

**EL DORADO COUNTY
MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
Joint Meeting
Minutes for May 26, 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, Bob Bartley, R.S. Lynn, Gus Pike, Jan Melnicoe, Lori Shepard, Bonnie McLane, Claudia Ball

Associate Members: Diana Hankin, Cathy Hartrum

Guests: Ruth Bartley, Bob Martin, Stacy Bolton, Nancy Campbell, Larry Hartrum, Bill Ball, Lee Kaplan, Carl Propst

Staff: Neda West, Chris Kondo-Lister, Prestine Skinner, Sally Williams, Shirley White, and Jackie Norlie (minutes)

Approval of Agenda – Approved with the following changes: Lori Shepherd’s comments regarding language sensitivity will be addressed under Public Comment rather than under New Business, and the topic listed as “Committee Development” under New Business will be corrected to read as “Commission Development.”

Public Comment – Lori Shepherd pointed out that use of certain language in reference to individuals with mental illness can be inadvertently hurtful. When people hear themselves described as a “mental health patient,” it can be internalized as a label. People with mental health issues are much more than their illness. Lori recommended use of “people first” language – for example, “someone with a mental illness” instead of a “mentally ill person.” Lori raised this issue for the Commission’s and public’s awareness and for future practice in Commission meetings.

Guest, Carl Propst, presented to the Commission documents regarding a concern he had with the conduct of a County employee. He shared copies of his grievance letter to the Division and the response letter he received. He expressed continued dissatisfaction regarding the Division's response. Chris Kondo-Lister spoke to assure the Commission and Carl that public concerns are taken very seriously and personnel matters are handled per County policy and in a confidential matter.

Denise Burke said that unfortunately only two people had signed up for the South Lake Tahoe "Family to Family" program hosted by NAMI. In view of this, it will be postponed until next fall.

Approval of Minutes – The Western Slope Commission approved their meeting notes of April 28, 2010.

Mental Health Division (MHD) Report –

Behavioral Health Court

Shirley White indicated that the Behavioral Health Court (BHC) in South Lake Tahoe has twelve participants. These clients now have both mental health and substance abuse assessments. Shirley also reported that there is a new referral form for the program. Recently, two clients graduated and they have welcomed in two new clients. The Western Slope BHC has six participants; the team would like to increase the number to ten. While it is possible that a new judge will be assigned to this program, the team is hopeful that Judge Phimister will continue to preside since the BHC caseload is small and he is so experienced in working with problem-solving courts.

South Lake Tahoe

Chris recently met with SLT NAMI, SLT MHD staff, and the Sheriff Department regarding the potential use of STARS volunteers with individuals known to the MHD who may benefit from a friendly visitor. Currently, program development and the creation of an MOU is underway. This program is being piloted in SLT. The WS community is eager to learn from their experience and hopes to be able to consider a similar program in this region if successful.

The South Lake Tahoe Clubhouse and Wellness Center continues to be active. Chris Kondo-Lister reviewed the diverse activities planned for the month of May.

Diana Hankins raised a concern regarding individuals released from jail who are on psychiatric medications. She indicated that although they are released with a two week supply, obtaining refills can be a challenge. Diana expressed concern that wait time to see a psychiatrist in SLT may impact continuity of medications.

Chris Kondo-Lister suggested that she and Diana talk further with Sally Williams regarding access to screening for Specialty Mental Health services for individuals released from jail – similar to the mechanisms in place to screen and provide access to individuals recently seen by Psychiatric Emergency Services staff. All applicants for services, including those who may have been recently released from jail, must be screened for the Specialty Mental Health criteria. In addition, it was noted that MHD psychiatrists cannot automatically refill a prescription written by another doctor; rather, they need information gathered through the MHD assessment process in order to ensure an appropriate evaluation prior to prescribing medications.

Psychiatry Services

MHD is still actively recruiting psychiatrists. There is a national shortage of psychiatrists which makes this effort quite challenging. With the assistance of the County Human Resources Department, MHD is using a variety of strategies to improve its advertising and recruiting efforts, including offering relocation and signing bonuses. Although offers have been made, no psychiatrist has yet accepted a position with MHD. Active efforts to recruit employee or contract psychiatrists will continue.

Children's Services

In Children's Services, MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs are moving forward toward implementation, including a program for early identification and support for youth struggling with school success, expansion of the Incredible Years parenting program to community-based sites (beginning in the El Dorado Hills White Rock housing facility), and a school-based program for very young children (K-3).

Western Slope (WS) Adult Services

Western Slope Adult Services is developing/implementing a new MHSA program known as "medication plus." Clients will have a chance to enrich their care with the Wellness Center's medication clinic, designed to provide psycho-education regarding health issues related to mental illness and psychotropic medications.

The WS Adult Services Team recently attended a two-day training in Transformative Care Planning (TCP), which addressed how to better construct client-driven and recovery-oriented client plans. MHD staff have also participated in training in the following areas: Recovery-oriented Leadership, the Promotora Model, and use of Performance Improvement in MHSA programs. Routine application of the Level of Care Utilization System (LOCUS) will start on July 1, 2010 in the WS Adult Services section and at SLT. Shirley White and Laura Eakin also recently attended a training regarding the integration of mental health, drug

and alcohol, and primary care services which will help us to progress in service integration efforts.

Neda West reminded the Commission that the current Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Norma Santiago, declared this year as the year of the child. MHD made a presentation to the Board on May 25th giving an overview of its current children's programs and the presentation was well received. This presentation can be accessed on the County's website under Board of Supervisor agendas. (Click the agenda item number to obtain the presentation.)

Budget Update

The first week of June, Neda will meet with two members of the Board to review MHD's FY 10-11 budget proposal. The following week the Board's formal budget workshop process begins. The submitted budget is currently balanced; it does not yet include impacts that could result from the State's budget process. The Governor's May Revise proposal would be devastating for Mental Health. It proposed a 60% reduction of mental health realignment funding (consisting of vehicle license fees and sales tax) as well as a suspension of the AB3632 mandate (addressing mental health services for qualifying public education students with special needs and disabilities). The realignment reduction could result in a loss of up to \$1.7 million to MHD. Suspension of the current AB3632 mandate would shift responsibility to the schools for provision of mental health services for children with Individualized Education Programs. The County will remain aware of and continue to assess potential State impacts, but the CAO cautioned the Board to not overreact to the various proposals of the Governor and the Legislature. It could be some time before the State has an approved budget. Neda will keep the Commission informed. Neda also addressed recent State requirements to bill Medicare, before Medi-Cal, for some services. MHD is now in the process of applying to be a Medicare provider; however, this is difficult for most small counties because of the criteria imposed. Many small counties cannot qualify.

Client Assessment Follow-up

Chris Kondo-Lister provided responses to the Commission's written questions regarding client reassessments that had been previously submitted to the MHD.

1) Are group sessions/life skill lessons meeting the needs of individuals receiving services? How is this determined? *Answer: Mental Health does not have a formal outcome measurement tool in place at this time, but does use a class evaluation questionnaire at the end of the life skills course. Clients at both clinics are encouraged to offer suggestions for group services. For example, South Lake Tahoe clients asked for peer support and community integration events such as learning to ride the bus, which the Wellness Center now incorporates. On a monthly basis in the Community Meeting, clients participate in giving feedback for*

programming in the upcoming month. On the Western Slope, there is a weekly scheduled time for clients to provide their feedback regarding programming for the Wellness Center – including offers to do peer-run groups themselves.

2) What formal medical utilization review process is used in the assessment and reclassification of individuals receiving services? *Currently, reassessments are done at six month intervals after the initial intake assessment. In the next fiscal year, we will change to doing reassessments on an annual basis and client reviews every six months. Reassessments can also be done as needed when there is a dramatic change in a client's life. In previous Commission meetings, packets of documents were passed out that included the policies/procedures for "Problem Resolution," "Notices of Action," and "Authorization of Services." Also included in the packet were blank copies of the "Comprehensive Assessment," "Re-Assessment," and "Treatment Plan" forms.*

3) How long is the transitional period following reassessment for monitoring to insure safety of the individual? Is there a written transitional plan? Who is responsible for the development and implementation of the plan? If the individual relapses, what is the process for getting services reestablished? *When clients are ready to graduate, there is generally a three month transition period until they transfer to a primary care physician. This transition period is established on a case by case process - some clients are provided with a six month transition period. The transition plan is part of the client reauthorization approval process. If a client relapses or needs Specialty Mental Health services again in the future, they can access services in the usual and appropriate manner: they always have access to Psychiatric Emergency Services and they can re-apply for outpatient services. Intake groups occur weekly on the Western Slope and on an individual basis in SLT.*

4) Who determines whether an individual meets the criteria for "Ability to Benefit from Services" or Medical Necessity? *The determination is made by the staff team, supervisor, and those in Utilization Review/Quality Improvement. If a Medi-Cal beneficiary disagrees, they can file an appeal. There is a problem-resolution process that is followed locally (as outline in the updated Problem-Resolution Policy that was recently reviewed by the Commission). If the beneficiary disagrees with the outcome of that process, they may appeal the decision to the State. Services will continue until the local problem-resolution process is completed. Those who do not have Medi-Cal benefits can file a grievance with the County but they do not have the same right to appeal to the State.*

5) When an individual is reassessed and loses services due to the change in level of need, is the Patient Rights Advocate involved in the transitional plan? If not, is the individual then given an appointment to discuss the changes and implications with

the Patient Rights Advocate. *The Patient Rights Advocate is not currently formally involved in this transitional plan process but mechanisms to ensure access to the PRA can be re-evaluated.*

6) Have the available staff and resources been reduced to a level that dangerously impacts the continuum of care and safety net for those receiving services?
We feel we have applied our staff resources in newly constructed recovery-oriented models that offer a continuum of care and safety net. The Mental Health Staff work in teams with clients who have a high level of impairment. This has been a challenging year of simultaneous program transition and staff reductions; however, staff have remained very committed and diligent in their efforts to provide quality services to our clients and community.

Old Business – None.

New Business – Nancy Campbell was nominated to become a new member of the Commission. Some members raised a concern over a possible conflict of interest since Nancy is on the Board of the El Dorado County Community Health Center. County Counsel was previously consulted about this issue and indicated this is not a conflict of interest. It was noted that there are four empty spots on the Western Slope Council that should be filled; members expressed interest in adding consumers and representatives of the Latino community. A motion was made to accept Nancy as an Associate Member. Nancy indicated her intention to withdraw her application to become a member. Upon the urging of other members, she indicated she may reconsider her interest.

Lori Shepherd reported on the Consumer Leadership Academy. The Tahoe bowling meeting went well. There are some issues that need to be worked out before the Leadership Academy moves forward.

Deferred until the next meeting: Data gathering training and report; Quality Improvement Committee report; and Commission development.

Commission Comments - None

Adjournment

**Next Meeting for West Slope Council will be June 23, 2010 at 5:00 pm.
The South Lake Tahoe Council will meet July 1, 2010 at 12:00 pm.**