

COUNTY OF MORRIS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & YOUTH SERVICES

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Participants of the 2012 Public Forum for Consumers and Families

FROM: Laurie Becker, Mental Health Administrator

DATE: August 10, 2012

RE: Public Forum Summary Report

I thank each of you for participating in this year's Forum. The abbreviated summary is attached for your review. You may access the full 9-page report is posted on the County website at:

<http://morrishumanservices.org/boards/MentalHealth/Publications/2012SummaryReport.pdf>

If you prefer, I am happy to send you the full report at your request.

Every year, the Forum Summary Report is incorporated into Morris County's planning and advocacy activities. The Report is also sent to the State's Division of Mental Health Services and public officials for consideration.

If you would like to participant on next year's Forum planning committee and/or if I can be of further assistance to you, please contact me at 973-285-6852.

C: Frank Pinto, Director

MHSAAB Members

Eileen Alexander, DMHAS

Morris County Mental Health Substance Abuse Advisory Board
Public Forum for Consumers and Families
Many Faces of Recovery: Standing Up to Stigma
June 12, 2012

SUMMARY

Attendance

The Forum drew over 160 participants, the largest turnout ever. The new location and additional publicity on the county website may have factored in to the high turnout. There was more focus on addictions services this year. Participants spoke about a broad range of mental health, addictions and homeless services. The majority of participants were consumers, followed by providers, family members and officials. There were parents with small children in attendance as well as a number of young adults and “seniors.” Attendees included representation from NJ Division of Mental Health and Addictions Services, Greystone Hospital, the County and at least 50% of MHTAAB members.

Agenda

Department Director Frank Pinto and MHTAAB Chair Carol DeGraw gave welcoming remarks. Ms. DeGraw gave an overview of the MHTAAB’s mission and thanked County and State officials, providers and attendees for all they do to ensure a strong service system.

This year’s focus was on stigma. The topic emerged in 2011 as an area of high interest. Peter Basto, UMDNJ professor, talked about the negative attitudes related to social, institutional and self stigma that can incite prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. He gave pointers on what we all can do to eradicate stigma:

- Educate the community on the facts about mental illness and mental health.
- Advocate for and participate in school programs that include education on MI and wellness and recovery—important to reach individuals when they are young.
- Seek opportunities to provide “stigma busting” facts at colleges, to health care providers and for law enforcement.
- Seek opportunities to get out information to the press, social networks.

Mr. Basto opened up the discussion to attendees who gave their own suggestions:

- SAMHTA resources
- Share personal recovery with community
- Surround yourself with strong support system
- Public education through self help groups and treatment providers
- Speak up and educate one on one
- If you hear something stigmatizing, speak up and educate people so they have a better understanding of the disability.
- Spirituality can help.
- Try not to judge yourself, handle best you can and use your sense of humor.
- Stigma is pervasive but can be overcome.

Two speakers, Andrea and Valerie, gave a presentation on their personal journey to recovery. Programs that helped:

Initially hospitalization, a group home, day treatment, sheltered workshop, treatment for substance abuse. Then supported employment, Career Connections, UMDNJ's psych rehab program where there were special accommodations. Coping resources include friends, family, therapy, groups, serenity prayer. Despite the odds, one speaker is fully employed, the other retired from employment.

"Never give up or give in to stigma; don't waste your time on it. Follow your dreams."

Highest Service Priorities ---

Priorities were consistent with previous years with a couple of additions:

- ❖ Transportation – flexibility of routes and times/needed on weekends; for work and education. Provide education on how transportation works. Recent cuts in bus lines in areas such as Flanders have been problematic. Highest priority as identified by 42% of the respondents to written evaluation.
- ❖ Affordable supported housing—hard to find, and harder to navigate the requirements to access these services
- ❖ Psychiatric time, co-occurring treatment across the continuum.
- ❖ Medical Assisted Treatment such as suboxone. Providers need more education on MAT.

Suggestions for 2013:

1. Continue to include recovery stories. Bring back recognition component?
2. Update on integration of mental health and addictions services – State and local perspective.
3. Consider using St. Francis conference center again.
4. Continue community resource tables on focused topic. Move resources away from buffet tables to free up space.
5. Topic for consideration: To be discussed with 2013 Forum Planning Committee.
6. One family member suggested that this Forum be designed for consumer feedback only. Families and others could attend as listeners.

Written evaluations: 49 completed

- 94% said Forum met expectations
- 72% had attended previous forums, 28% were first time attendees.
- 35% said the personal recovery stories were the program highlight.

Targeted timeframe for initiating 2013 Forum planning: February 2013.

**Public Forum
Participant Feedback
June 12, 2012**

Wellness and Recovery is uniquely personal for every individual. It is a wonderful journey (as said by a previous forum participant)

Sampling of Speakers' Comments

1. During the past year, what services and supports were most helpful?
 - A. Saint Clare's LEARN Program, supportive education, and Depression and Bi-Polar Support Alliance Programs (DBSA)
 - B. Career services at Saint Clare's and Counselor Anne Marie.
 - C. Church, Self Help Center and various other services.
 - D. New Bridge Crossroads Program in Pompton Plains and Foundation for the Handicapped in Wayne.
 - E. The New Bridge family.
 - F. Newsletter Morris County Mental Health Coalition newsletter and the Mental Health Association of Morris County (MHAMC). The services provided by MHAMC were instrumental in recovery and in securing a job.
 - G. New Bridge provided a lot of support with the knitting club, depression groups, supports and group homes. Thank God for all his help!
 - H. Five (5) people stated that Morris Self Help Center helped all the time.
 - I. Morris Self Help Center provided transportation and things to do. Saint Clare's Enhanced Outpatient care had many groups which helped and I enjoyed attending. Everyone needs to have things to do and the need to keep busy. Support from others is critical.
 - J. Community Care in Morris Plains.
 - K. Mom passed away and got much help from Homeless Solutions.
 - L. Got divorced and this was traumatic. Tried to commit suicide and counselors helped learn various skills including computer skills. Learned many new things through the (New Bridge) Cross Roads Program.
 - M. Alternate schools and going back to school was big help when having problems. Was in recovery for a long time and working with alternative schools helped gain confidence. Also got assistance from the (Saint Clare's) PACT team. When Mom passed away got lot of help from support programs and didn't have to be alone. There was a lot of stigma at the hospitals but it does seem things are getting better.
 - N. The LEARN Program. Been working with them for many years. Now able to go back to work and this helped with self esteem. Have support financially and emotionally from them. The twelve step program is vital. The DBSA also helped.
 - O. In recovery from addictions and mental illness. Suboxone has been a huge help. It is hard to access these programs. For people with co-occurring problems it's hard to find a program. Often programs are for addictions or mental health and not for those with multiple problems. Believe that for people with a lot of anxiety problems it would help if Suboxone was more accessible. There is a need more combined services.

2. What is missing/what services are hard to find?
 - A. Psychiatrists in the community. Often hospitals require you to see a psychiatrist and there are none available.
 - B. Co-occurring services – Got clean but with great difficulty. Problems getting into integrated care and finding a suboxone program.
 - C. Housing – the paperwork is overwhelming. Need more access to services.
 - D. Psychiatrists are not always educated about drugs. This is not safe for those that are dually diagnosed.
 - E. Lack of country transportation (4x's). If you don't live by a bus stop you can't get transportation. Especially living in Flanders it is so hard to get around. Cut back of bus stops a problem. Need to revamp transportation system. Community Care Behavioral Health transports clients to shopping, some social activities.
 - F. More DVR education opportunities/job opportunities and job training.
 - G. More help to figure out how to get affordable housing.
MHAMC helped with the paperwork for Section 8 housing. That was a tremendous resource.
 - H. Need more addictions treatment services.
 - I. Detox and rehabilitation – all full and need to be self pay.
Received a lot of help from Saint Clare's to stay sober. Lot of services and resources there.
 - J. As a provider finding placement for clients that need rehab and detox services is difficult. There is not enough room in facilities for those that need help. There seems to be a lack of services and often facilities require self pay.
 - K. Need more activities to go to.
 - L. Better communication and understanding by family.
 - M. Need a group like Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) for youth age 13-17. Like to get a group started.

3. How has your family helped?
 - Parents helped get medical attention.
 - Family didn't support him. Now at times they do support him and times they don't.
 - Live with Mom that is 80 and help take care of her and no longer gamble.
 - Two (2) people stated that their parents helped a lot.
 - Immediate family worked with Community Hope to help get needed help.
 - Got pregnant and had some help from family. Also got some community support and education. She helps her family at times and they help her.
 - Father believed in her and never gave up hope. Husband also believes in her and she is going back to school.
 - Saint Clare's also helped. Was hospitalized for depression. Closest friends were also of help. Has a close relationship with God and as time went on got stronger. Never gave up. You must reach out for help and support.
 - Mom was sick and had no place to stay. Sister made phone calls and helped her. With the help of her sister and MHAMC she got into Homeless Solutions.

4. If you could create a service in the County what would it be?
- Two (2) people stated creation of a transportation system. More accessible locations.
 - Incentive to get people to participate in programs. We are privileged to have a lot of services here in the United States and can get treatment. Had a lot of family support which really helped.
 - Way to have affordable medicine. Everyone should be able to get their medicine.
 - Not to have to live in a boarding home – maybe other alternatives to housing.
 - Would like have more to offer for the children of parents with MI. It is stressful and overwhelming having so many family responsibilities. Daughter is sick and conceals her pain and illness since she is worried about her mom.
 - Have a choice of medical insurance—I could only choose one HMO.
 - There needs to be more recreation, more low income housing, and more things to do. It is hard to find jobs and to keep busy.
 - More support groups.
 - More spiritual support for those with mental illness. More support from the church.
 - More organized events and activities for networking.
 - Publication with all available resources.
MHAMC has a service listing and the County is building a human service list on its website.

Mr. Basto thanked everyone for their feedback. Ms. Becker thanked Mr. Basto for his help and for returning as facilitator. Ms. Becker also thanked to Planning Committee for all their work. Ms. Becker asked everyone to fill out the questionnaires and hand them in prior to leaving. Once the questionnaires are tallied she will send out the summary report to all in attendance. The MHSAB will look at the Forum Summary to identify funding priorities and advocacy priorities. MHSAB may write letters advocating for services that were identified as needed in the county. It seems the highest need is transportation. Will try to find out what we can do to help.

Mr. Pinto's provided some information on transportation. In 2009 the bus system was decreased and a number of lines were eliminated, including in the Flanders area. The County doesn't control the bus lines. Mr. Pinto urges everyone to go on www.MorrisDOT.org which has information on it. All may post comments there. Comments may influence future routes. Morris Area Paratransit System (MAPS) is also available in some parts of the county. They are very busy but can help individuals with disabilities and seniors. This may be an option for some.

Mr. Pinto thanked all for attending.

The Forum ended at 7:55 p.m.

Summary of Written Evaluations

A total of 49 Evaluations were submitted.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR THE MHSAAB TO ADDRESS IS:

- Competent medical providers (psychiatrists) and appropriate medications.
- Two (2) participants ... identified access. How to navigate the system.
- Lack of understanding money wise (taking away or subtracting money).
- Doctors and counselors.
- The stigma within the schools, stories, recoveries and helpfulness through mental illness today.
- Two (2) participants... identified housing for people who are in recovery.
- Greystone Hospital's discharging individuals to housing.
- Drugs and alcohol.
- Transportation (3).
- Services and availability of services (2).
- Closing the gap.
- Taking concerns from consumers seriously when making changes.
- Psychiatry, education and psychiatry services that don't require use of one of their counselors but allow you to provide your own.
- Need for substance abuse treatment facilities.
- Need for more rehab and detox services in this county.
- Educating the community (3).
- Help individuals become aware of services in the area.
- Planning more activities and symposiums such as this.
- Stigma (2).
- Helping people overcome drug, alcohol and other issues.
- Instilling hope of recovery and helping people become self sufficient.
- Funding for services.
- Family volunteer opportunities.
- More support.
- Money and benefits.
- Addiction and how to assist people with working with it and away from substance abuse.
- Legal services for people with mental illness.
- Networking and spiritual support.
- Dual addictions.
- Housing.
- Inpatient rehab services of people with mental health issues – they are denied.

IN MY OPINION THE BIGGEST GAP IN MORRIS COUNTY'S SERVICE SYSTEM IS:

- Public transportation that is accessible and addresses the needs of the residents in all areas of the county. (19)
- Housing (5).
- Having programs set up for patients with mental illness who want to get back to work.
- Services for consumers in recovery, social skills, confidence building and help to re-enter society.
- Medicaid.
- Need DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) Program.
- To have affordable prescriptions no co-pay for Medicaid – can't afford it.

- Socialization for all types of consumers.
- Affordable housing with access to transportation.
- Addictions services.
- Funding needed for more services in our area.
- Services offered to consumers.
- Different people getting help equally.
- Education of counselors on benefits system.
- More specialists.
- Youth services.
- Co-Occurring services.

WHAT I WISH I WOULD HAVE SAID AT THE FORUM:

- County needs more long term residential treatment services.
- How my family would understand my mental illness.
- I said it all except my cousin, Ann Marie, needed to bring by Cousin Vincent to this group and tell him that his wife meant a lot to everyone and her job where I got to talk with her until her death.
- Needs for services for people in recovery to help them stay in recovery and build social/life skills so they can re-enter society.
- Have Community Hope and all other consumer housing offer transportation.
- How much I got out of the stigma stories told by other people.
- We need female shelters.
- Thank Community Hope and Saint Clare's Behavioral Health.
- Exciting and very informative. Very well delivered.
- We need more learn programs and support systems.
- Read a client statement on his behalf as he wasn't able to attend.
- Thank you!
- Managers of benefits need education.
- Said a lot – no regrets!
- Need youth programs.
- My needs.
- Lack of intensive co-occurring services.

THE FORUM MET MY EXPECTATIONS:

Yes - 44
 No - 0
 Somewhat - 3

HAVE YOU ATTENDED PREVIOUS CONSUMER AND FAMILY FORUMS?

Yes - 34
 No - 13

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Seventeen (17) participants... identified personal stories.
- Be a support to others.
- Attending to the needs of the disabled.
- Going around with everyone to give support services and vocational services like the ones I have.
- Stigma discussion (3).
- Five (5) participants... identified good speakers.
- Supports that are available that may not be known.

- Audience participation.
- Stigma and need to get rid of negative opinions.
- Prejudice and hate toward people with mental illness.
- Education.
- Consumer input on system needs.
- All had something to take home.
- Keynote speaker.
- Personal stories – Valerie and Andrea.
- Wishful desires.
- Everything.

MY SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE NEXT YEAR’S FORUM:

- Bigger space (3).
- Bring a family member to talk about stigmas and how to talk about possible solutions for the problems.
- Share more personal stigma stories – myself included.
- More food ran out again this year.
- Better parking - it’s a bit long to tolerate for consumers. (2)
- Different location.
- Perhaps smaller groups so consumers can talk more to each other.
- Great topics this year!
- Not have tables in rows hard to get around.
- More comfortable environment.
- Sharing your recovery forum –talk about recovery.
- Better access to resource tables.
- Hot food.

TOPICS

- Depression.
- Reaching out to people who do not like you who you want in your life.
- Making commitments to the family members who you really love and want in your life.
- Housing options how to navigate.
- Self injury awareness.
- Wellness and recovery.
- Anything on twelve step programs.
- Mental illness information, etc.
- Who to get in touch with for services.
- Wellness topics; focus on wellness wheel.
- Qualifying for benefits.
- Helping families cope.
- Continuing services.
- Stigma.

I CURRENTLY RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES:

- Saint Clare’s Transitions, 23 Sylvan Way, Parsippany, NJ.
- 450 Club
- Three (3) participants... identified NewBridge Services
- Crossroads of NewBridge Services -1-1
- Foundation of the Handicapped
- Morristown Memorial Hospital

- Saint Clare's
- Morristown Medical Center
- Saint Clare's Supportive Housing,
- Mental Health Association
- Saint Clare's Supportive Education and Supported Employment
- Saint Clare's Career Counseling
- Homeless Solutions/ Safe Haven
- PACT, LEARN Program—Saint Clare's
- Two (2) participants... identified Morris Self-Help Center.
- Saint Clare's Career Services
- MHA Supportive Employment
- Supportive Housing
- Mental Health Coalition
- Two (2) participants... identified MHAMC.
- Two (2) participants... identified Community Hope.

FAMILY MEMBER 3, CONSUMER 17, PROVIDER 17