

MINUTES - MINORITY HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Providence Housing Authority

September 24, 2007

PRESENT: Maria Nunez, Yvette Mendez, Vinnie Velasquez, Dannie Ritchie, Maria Barros, Deborah Correia Morales, Helena Friedmann, Fred Sneesby, Norma Hardy, Carrie Bridges, Aleatha Dickerson, Betty Bernal, Bill Waters

I. Call to Order

Aleatha Dickerson called the meeting to order.

II. Welcome from Host Agency

Fred Sneesby of the Providence Housing Authority welcomed the group to the meeting site. Fred described the services offered at 50 Laurel Hill Avenue specifically, the services of the Providence Housing Authority (PHA) in general, and the current state of subsidized housing in Providence. Fred distributed a PHA Health Profile describing the demographics and health status of the residents in the elderly & disabled high rises. The Minority Health Promotion Center at PHA provided health education about diabetes and nutrition, as well as support groups. Other health conditions named by residents include asthma and depression. Fred is concerned about availability and access to appropriate mental health support services for PHA residents as this seems to be a key obstacle to better education, employment, and health outcomes.

III. Review of Minutes

Minutes from June 4, 2007 accepted without correction.

IV. Sub-committee Breakouts

No breakouts this month

V. Old Business / Minority Health Advisory Committee Updates

A. OMH Update:

B. State Partners Updates

DEA: Maria announced that open enrollment for Medicare Part D is coming up. Seniors can call The Point at 462-4444 to speak with an insurance counselor who can do a plan comparison for them.

DHS: No updates.

VI. New Business

A. Revision of By-Laws – tabled until future meeting

B. Key Action Steps on MHAC Priorities

Reviewed the MHAC priorities and key action steps (see attachment). Discussed each priority in detail. At a future meeting, priorities will be organized into groups for immediate or later action. Some suggestions that came out of discussion include: (1) schedule a joint MHAC/MHPC meeting, (2) develop a minority agency resource guide, (3) invite the Minority Caucus to the MHAC or schedule a meeting between the Minority Caucus and MHAC, (4) re-schedule the Charity Care and CON presentation to the MHAC, (5) place legislation on the

agenda for every MHAC meeting, (6) invite someone from MHRH or elsewhere to share the status of mental health services in Rhode Island, (7) recruit mental health professionals to serve on the MHAC, and (8) share information about the new BCBSRI and UHC health plans for dual-enrolled Medicare/Medicaid beneficiaries.

VII. Open Comments / Discussion

A. NERMHC Meeting on October 12th from 10:00 – 3:30 at the Westin Hotel, Providence

B. Above and Beyond...

VIII. Next Meeting

Meetings are on the 4th Monday of the month from 9:00-11:00 am. The next meeting is on Monday, November 29th from 9:00 – 11:00 am at Nursing Placement, 334 East Ave. in Pawtucket.