

# **Long Term Care Coordinating Council**

**September 12, 2007**

**State House Room 313**

**Providence, RI**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Meeting called to order by Chairwoman Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts at 10:02 a.m.**

**Minutes of the June 13, 2007 meeting were unanimously approved with one change.**

**The Chair recognized Ray Rusin from the Department of Health to report on nursing home deficiencies.**

**The Chair introduced the interim report of the special house commission to study the administration and function of the Rhode Island Veterans Home.**

**The Chair introduced Gary Alexander, Director of the Department of Human Services which runs the Veterans Home. Director Alexander**

indicated that the Department of Human Services is conducting an internal investigation at the Veterans Home regarding allegations addressed in the House commission's interim report. Director Alexander stressed that by all accounts, the care that residents of the veterans home are receiving is of the highest quality. Director Alexander stated that he personally visits the veterans home frequently to ensure the highest level of care and proper administration of the home.

Roberta Hawkins commented that the level of care at the veterans home is very high, that the family council is active in the daily function of the veterans home and that the improvements in the quality of care and the management of the home have expanded in the past 5 years.

A question was raised as to why the house commission was formed. Director Alexander stated that he was not aware of the reasons for the creation of the commission.

The chair introduced the state Mental Health Advocate, H. Reed Cospers, Esq., who serves as chair of the special house commission. Mr. Cospers began by stating that the commission was formed in response to the deficiencies found at Walter Reed Medical Center to ensure that similar deficiencies were not present at the Rhode Island Veterans Home. Mr. Cospers thanked Director Alexander and Roberta Hawkins for their commitment to quality care at the veterans home.

**Mr. Cospers stated that the commission feels that there are positive and negative attributes of the administration at the veterans home. He stated that the quality of care in at the veterans home was high. There was a discussion about patient records and confidentiality.**

**Members and participants asked Mr. Cospers about the work of the commission and the interim report. Specific questions included the choice of wording in the report, whether the commission found allegations made by family members to be a pattern or isolated cases, why no physicians were interviewed before the issuance of the interim report, and the expected additional activities of the commission. Members of the Long Term Care Coordinating Council, many of whom have decades of experience in the long term care field, advised Mr. Cospers on behalf of the study commission that the use of language and choice of terminology in study commission reports can often have a profound impact on the perception of legitimacy of the reports themselves and also recommended some strategies to broaden the scope of the inquiry of the commission in order to get the most balanced view of the functioning of the Veterans Home.**

**The chair recognized Al Santos who discussed the need for Rhode Island to address the issue of pressure ulcers. Roberta Hawkins stated that the Alliance for Better Long Term Care expects to introduce legislation mandating reporting of pressure ulcers in patients transferring from community based care to nursing homes. Susan Sweet asked where the Rhode Island ranks among other states**

**on the pressure ulcer issue. Mr. Santos stated that we are in the middle of the pack nationally. Jennifer Wood stated that the Lieutenant Governor will follow up directly with the Director of Health on the efforts that the Department is already pursuing in the pressure ulcer issue in Rhode Island and that the Office of Lieutenant Governor will commit to playing a supportive role in bringing together the necessary parties, in partnership with the Department of Health and others, to pursue positive forward movement in this issue in Rhode Island.**

**Ms. Wood stated that the next meeting of the council would be held on October 17, 2007. This is a one-time rescheduling from the usual meeting time of the second Wednesday morning of the month.**

**The Council adjourned at 11:30am.**