 11, 2011 Delores Huffman will chair retreat activities. Activities will include special birthday recognition for Commissioner Helen Wolff.
CALMHBC Meeting – The first CALMHBC meeting for 2011 was held in San Diego January 21-23. Newly elected officers conducted a very orderly and focused meeting. The next meeting will be in Anaheim April 27-29
DMH Report by Dr. Rod Shaner:
 1. The county is addressing the State's intent to turn the funding reimbursement process over to local governments.
 2. DMH is reorganizing PMRT and will present a plan to board soon. The reorganization efforts will offer opportunities for health facilities to handle 5150 patients.

3. Board letters outlining PEI spending plans are being held up by the board because they are concerned about MHSA dollars held by State budget.
- **MHC/SAAC Chairs Meeting** – Terry Lewis, Executive Director gave update on the SAAC Chairs meeting held February 8. The SAACs continue to revise charters and membership guidelines. DMH hired Yvette Townsend to consult the group develop a reorganization plan. Ms. Lewis introduced Greg Koyama, Intern from CSU Northridge who will assist the SAACs organize and produce annual reports and other deliverables.
 - **January Joint Commission Feedback** –
 - a) DMH was well represented.
 - b) CCF was somewhat aggressive making the joint meeting purpose counterproductive.
 - c) DMH needs to provide more detail in presentation information.
 - d) All parties involved continue to support finding ways to provide quality services to the kids in Los Angeles County.
 - e) Some information request by CCF required access to individual medical records that DMH does not have the appropriate technology.
 - f) Assign liaisons among the impacted commission members exchange information and questions.
 - g) DMH reported it has been approved to hire 88 positions in the juvenile camps of which 65 are clinical. DMH has also implemented an integrated care program to train Probation and Mental Health staff on behavior changing practices for the kids. The training offering will improve interaction with kids.
 - h) Commission intends to follow up with its commitment to answer the specific questions from CCF.
 - **NEO** – Ms. Lewis gave a brief overview of the last New Employee Orientation and asked for volunteers to participate in upcoming ones.

III. **DMH Report – Dr. Marvin J. Southard, Director of Mental Health**

Budget – Dr. Southard discussed the departmental budget. There is approximately \$20 million in unresolved issues that either need curtailment or additional revenue. The fiscal year 2011-2012 budget is stable. The Department continues its plan to hire additional staff for both the Katie A co-located and MHSA Probation camp aftercare programs.

Dr. Southard reported ongoing negotiations with the state for funding the AB 3632 and EPSDT managed care programs appear to be workable for mental health. He also discussed the breakdown of funding gained from serving the inmates released from state prisons who will soon be returning to their origin counties.

Health Care Reform – DMH continues to meet with Department of Health Services to develop a standard process to deliver mental services in its primary health care facilities. Current negotiations involve expanding LIP (Low Income Program) to include seniors receiving SSI due to disability or age in Tier 2, in addition to funding the co-located staff.

Legislative Analyst – Susan Rajlal continues present testimonies at hearings to protect MHSA funds, and attend open house gatherings to meet the new senators and acquaint them to mental health issues.

Ms. Rajlal reported the Speakers Bureau is going well. Ms. Rajlal and Terry Lewis made several presentations at Neighborhood Council meetings reaching out to active communities supporting mental health issues. Ms. Rajlal recommended the legislative breakfast should be scheduled for October or November 2012. During those months, the senate is quiet and available to move around.

IV. **Commissioners' Reports**

Jerry Lubin – Mr. Lubin has provided testimonies at the East Los Angeles Planning Commission on behalf of the zoning issue between board and care and shared housing status. Mr. Lubin gave a brief update on the status of the three year appeal to change classification of shared housing in master contracts.

George Caballero – Reported the following:

- Continues to meet with agencies to collaborate with universities on increasing services to older adults.
- Plans to attend several health deputies meetings.
- Plans to invite representatives from a successful aging program to present at full meeting
- Plans to attend the Commission on Women's meeting in April.

Frank Baron – Mr. Baron discussed a new project led by LA Times Journalist Steve Lopez. The project is called "Project 60" it advocates for services to veterans.

Delores Huffman – Ms. Huffman participated in the Count Homeless campaign in Service Area 6. Counting homeless people who lived in their vehicles was the methodology used.

Ms. Huffman submitted the following housing report for the month of February 2011:

MHSA Housing Program

Thirty projects are actively participating in the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Housing Program in various stages of development. The status of each project as of February 18, 2011 is shown below:

Developing Supportive Service Plan for Public Posting and Comment Period

- Avalon II Family Apartments
- East LA Community Corporation

Finalizing Supportive Service Plan for Public Posting and Comment Period

- Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)

Preparing Technical Submission

- Swarthy World Society Apartments

Invitation to Submit Full Application

- Parker Hotel
- VOALA Navy Village for Families
- New Genesis Apartments

Application Submitted to the State Pending Approval

- Figueroa Apartments
- Step Up on Vine (Galaxy Hotel)
- Parkview on the Park Apartments
- David & Margaret Home, Inc. – Cedar Springs Apartments

Approved for Funding by the State

- Nehemiah Court Apartments
- Progress Place I and II
- Caroline Severance Manor
- Osborne Place Apartments
- Horizon Apartments
- 28th St. YMCA Residences
- Menlo Family Housing
- PWC Family Housing
- NoHo Senior Villas
- KIWA Apartments
- Willis Avenue Apartments

Approved for Funding and Initiated Construction

- Young Burlington
- Courtyards in Long Beach
- Ford Apartments

- Villas at Gower
- Glenoaks Gardens
- Parkview on the Park Apartments *
- New Genesis Apartments *
- Epworth Apartments
- 28th Street YMCA

Open for Occupancy

- Daniel's Village
- Charles Cobb Apartments
- The Courtyards in Long Beach

* Projects under construction awaiting final approval

Housing Trust Fund Program

Twelve of the fifteen executed Service Agreements are in operation one of which is a shared housing and scattered site projects. Through the HTF Program, supportive services are being provided to approximately 400 tenants residing in permanent supportive housing. The services being provided assists formerly homeless individuals and their families maintain their housing and pursue their recovery goals. Construction has begun for Glenoaks Gardens, the Los Angeles Family Housing project located in Service Area 2. Project Home, located in the downtown area of Service 4, opened December 10, 2010. Cedar Springs and Nehemiah Courts projects remain in the predevelopment phase as they are seeking capital funding. The Navy Village Apartments and Swarthy housing projects are under negotiation.

Ongoing & Upcoming Activities

Housing Assistance Program

The Department provides financial resources for clients moving into housing from homelessness by paying the security deposits and purchasing the basic essentials to furnish their apartment. In addition, financial resources are available to pay one month's rent in arrears to prevent eviction and ongoing rental assistance for qualified clients. The funding sources for the Housing Assistance Program include Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness and MHSA. As of February 18, 2011, the Department assisted the following number of clients with securing permanent housing:

- 161 clients and/or their families with the security deposit at the time of move-in;
- 234 clients and/or their families with purchasing household goods;

- 5 clients and/or their families with paying for utilities
- 16 clients with eviction prevention; and
- 67 clients with ongoing rental assistance.

V. **Community and SAAC Reports -**

SAAC 6 - Dorothy Banks reported the following:

- SAAC membership guidelines are pending approval from DMH
- Susan Rajlal provided a legislative update to the group at the last meeting
- Scheduled a training on mental health for faith-based leaders
- Discussed the Client Coalition Activity Fund (CCAF) application process. SLT clients did not participate in development of the CCAF reorganization process. Activity such as excluding SLT members may deter client participation whether paid stipends or not.

VI. **Public Comments –**

- **Jo Helen Graham** – My name is Jo Helen Graham and I am the mother of a son with paranoid schizophrenia. I am also the mother of three other sons, one of whom is a surgeon, one in Law School and one with a Masters degree in counseling serving at one of our local Middle Schools in Los Angeles. All four of my sons have attended public schools and state UC and State Universities. I am a retired educator from LAUSD in addition to my husband with collectively 78 years in the system. Additionally, my mother, grandparents, and a host of aunts and cousins are public school educators and administrators as well. I mention this simply to say that I understand public systems, for I grew up in or have worked in public systems all of my life and I mean no disrespect this afternoon. However, the current state of affairs in the public mental health system in our county is not working.

Over the last fifteen years, I, along with my family and friends, have tried unsuccessfully to navigate through the Los Angeles County Mental Health System to obtain consistent, sustained, reasonable mental health support for our son. Our cries and pleas for intervention have yielded no positive outcomes. Marc has suffered; his life has been shattered, changed forever, and his young life stripped of any normalcy since his first diagnosis, 17 years of age, UCLA NPI & H.

In 1993/94 when Marc began to show that something was awry, ducking pictures on the walls at home, and dressing in disguise, along with other personality and behavioral changes, our family went in for family counseling. Within a year or so, after several hospitalizations, Marc was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia from UCLA NPI & H. The head Chief of Staff became Marc's doctor. Because 72 hour holds and 6 or 8 weeks was the norm for treating one in mental health hospitals, and because patients' symptoms are arrested during those times, Marc was always sent home with medication and continued therapy. Within another two years, Marc would have other hospitalizations, throw his

medication away when he was not in UCLA NPI & H, and by age 18.3, Marc had conflict with the law. Residential placements were a part of his experience once he graduated high school, but residential facilities terminated Marc for the very behaviors for which Marc was admitted. Soon Marc was back at home, attempting to attend college, but an un-medicated diseased brain with alcohol was a poor match. Marc had more conflict with the law, in most cases I thought it was a rush to judgment for Judges and Attorneys are not trained in mental health, but soon we were in the hands of the Criminal Justice System.

Attempts to acquire Conservatorships over the years have proven to be futile because according to DMH in Court 95, Marc is not gravely disabled because Marc showers and brushes his teeth sometimes, and eats daily – regardless of the degree and bizarreness with each of these. DMH **will not** treat my son's mental illness in a locked mental health facility, out-patient program, or residential program because he is delusional about taking medication and thinks it causes brain damage and because he has a severe impaired awareness of his illness, (a common symptom of 50% of individuals with paranoid schizophrenia, a medical condition known as Anosognosia. But moreover it seems because Marc is now in the Criminal Justice system, DMH will not accept him in their facilities. The Department of Mental Health **will not** treat our son in any of their programs or facilities because he is a parolee and the DMH will not work with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Adding insult to injury, DMH in the Mental Health Court declared my son, with an Axis I chronic degenerative brain disease, (paranoid schizophrenia), which affects **thinking, perception, and emotion, COMPETENT** to act as his own counsel in a court of complex laws.

If my son is locked out of mental health treatment in DMH facilities and programs, but locked up for behaviors that are a manifestation of his illness, my son has no chance to find meaningful ways to live his life.

Accepting that Twin Towers is touted as the #1 psychiatric hospital on the West Coast or "American Jails and Prisons Have now Become the Modern Surrogate Mental Health Hospitals and Rehabilitation and Treatment Facilities for our Mentally Ill" is wrong. The failure to provide mental health treatment for ALL, who are mentally ill regardless of degree, criminalizing and warehousing them in our jails and prisons as an alternative to treatment, and subjecting our public to the illogical minds of the mentally ill, who have been locked out of mental health treatment in DMH LA County is an American human tragedy and travesty of justice. We are SUFFERING! Please help us! Thank you for listening.

- **Dennis R. Miller** – I am a very active advocate for the people and improving the health awareness to improve the diet in result that so many adults and children being over weight and more problems with ADD and ADHD. Free dental introduction and awareness.
- **Sandra Clayton** – Discussed the following:

1. Attended SAAC 4 meeting. The discussion was how to help patients with more compassionate communication and really developing each therapist to listen more. Also a real emphasis on spirituality – not on a religious level with getting in touch with the clients real purpose and life goals, dreams; not just medicating the clients or work quick fix.
 2. Caregiver group
 3. Victory after months of job search, broke three age barriers, too much experience and not being bilingual which was extremely important
- **William Legere** – Spoke against Governor’s budget cuts
 - **Phyllis Coto** – Appealed to Commission to write a letter to Sacramento or call to keep adult day care programs open. (Ilean Rabens replied with a clarification to the appeal that it was decided not to close the programs.)
 - **Sawako Nitao** – Announced a food pantry in San Fernando area. The location is Iglesia Misionera Antioquia Siloe, 8235 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood 94604; open Mondays through Thursdays
 - **Zed Null** – When speaking to the two program heads of the CCAF, I was informed that the new invoice has a question segment that the program heads are planning on using. The segment inquires whether the consumer was actually engaged at the invoiced meeting which determines whether or not the invoice is approved, and whether those meetings will be reimbursed in the future.
 - **Mark Karmatz** – Announced Alternatives Conference. Proposed a question regarding MHSA. Will the governor be borrowing from the MHSA revenue then returning it?

VII. **Meeting adjourned**

NOTE - NEXT MEETING LOCATION AND TIME CHANGE

**Thursday, March 24, 2011
10 am – 11:30 am
St. Anne’s
Second Floor Classroom
155 N. Occidental Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026**

Please contact the Commission office at (213) 738 4772 if you need more information

Submitted by Canetana Hurd