

**MORRIS COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ADVISORY  
BOARD – FEBRUARY 9, 2012**

**Members Present:**

Charlie Berman, Citizen Representative  
Karen Cutaneo, Citizen Representative  
Carol DeGraw, United Way of Northern New Jersey  
Peggy Himsl, Citizen Representative  
Fran Libasci, Citizen Representative  
Marcy McMann, Citizen Representative  
Mary Jane Melo, Citizen Representative  
LaJuan Tucker, MCPO  
Barbara Ward, Citizen Representative  
Deborah Ward, Citizen Representative

**Also Attending:**

Laurie Becker, MCDHS  
Valerie Fox, Consumer  
Beth Jacobson, MCDHS  
Charles LaRussa, Consumer  
Steve Nebesni, MCDHS  
Patricia Mocarski, MCDHS  
Vivian Schwartz, NJMHAS/NRO

**I. Call to Order and Approval of January 12, 2012 minutes –**

Ms. DeGraw, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m. There was a motion to approve the January minutes. The motion to approve the January minutes was made by Mary Jane Melo and seconded by Charlie Berman. All were in favor with one abstention by Fran Libasci and no opposition.

**II. Welcome and Introductions -**

Ms. DeGraw welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

**III. Discussion and vote on Telepsychiatry re: Saint Clare's Screening Waiver Request**

Ms. Becker stated that at the last meeting the board decided to delay writing a letter of support until more information was made available. Ms. Becker offered to get feedback and further information from other counties using the Center for Family Guidance (CFG) Network Company's telepsychiatry program. Ms. Becker spoke with several counties including: Warren, Middlesex, Gloucester and Salem about their experience using the Center for Family Guidance (CFG) Network Company's telepsychiatry program. Most stated they had a very positive experience using CFG. All counties Ms. Becker spoke to stated they had good access to services and all physicians were well credentialed. Client choice is the key and clients do have a choice. In Somerset County in five years there were only six clients that didn't like or

accept the use of telepsychiatry. In Gloucester County there were five clients that didn't like or accept the use of telepsychiatry. Most clients accepted the service.

There are special concerns using this service related to children with certain childhood disorders. In some of these situations the use of telepsychiatry isn't appropriate. Ms. Becker also asked the counties she spoke with about the negatives of using telepsychiatry and was told there were none known. Ms. Becker reminded the board this waiver is just for the face to face portion of the evaluation. All other requirements of the screening law such as the medical evaluation, consultation, signing of the physician's certificate, prescribed timeframes, must be performed according to state regulations.

Somerset County stated that it is important for CFG to get the signed certificate to the hospital in the time frame allotted. One of the board members suggested that the recommendation letter include a statement that CFG be regularly monitored and assessed by Saint Clare's leadership on all screening assessment protocols. It was also suggested that the letter recommend CFG make presentations to consumers so they are informed and aware of the hospital's use of telepsychiatry.

Ms. Becker stated that she spoke with Dr. James Varrell at length over the telephone after the January MHSAAB meeting. Dr. Varrell wanted to know what the board thought about their presentation. Ms. Becker reported to him members were cautiously optimistic about the benefits of telepsychiatry but concerned that CFG didn't convey a client focused approach. Dr. Varrell stated that this is not the case and would like to come back to a future MHSAAB meeting to clarify CFG services and address any concerns with members.

Ms. DeGraw thanked Ms. Becker for this information. Ms. Debra Ward said she was a little uncomfortable with telepsychiatry and did some research on it. She looked on the internet and really couldn't find anything negative about it. There are some folks that are not comfortable with computers and they may be uncomfortable with this service. There are not a lot of emergency departments that are actually using telepsychiatry. She didn't find a lot of information about outcomes. She added that this is an exciting development and hopefully clinical services will be high quality at the reported cost savings. The face- to- face contact and personal touch has to be a loss to some degree.

Ms. Cutaneo stated that in some hospitals they are using Skype sessions already. In these cases the patient signs a waiver of confidentiality and the conversation is not allowed to be recorded. Ms. Cutaneo believes this is very helpful for the consumer since through a video link the therapists are readily available to them. She stated that there seems to be a lot of positive feedback and not much negative feedback.

Ms. Becker stated that she asked Dr. Varrell about the time involved from when medical information is received to when the actual assessment takes place. Dr. Varrell stated that average time is 110 minutes for the whole process to be conducted. The benefit of telepsychiatry is there is not a long wait. At Saint Clare's when the

psychiatrist is not there patients often have to wait many hours. At times, when the patient sees the psychiatrist, he has been sedated due to the long time lapse. This makes it challenging for the psychiatrist to get a good assessment and make diagnoses.

Ms. DeGraw asked Ms. Becker if mental health administrators from other Counties report that this process actually shortened the waiting time in the emergency departments. Ms. Becker stated in the affirmative, that telepsychiatry shortened the waiting time and helped facilitate quicker transfer of patients.

Ms. Himsl asked if patients at Saint Clare's could be evaluated by a Doctor in another state. Ms. Becker stated that is possible. Some discussion ensued and concern over the regional differences between the doctors and the various states. Ms. DeGraw stated that could happen with telepsychiatry or in person since doctors and patients are from various regions. Ms. McMann asked Ms. Fox how she felt about telepsychiatry. Ms. Fox stated that she believes this is a good thing and that Saint Clare's will be carefully monitoring the process.

Ms. McMann made a motion to write a letter of support to DMHAS supporting the telepsychiatry waiver with certain recommendations:

- Make sure communications is over a secure private line.
- Make sure M.D.'s conducting the evaluations meet N.J. credentialing requirements.
- Abide by the screening regulations.
- Client is given a choice.
- This service is only used when psychiatrists are off site and not as a substitute for a face to face assessment when a psychiatrist is covering in the hospital.
- If there are medical conditions which compromise clinical aspects or ability to diagnose patient face to face be provided.
- Staff is provided with training on usage and education is provided at consumer groups about the service.
- Follow up and review periodically, in approximately six months.

Ms. Cutaneo seconded the motion. All were in favor with no opposition and no abstentions. The motion was carried. Ms. Becker suggested the recommendation that Saint Clare's give the board a status report in six months on this service. MHSAB agreed to include this in the recommendation letter.

#### **IV. Chair Report – Board Orientation – Carol DeGraw**

Orientation Packets for the Advisory Council members were distributed and reviewed.

The importance of this Advisory Committee in regard to our funding process was expressed. The orientation packets distributed included information on funding, by-laws, fact sheet, profile form, conflict of interest statement, organization charts, and meeting dates. A primary goal is to identify mental health and addictions service needs

of residents in our community in order to strengthen the service system. Ms. Becker, Ms. Jacobson and Mr. Nebesni spoke about their respective roles in the Division. Ms. Becker stated that over \$21 million comes into the county for Mental Health Services. There is also \$1.2 million that comes into the county for Addiction Services.

Ms. Becker asked the board if anyone had any questions. Ms. Cutaneo asked about terms of office. Ms. Becker stated that as a MHSAAB board member there is a six year term. The Freeholders office will let the board know annually if any members must come off the board and when their term is up. Ms. DeGraw passed around the sheets for the board to sign up for subcommittees. She also passed around the contact list for any updates in addresses or phone numbers to be made.

Ms. Fox stated that she attended the State Forum for Mental Health Consumers and it was very informative. Lynn Kovich, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, participated. There was information given on HMOs, Medicaid and the effect of changes on consumers. Ms. Fox stated that it appears that many consumers are going to non mental health professionals to get their prescriptions and Ms. Fox believes it is probably due to insurance coverage.

**V. Subcommittee Reports –  
Funding – No Report  
Planning –**

Ms. Jacobson stated that according to an email from DMHAS, the 2014-2017 Planning Guidelines are to be sent out this week. Some elements of the process will be similar, but some will be new. Dr. Culleton from DMHAS intends to write procedural guidelines to better explain how to develop some of the content of the County Comprehensive Plan (CCP). The recommendation is that the Counties start to put the planning committee together and start thinking about scheduling meetings in the first three quarters of the year, with the last quarter dedicated to producing the plan. However, Dr. Culleton will be away until March 1. Ms. Jacobson advised that invitations will be sent to all sectors of the human services community to be part of the planning process.

**Legislative/Advocacy -**

Ms. Becker stated that the annual Public Forum for Consumer and Families will be held again in June. There has already been one planning meeting. The next meeting is scheduled on March 14 at 1:30 p.m. at 30 Schuyler in Morristown. All are welcome and help is appreciated as the board sponsors this Forum. This Forum is a great opportunity to invite the public and those who utilize services to speak on what services are working well and where improvements are needed. The theme will focus on erasing stigma. The planning committee would like to invite three to four individuals to talk about their personal recovery stories. Peter Basto, University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), will be back to facilitate the event.

Ms. Becker provided copy of a recent legislation that was introduced that would allow certain psychologists to provide psychotropic medication to clients. There was no

stipulation that the psychologists be supervised by medical doctors, a requirement that may strengthen this proposed legislation. Ms. Becker asked Mr. Berman if he would be able to follow this and keep the MHSAAAB informed of the outcome.

Ms. Becker stated there was an article in the Star Ledger on January 18 regarding advocacy of addiction services from Governor Christie. Ms. Jacobson distributed the article. In his State of the State address on January 17, 2012, Governor Christie proposed a transformation of New Jersey's drug policy so that nonviolent offenders with substance-use disorders would be treated instead of incarcerated. Ms. Cutaneo suggested it might be a good idea to invite Governor Christie to one of our Advisory Board meetings or to the Consumer and Family Forum.

**County Alliance Steering Committee (CASS) – Steve Nebesni**

The CASS has not met since the last MHSAAAB meeting and the next CASS meeting will be on March 12 at 30 Schuyler Place in the Blue Conference Room at 3:30 p.m.

**VI. Staff Reports –**

**Mental Health Administrator – Laurie Becker**

Ms Becker reported that the Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) for office space at the “nonprofit mall” on the Greystone property should be out within a couple of months.

Ms. Becker has been invited to Monmouth County to discuss Morris County's development of the Integrated PAC as Monmouth is considering movement in this direction.

The Morris County Disaster Recovery Group met today. This group represents many that donated time to help those in need including construction workers, Habitat for Humanity, FEMA and others. Trink Schwartz (previously worked for Hospitality Link prior to their closing) has been hired in a temporary six month position to bring together this recovery group and help those many folks that are still recovering from the hurricane. There is \$6.2 million that will come into the state for case management.

**Municipal Alliance Coordinator – Steve Nebesni**

Mr. Nebesni and Ms. Jacobson attended the first week of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) Coalition Academy at the Hyatt in Morristown. The Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (GCADA) is offering this three week training to the Alliances and County teams as an intensive training on coalition building, environmental change, and the strategic prevention framework. The next week long session will be in May.

Mr. Nebesni is currently processing the fourth quarter Alliance reports for 2011. The County needs to meet the GCADA deadline of February 29. The 2012 Alliance site reviews are coming up and the 2012 Letters of Agreements are being received by the county.

The annual Natural High Event is scheduled for March 22 at the Mennen Sports Arena in Morris Township from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. This event is free and resource tables will be available. Due to limited capacity pre-registration is required. To register please visit: [www.morrishumanservices.org](http://www.morrishumanservices.org) or call 973-285-6860.

There will also be a Natural High Comedy Night and book signing with Dr. Matt Bellace on April 25, location still to be determined. Further information will be available at the next meeting. Last night Mr. Nebesni and Ms. Jacobson presented to a Graduate class at William Paterson University on the Municipal Alliance Initiative and the programs provided in the community. An overview of both treatment and prevention resources in the county was given, highlighting the full continuum of care. The presentation was well-received.

**Addiction Services Administrator – Beth Jacobson**

Ms. Jacobson reported that 2012 Chapter 51 Subgrants are scheduled to be fully executed on February 22, 2012. Complete subgrant packages will be mailed out by the end of February.

**VII. Joint PAC Report – Laurie Becker**

Although the minutes were not available, Ms. Becker reported that Dave Roden, New Hope Foundation, brought up the issue that the no smoking mandate is causing problems for residential addictions providers. While providers are working with clients on smoking cessation, the reality is that this is not always possible. This is a practical concern and topic of much discussion. The next PAC meeting is March 2 at 10:00 a.m. at Atlantic Health Care's Corporate Office at 475 South Street in Morristown.

**VIII. State Liaison Reports – Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) –Vivian Schwartz**

**Requests for Proposals (RFPs):**

**Supportive Housing Services for Consumers Discharged from State Psychiatric Hospitals with a History of Forensically Involved Commitment**

Mandatory conference date of February 8, 2012. The proposal is due on March 19 and award notification by April 27, 2012.

**Development of Involuntary Outpatient Commitment (IOC) Programs**

Mandatory conference date of January 25, 2012. The proposal is due on February 29 and award notification by April 4, 2012.

**Development of an Addictions Recovery Center**

Mandatory conference date of January 25, 2012. The proposal is due on March 14, 2012 and award notification by April 22, 2012.

**Expansion of Existing Programs for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) and Residential Intensive Support Teams (RIST)**

Mandatory conference date of November 7, 2011. The proposal was due November 28, 2011 and award notification by January 10, 2012. Awards went to RHD (Passaic

County), Bridgeway (Passaic County), Bridgeway (Union County), and Bridgeway (Tri-county, Warren, Hunterdon and Somerset).

**Development of Mental Health Cultural Competence Training Centers**

Mandatory conference date of November 7, 2011. The proposal was due on December 5, 2011 and award notification by January 19, 2012. Preliminary award announcement will be delayed until 1/24/12.

**Start Up Costs for Licensed Substance Abuse Treatment Providers to Provide Co-Occurring Services to Drug Court Population**

The proposal due date was November 30, 2011 and award notification by December 29, 2011.

**Outpatient Psychiatric Services Intensive Outpatient Treatment**

There will be a Bidders' Conference on October 29, 2011. The proposal was due on November 26, 2011 and award notification by December 28, 2011.

**Other Announcements**

The Department of Health and Senior Services recently announced that the Universal Transfer Form (UTF) is being mandated for use in all transfers between healthcare facilities effective October 30, 2011. The UTF will help ensure that appropriate patient information concerning medical status is conveyed at the time of transfer between the facilities. Last April, when the Consensus Guidelines for Medical Clearance were finalized by a workgroup that was assisted by the New Jersey Hospital Associations, it was announced that the Psychiatric Transfer – Inpatient Interfacility Transfer Form was developed for conveying mental health and substance use information would be become effective when the UTF was implemented.

The 2012 schedule is posted on the web site for the NJ Citizen's Advisor Board, Mental Health Planning Council. The meetings are held at 50 E. State Street in Trenton in room 366 on the third floor between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

There will be a forum on understanding Medicaid Benefit Changes for Mental Health Medications at the Morris County Public Safety Training Academy on February 2 between 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

A reminder that the Mental Health Board must have at least seven appointed Board Members. The Board must have eight meetings a year and any paid or unpaid employee/volunteer of funded agencies is considered a conflict of interest.

**IX. Old Business – Ms. Becker**

At the next Human Services Advisory Council meeting there will be guests from Homeless Solutions speaking. They will talk about the homeless services needed and their viewpoint. There are some services offered in other counties that we don't have. All are welcome to attend this meeting on February 22, 2012 at 340 West Hanover Avenue in Morris Township at 5:30 p.m.

Ms. Becker stated that it would be good to start tracking data of individuals relocated from Hagadorn to Greystone. It would be interesting to find out the patients that are now in Greystone originating from Morris County. There was no response to the June

2010 letter sent to Senator Pennacchio from the MHSAAAB and the Advisory Council on Aging, Disabilities & Veterans regarding the concerns related to the proposed closing of Hagedorn. This is a hospital that has provided specialized psychiatric services to seniors with serious mental illness.

**X. New Business – Mr. Berman**

Mr. Berman reported on the Harassment Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Law that is currently in place in the schools. This is an unfunded mandate that is placing a great deal of added work on school personnel, mainly Student Assistance Counselor's (SAC's) and guidance counselors. Mr. Berman encouraged writing legislators regarding funding to accompany this law. Ms. Becker suggested that the CASS could write a letter of support for funding for this as it is now a non funded mandate.

Ms. Melo stated that it seems that there are a lot of problems in the local schools with bullying and fighting going on. Mr. Berman suggested having a presentation here or at the Youth Services Advisory Committee (YSAC) on this new HIB Law.

Mr. Berman also announced that Willow Tree now has a new support group for Young Women in Recovery. Many young women are uncomfortable going to Alcoholics Anonymous so this is a good alternative program for them. The support group is on Tuesdays for 1 ½ hours. Please call the Willow Tree for further information at (973) 682-8733. Mr. Berman will give Ms. Jacobson further information to share with everyone.

**XI. Open to the Public –**

Ms. Fox is curious why consumers are more often going to physicians and not psychiatrists. Some discussion ensued and it was mentioned that this could be due to individual's insurance coverage. Insurance is more likely to cover a regular physician than a psychiatrist. Ms. Fox stated that these meetings are always excellent and informative and that the Board should be proud of all the information that is shared.

Mr. LaRussa stated that the Cross Systems Meetings are on the first Wednesday of the month at 340 West Hanover Avenue in Morris Township at 2:00 p.m. In April there will be a presentation on substance abuse and adolescents. All are welcome to attend.

Mr. LaRussa also mentioned that the Earned Income Tax Credit fliers are on the table. Earned Income Tax Credit is a tax credit for lower-income workers that meet certain rules. Please see fliers for further information.

**XII. Adjourn –**

Ms. DeGraw made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Fetzer MocarSKI  
Program Development Aide