

**Meeting Minutes of  
The Governor's Council on Behavioral Health  
8:30 A.M., Thursday, December 14, 2006**

The Governor's Council on Behavioral Health met at 8:40 a.m. on Thursday, December 14, 2006, in Barry Hall's Conference Room 126, 14 Harrington Road, Cranston, Rhode Island.

Members Present: Richard Leclerc, Chair; Cynthia Barry; Linda Bryan; Stephanie Culhane; Sandra DelSesto; Scotti DiDanato; Elizabeth Earls; Jennifer McCarthy for Chaz Gross; Joseph Le; Peter Mendoza; Reed Cosper; Representative Bruce Long; and Noreen Shawcross.

Ex-Officio: Craig Stenning, MHRH; Jeanne Smith and Sandy Woods, DCYF; Michele Palemo,  
Members Present: Department of Education; and Colleen Polselli, Department of Health.

Guest: Lisa Clark and Melissa A. Siple of Reckitt Benckiser.

Staff: Charles Williams, Corinna Roy; Kristen Quinlan, and Mary Ann Nassa.

Once a quorum was established, the Chair, Richard Leclerc, called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. After introductions were conducted, Richard entertained a motion to accept the Minutes of November 14, 2006. Elizabeth Earls motioned to accept the minutes and Scotti DiDanato seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the minutes were approved as submitted.

**UPDATES ON CO-OCCURRING ACTION PLAN**

Richard referenced an attachment in the November Minutes, the *Revised Co-Occurring Action Plan*, and introduced Kristen Quinlan who reported that a meeting was held on September 28, 2006 to assemble a team of stakeholders and government agencies to discuss the development of a plan for serving people with co-occurring disorders. Kristen stated that as a result of that meeting, four different workgroups were developed to work on four different priorities for the plan. The next step is to assemble a team/workgroup from the original September meeting group to meet once a month to talk about the benchmarks and implementers in order to get the plan moving to the next level.

Kristen reported that a letter was sent to recruit for the workgroup earlier this week, and she expects to get responses soon. Kristen also reported that the original group that met in September will be meeting quarterly.

Richard thanked Kristen for her report and stated that the Governor's Council will be reviewing the *Co-Occurring Action Plan* on a quarterly basis.

**UPDATES FROM MHRH**

Craig Stenning reported that the review of the proposals for the RFP for the purchase of combined psychiatric inpatient and medical detoxification services has been completed and the recommendation from that review was being forwarded to Director Nelson today. Craig is hopeful that the recommendation will go to the State Purchasing Agent by Monday, December 18. Craig also added that the process is confidential until the State Purchasing Agent releases the successful bid. Finally, Craig reported that the start date has been postponed until, at the earliest, February 1, 2007.

Craig reported that additional funding has been issued under the last year of the SIG grant, maximizing the Federal expenditures as much as possible. With a short-turn around proposal period, five (5) small proposals were selected, totaling approximately \$279,000 worth of additional funding. Craig expects the expenditure of some additional dollars for the media portion of that proposal.

Craig reported that on Tuesday, December 12, Director Nelson released the Quality Assessment Review in written form, which will be posted on the MHRH website. Craig reported that the major points within the areas of Behavioral Health were a review of capacity issues, the need for additional less-intensive levels of service than hospitalization, the change of some current contracts to make them more performance outcome based, and changing the continuum of care in the area of behavioral health to include the Eleanor Slater Hospital.

Craig announced that this afternoon Director Nelson and other cabinet directors would be meeting with the House Finance Committee to discuss the 2007 budget as it currently stands. In the area of behavioral health they are looking at where the Department stands in regards to any of the budget reduction exercises that are included in the budget. In Behavioral Health, the major reduction was incorporated into the RIActII implementation, which is now in place. Craig reported that the 2008 budget was submitted; and with the difficulty of the current state budget, he anticipates difficulties with the 2008 proposed state budget.

Craig reported that he has held one meeting regarding the outpatient contracts but asked to postpone the discussion this month because of a death in his family that called him out of the country. He looks forward to a report being presented at the February 2007 meeting.

Richard Leclerc asked if it was possible for the Council to obtain a copy of the MHRH Master Plan that was issued on Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. Craig stated that it was his understanding that the MHRH Master Plan would also be available on line at [www.http://mhrh.ri.gov](http://mhrh.ri.gov). Richard stated that the report includes details of new initiatives from three partnership subcommittees: Quality, Access, and Consumer Innovation. Richard stated that in the near future, an update will be presented on each of those committees either in written form or a verbal report.

Richard stated that the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council (RIPEC) has been meeting on various recommendations for changes in the Medicaid system that will affect behavioral healthcare. Richard stated that those recommendations originate from two subcommittees of the Medicaid Reform Task Force, go back to the full task force, and then are forwarded to the Governor. Elizabeth Earls stated that ~~the recommendations are expected to be out by March at the latest. Richard stated that information~~ regarding reorganization and cost containment issues will be provided to the Council as it becomes available. He suggested that if any Council members wanted it as an agenda item, that they contact him or Corinna to make accommodations on future agendas.

Deleted: those

#### **UPDATES FROM DCYF**

Jeanne Smith reported that Janet Anderson would be attending next month's meeting to discuss the budget constraints facing DCYF. Janet will speak about her plans for avoiding cuts in services.

Jeanne displayed the poster and brochure for the statewide Emergency Services (ES) for Children. DCYF will distribute the brochure and poster throughout the state next month which includes the toll-

free statewide ES number (866) 429-3979. Jeanne reported that this program will officially be launched with a press conference on January 9, 2007. Richard clarified that the service is a 24 hour, seven-day a week statewide program coordinated by Gateway. He stated that there is a child-trained psychiatrist on call off hours who will be accessed if needed along with a whole network of care. He stated that DCYF is funding the program which includes hospitals along with all of the mental health centers. During off hours, a clinician will respond within 15-minutes of the call received by a live answering service. Jeanne Smith added that the campaign will be in English and Spanish. Joseph Le suggested that the information include South East Asian languages and offered his agency which has a youth program to work with DCYF to implement the translation.

Jeanne reported that the Partnership for Youth in Transition, which is an initiative between DCYF, MHRH and the Department of Education include children from ages 14 to 21 who would be slated for adult services and are identified earlier so that DCYF can plan for them. Jeanne reported that they have reached the end of the first-year plan, and there is a report that will be presented to the Children's Cabinet. Once the report has been presented, Jeanne will bring copies for distribution at the following Governor's Council meeting.

Noreen Shawcross expressed that the Office of Housing and Community Development is interested in having providers think about housing services for the group Jeanne describes after they leave DCYF's care. She stated a desire to have a set-aside from their Neighbor and Opportunities Program funding for supportive housing for this particular group and welcomes proposals in that area.

Sandy Woods reported that over the last year there has been an increase in the number of children being removed from their homes and coming into care in the Child Welfare/Protective side of DCYF. She reported that from year-to-year, approximately one-third of the children coming into care are because of parent's substance abuse. Sandy stated that this translates into the real issue of access to services for substance abuse and mental health. Sandy also stated that access to housing is another issue. Sandy further reported that there has been a reduction and freeze in hiring at DCYF, and social workers are at a bare minimum.

Richard suggested that the Children's Shelter Placement and CASSP program will be listed on next month's agenda for Janet Anderson's response as well as her comments on the 2007 budget.

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Corinna Roy reported that the Federal government recently conducted a PATH site visit. Corinna stated that a preliminary report has been received and that a final report is expected in a couple weeks. Corinna plans to have that available for distribution at the next Council meeting.

Corinna distributed copies of the *State Action Plan to End Homelessness (See Attachment)* which was recently approved by the Governor. Corinna reported that it was reviewed by the Federal Government during the site visit, and they found it very interesting and forward in its design. Corinna welcomed any comments regarding the document. Corinna introduced Noreen Shawcross to discuss the closing of the Welcome Arnold Center and the plans for the new model, scattered-site apartment program.

Noreen stated that the distributed *State Action Plan to End Homelessness* was a Policy Academy plan. Noreen stated that the most important concept in the plan is systems change moving from a system of

shelter to supportive housing. Through the Neighborhood Opportunities Program, it has funded well over 100 units of permanent supportive housing. Noreen reported that they are ready to sign a contract immediately and go forward with construction within six months. The apartments will be available within a year or two. The Office of Housing and Community Development wants to work together with all agencies to get the housing to the people who are in most need. They have passed a housing bond for higher-income individuals, those making between 30 and 60 thousand dollars a year. Working with this group loosens up a very tight-rental market. Noreen stated that regulations have been written and are being prepared for publication and asked that everyone review them on the website: <http://www.hrc.ri.gov>. There will be two public hearings at the end of January.

Noreen announced that Building No. 93, the Welcome Arnold Shelter, which accommodates about 100 people a night, will soon become the site of the new State Police Headquarters. The Governor has pledged that the shelter will not be demolished until there are 100 replacement beds somewhere else. Noreen stated that it has been a struggle since March to find those beds on the John O. Pastore Complex and does not believe that it will happen.

Deleted: #

Noreen announced that after meeting with the Governor, he has given them the go-ahead to create a new model around individuals who will be put in independent living situations within the community. Noreen stated that there will be a 1 to 20 ratio for case management of these individuals. They will be utilizing main stream services within the community, and the sites will be scattered around the state void of zoning issues. The apartments will be two bedrooms with 4 people in each apartment. Those chosen will be carefully screened. They have already moved 12 women into apartments, and they are doing great. They will be considering the pool of people at Harrington Hall which consists of 100 men and 60 men from Welcome Arnold and select those who they are comfortable with to be placed in an independent living situation in the community.

Noreen stated that her office is in the process of writing the RFP which is due January 1, 2007; and the Governor's Office is hopeful that they can implement this by March 1, 2007.

Noreen spoke about Project Homeless Connect, an event that took place last week and was promoted nationally by the USA Interagency Council on Homeless to provide one-stop shopping for people who are homeless. It was held at the Saint Peter and Paul Cathedral Hall and breakfast, lunch and snacks were made available along with some entertainment. Noreen reported that over 30 different agencies within state government and the community participated along with 49 volunteers who escorted the people from table-to-table helping them fill out applications and learn about services. Three hundred homeless people attended. During the event, the Governor announced the plan to end homelessness in front of an audience of people who are the most affected by homelessness. Noreen stated that it was a huge undertaking and enormously successful. She also added that this will become an annual event. Noreen also reported that the homeless individuals who attended and who were surveyed stated that almost everyone who attended got something out of it.

Stephanie Culhane asked if there is a plan of action in place in order to educate the public about the program and the living arrangements in their neighborhoods once they have implemented the project. Noreen stated that for this particular arrangement, unlike opening a shelter or a group home, they are not required to do anything. They will be trying to choose neighborhoods very carefully in order to prevent this group of people from standing out. Richard asked how many apartments they anticipate needing.

Noreen stated that they currently need 22 apartments. Presently, they have 3, where 12 women are currently housed. Richard clarified that the RFP will be soliciting vendors to provide some or all of these apartments. Noreen stated that they are open to innovation, but are generally looking for 5 providers that will supply 5 apartments each which will work well with the full-time case manager. Although, she stated that agencies can split the responsibility with a property manager agency and a service provider agency. Noreen stated that an important point to make is that they are able to take their current shelter budget and be able to have all of these apartments in the community. The expenses will come from the 24-hour staff.

There was some discussion about some of the problems and situations that may arise through the program. Noreen stated that everyone will be screened, including BCI checks, to make sure that the folks that are out there are those individuals who are our neighbors anyway. Noreen stated that they anticipate some problems and that is why they need a fall-back shelter. Anyone engaging in illegal activities will be immediately discharged from the program. With those discharged individuals, they will be working with relapse prevention and connecting those people to treatment.

Reed Cosper asked what the future is of the Overflow Shelter for excess Welcome Arnold recipients and for all of the second tier shelters across the state. Noreen stated that the only institutional shelters available in the State are Harrington Hall, which is called the Overflow Shelter, Welcome Arnold and the Prairie Avenue Shelter. All of the other shelters are small community-based facilities. She did state that Harrington Hall will have to be addressed as a system because it is not in good condition in spite of the efforts to try to improve conditions with the assistance from MHRH. Reed stated that his concerns are less about Harrington Hall's facilities and more about people and their histories of sexual assault and substance abuse who are filtered out of other shelters into Harrington Hall. Noreen does not see it that way. She stated that Harrington Hall has been open since February of 2003, and homeless men self-select Harrington Hall. Reed stated that it is his understanding that people are refused at Welcome Arnold and sent to Harrington Hall and many of those refused are registered sex offenders. Noreen disagreed with Reed and stated that neither Welcome Arnold nor Harrington Hall do any kind of record checks. People show up, people give their name, people's possessions are searched and people are given a bed. If someone shows up intoxicated and are not causing a problem, they are given a bed for the night at either shelter. Finally, it was understood that Harrington Hall would not be closing.

Richard Leclerc suggested that *Million Dollar Murray*, written by Malcolm Gladwell for the *New Yorker Magazine*, be an article for reference. It makes a case about a gentleman named Murray that would cost the city of Reno 1 million dollars a year to manage him. His theory is that it would be easier to solve the homeless problem than try to manage it because of the cost.

Noreen requested that the Council endorse the program and make a commitment to work concurrently on the plan to end homelessness where it intersects with Behavior Health.

Liz Earls reminded the Council that the deadline for RItCare eligibility for non-citizens is December 31, 2006.

Charles Williams announced that he anticipates hearing from the Rhode Island Foundation today regarding the Council's request for funding for planning. Charles stated that he will inform the Council as soon as he receives the information.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING**

There was no further business. Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 9, at 1:00 p.m. in the first floor Conference Room 126 at the Barry Hall Building.**

Minutes respectfully recorded and written by:

Mary Ann Nassa  
Secretary, Governor's Council on Behavioral Health

*Attachment: State Action Plan to End Homelessness*