

**EL DORADO COUNTY
MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
Joint Meeting
Minutes for March 24, 2010**

TIME: 5:00 pm

PLACE: Joint Council by videoconference –
Western Slope –
El Dorado County Health Services Dept.
Public Health Division
931 Spring St.
Placerville, CA 95667

South Lake Tahoe
El Dorado County Health Services Dept.
Public Health Division
1360 Johnson Blvd.
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Call to Order – Introductions

Members: Denise Burke, Pamela Nance, Ernie Klindt, Gus Pike, Jan Melnicoe,
Lori Shepard, Bonnie McLane, Claudia Ball, Marcia Rose, R.S. Lynn

Associate Members: Diana Hankin, Cathy Hartrum

Guests: Tim Cramer, Lynn Blaylock, Sandie Quinn, Bill Quinn, Bob Martin,
Lance Bryant, Stacy Bolton, Nancy Campbell, Larry Hartrum, Bill Ball

Staff: Neda West, Chris Kondo-Lister, Prestine Skinner, Shirley White

Minutes: Jackie Norlie

Approval of Agenda – Approved

Public Comment – Sheriff Les Bryant spoke about the multidisciplinary team in Placerville. There are more outside agencies participating now. Deputies are learning what support is available in the community. Voluntary registration for those with autism has been very helpful; greater awareness of the circumstances can improve communication.

NAMI of South Lake Tahoe will host a 12-week Family-to-Family education program. It will start April 29th and participants will meet at the College.

Approval of Minutes – West Slope approved February 27, 2010 and South Lake Tahoe approved March 4, 2010.

Mental Health Division Reports – Shirley White addressed the Behavioral Health Court (BHC) Program. In South Lake Tahoe there is a new judge presiding. Judge Bailey is a highly trained Drug Court Judge. Currently there are twelve clients in South Lake Tahoe, with two new referrals in the pipeline. The West Slope BHC has four clients currently enrolled. They recently lost several participants (one graduated, one went to prison, and another went back to jail); however, they have some potential referrals. Judge Melikian will be handing over the West Slope BHC to Judge Proud.

Chris Kondo-Lister reported that the SLT Clubhouse has implemented a more formal schedule; current hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 1:00 to 4:00. A Mental Health Aide has been hired to support the SLT Clubhouse. The Western Slope Wellness Center is open five days a week. It has very good energy and is bursting at the seams. There are consumer led groups such as music, gardening, and even a relaxation group.

Chris Kondo-Lister, Sharon Columbini, Jan Melinicoe, Della Clavere, and Lori Shepard attended a community capacity building training the previous week. The goal is to increase resources for client recovery by use of natural supports through partnership between Mental Health and the community. There will be a follow up training in mid June. Potentially, the trainers may come to EDC to help guide community capacity building practices.

Neda West spoke next about the budget. The Department's proposed FY 10-11 budget is being completed and will be submitted to the County's Chief Administrative Office by the due date of April 2nd. In response to a question, Neda then summarized the County's budget process, as follows: The CAO will review and evaluate the Department's proposed budget. There will be meetings with the Board of Supervisors in mid June. The BOS will then approve a budget that will be used to start the new fiscal year on July 1st. The County's financial books for the fiscal year ending June 30th will close in early to mid August. Departments will then have a chance to submit Addenda budget requests, incorporating updates and revisions to their prior approved budgets. The County's final budget hearings will take place in mid September (which is consistent with many other California counties), at which time the BOS will adopt the final budget for the fiscal year. After final adoption, the budget can still be changed, when appropriate, due to circumstances such as unanticipated State funding changes, etc.

Chris Kondo-Lister next addressed the client re-assessment process. A variety of potential issues are explored during re-assessment, such as: Has the client made significant progress toward recovery and are they ready to move on to a different level of care? Are there indicators that the client needs a higher level of care? Has the client decompensated? What safeguards are in place? Has there been a change in clinician? Has the client had significant changes in their life? Changes in living situations, health, financial conditions, etc., are considered during re-assessments. Assessments are done upon intake, at regular intervals (normally at 6 months and each year), and also as indicated by the client's behavior, condition, or when changes, such as those address above, may occur.

There are specific criteria set forth by Medi-Cal to qualify for specialty mental health services. Three primary components are evaluated when determining medical necessity for specialty mental health services: 1) specified DSM IV diagnoses; 2) significant impairment in life functioning); and 3) intervention criteria (the ability to benefit from the MH intervention and/or the MH condition could be addressed by primary care. A Notice of Action (NOA) is given to Medi-Cal beneficiaries who apply for services and are denied, or if services are being discontinued. An appeal process is available if the beneficiary disagrees; the appeal process is explained on the NOA.

Clients who have been reassessed and who are considered ready to graduate from needing specialty mental health services are provided with service authorization for a transition period - usually three months. Their caseworker will help them find a primary care doctor if they do not have one. Support systems are identified and clients are always welcome to drop into the Wellness Center, even after services have been ended. An introduction letter is written for the primary care physician to explain the client's medication. Discussions with the psychiatrist may occur and alternatives may be explored if the primary care doctor has any questions or concerns with the planned new arrangement. Follow up with these clients is provided on a case by case basis, as needed.

Outreach to existing clients who may become disengaged is very important. The newly hired SLT Mental Health Aide will assist with this outreach. Mary Ellen Kinnings, our Psych Tech/nurse, is also instrumental in outreach visits to our clients who have medical and/or medication issues. She normally visits SLT clients every other Tuesday, along with the client's caseworker. Both Mental Health Clinics strive to be welcoming places for clients to go when they need services or when they need to re-engage in services.

One of the client visitors spoke of their feelings about the type of groups held at SLT, as well as how they were concerned about their services potentially being

dropped. The client recommended different groups/services. Chris replied that a client's frequency of attending groups was not the criteria for eligibility for specialty mental health services. Chris indicated she would bring this issue to the Wellness Center Community meeting for further dialogue with consumers and staff.

A question was posed to Neda about budget constraints. Neda replied that there are significant funding constraints in our current environment. The Mental Health Division receives funding from traditional sources, such as Medi-Cal and Realignment (i.e., sales tax and vehicle license fees), as well as from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). However, these funding sources are definitely limited, and the Division must ensure that it maintains a balanced budget (with expenditures not exceeding available revenues). During the current fiscal year, the Public Health Division is transferring funding to the Mental Health Division in order to maintain a balanced budget in Mental Health.

A member of Bipolar Insights indicated that they receive no funding; volunteers and peer buddies are instrumental.

Dr. Lynn requested additional information about the Medi-Cal utilization review process. He asked for the written procedures addressing discontinuance of services.

Larry requested formal discussion at a future meeting about the 5150 process, including how 5150 assessments are performed.

Prestine commented on the concerns raised about South Lake Tahoe and how essential it is to hear and address these concerns.

Neda confirmed that receiving feedback is critical and that the Department takes all feedback very seriously. She emphasized that we must all work towards solutions; that we can't address all issues or implement needed changes overnight; and that we must live within our means. We have limited resources and we want to use them in the most effective way we can. Chris noted that alternative group models are being explored and volunteers are being utilized in WS to help serve the clients. We want to also do this in SLT.

Jan asked that if anyone wants to address any other concerns/issues, please e-mail her. She will compile all questions and issues so they can be addressed.

Old Business – On May 4th the Board will make a proclamation that May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Jan will present the 2009 reports to the Board of Supervisors.

New Business – There are four vacancies on the Mental Health Commission. More members will create more input from the community. The Commission members discussed the need for membership to be balanced and reflect the community, with a minimum of two or three consumers. Fifty percent of the Commission should be made up of consumers or their family members. The El Dorado County Commission should be comprised of a Western Slope Council of nine regular members, a South Lake Tahoe Council of six regular members, and a BOS member.

Stacy from the Community Health Center expressed interest in joining the Commission but some members felt there may be a conflict of interest. Many clients receive services at the Community Health Center, although there is no financial contract between the County and the Health Center. Jan may ask County Counsel to clarify this issue. An alternative could be to have Stacy join the Commission as an associate instead of a regular member.

Lori and Ernie spoke about the new leadership group of consumers. South Lake Tahoe has four possible candidates. The first joint meeting between the South Lake Tahoe group and Western Slope group will be held April 22, from 11 to 1 at the Strawberry Lodge. Every Thursday is the potential meeting day for each group. To build ownership, the groups need to meet frequently. When the weather warms, other possible places to meet can be camping and picnic sites. Friday, March 26th there will be a presentation to the consumers at the Community Meeting about the new Leadership Academy. Volunteers from the Academy will assist with peer support and self help for consumers. Potential follow up may be at the bowling alley, which will be sponsored by NAMI. At the end, there will be discussion about where they will go from there.

Commission Comments - None

Adjournment

**Next Meeting for South Lake Tahoe Council will be May 7, 2010 at 12:00 pm.
West Slope Council will be April 28, 2010 at 5:00 pm.**