

**EL DORADO COUNTY  
MENTAL HEALTH JOINT COMMISSION  
Minutes March 28, 2012**

**TIME: 5:00 PM**

**PLACE: Video conference at:  
Western Slope – Mental Health  
670 Placerville Dr. Suite 1B, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Placerville, CA 95667**

**South Lake Tahoe – Public Health/Mental Health Offices  
1360 Johnson Blvd #103  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150**

- I. Call to Order; Roll Call; Introductions  
Members: R.S. Lynn, Denise Burke, Bill Ehrler, Claudia Ball, Jan Melnicoe, Linn Williamson, Bonnie McLane  
Guests: Bill Ball, Jim Abram, Diana Hankins, Maria Duran, Bonnie Miller, Aubrey Whitaker, Penny Jacobs, Todd Hammitt, Cathy Hartrum, Stacy Bolton, Brenda Bailey  
Staff: Sally Williams, Joan Meis Wilson, Sophie Cabrera, Prestine Skinner, Barry Wasserman, Janet Stevens, Tara Filipich, Lee Jackson, Shama Chaiken, Laura Walny
- II. Approval of Agenda  
Agenda was approved with one adjustment: South Lake Tahoe updates were moved up on the agenda, to follow Public Comment.
- III. Approval of Minutes  
Deferred until the April meeting.
- IV. Public Comment (15 minutes)
  - On behalf of the MH Commission, Claudia Ball acknowledged the upcoming retirement of Chris Kondo-Lister, and expressed best wishes.
  - Several South Lake Tahoe clients expressed concerns that have emerged since the Wellness Group moved to Senior Center facility:
    - Clients reported that the group meeting room is significantly smaller and no longer allows for cooking or washing dishes;
    - Neither staff nor clients have been allowed to use the Senior Center kitchen facilities and they have had to wash dishes in the bathroom sink;
    - As the result of staffing changes, hours for one of the drivers who had been actively helping with Wellness activities have been greatly reduced;
    - One client said that she does not feel welcome at the Senior Center, and that Senior Center staff members have been rude and unkind to mental health clients.
  - The parent of a mental health client commented on her experiences with Social Security taking steps to terminate the benefits her child is receiving. She said this has been happening to many clients, and that if the psychiatrist writes that a client is improving, the client's Social Security benefits will be terminated. In addition, clients often ignore or don't understand the letters they receive from Social

Security, and then lose their opportunity to challenge the loss of benefits. The parent requested help from the MH Commission to resolve this problem; the Commission agreed to schedule Social Security linkages for an upcoming meeting and ask staff to respond.

V. South Lake Tahoe Updates

a. Old Business

- i. SLT Police Incidents: The South Lake Tahoe City Police have a number of new officers, and there have been times where law enforcement has been inflexible and insensitive to the issues experienced by people with mental illness. In addition, Lt. Les Lovell, commander of the Tahoe Sheriff's substation for the past nine years, is retiring.
  1. CIT Training: Tahoe has one officer in the Sheriff's Department, Michael Yarborough, who has completed the 48 hour CIT training. He will be developing a training for the SLT Police Department and Ambulance personnel that will be taught in 4-hour blocks. Diana Hankins will update the MH Commission when a date for this training is determined.
  2. Multi Disciplinary Team: South Lake Tahoe had a Multidisciplinary Team (MTD) started by Sandra Branton. The team was considered helpful but the MH Administration did not support an SLT MTD and the function was lost. The SLT MH Council requested that reestablishing an SLT MTD be considered again on a future agenda.
- ii. Sharing the Senior Citizen's Center: South Lake Tahoe clients reiterated their concerns about the decrease in the size of the Wellness Center, and that clients feel that there is no place to do anything, and that they no longer feel like the Wellness Center is their space. SLT MH Councilmembers added that attendance seems to have dropped substantially and that the size of the space would make full attendance very difficult to manage. A Councilmember asked if MH clients might be able to use some of the open space in the Center; Barry replied that by contract MH can only use the specific space allotted. The there is additional concern about whether clients will be allowed in the kitchen; Barry addressed this by saying that the agreement is that clients and other staff will be allowed to use the kitchen after the senior lunch service is done for the day once we have a staff member certified in food safety to supervise.
- iii. Transportation: The ability of clients to get to Mental Health groups, particularly the dual diagnosis group, was also raised as an issue. The cost for clients to use the BlueGo bus system with a MediCal card is \$1 each way. Tokens are not available but the Department is working with BlueGo to see if some Mental Health might be able to provide some public transportation assistance for those for whom cost is an issue. SLT MH Councilmembers stated their belief that the Department should have conferred with the MH Commission before the move, and that other options should have been considered and discussed.

VI. Update on CIT Training and the Multi Disciplinary Team: Todd Hammitt has been with the Sheriff's Department for 18 years and has coordinated the West Slope Multidisciplinary Team (MTD) and Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) since its inception. He is being reassigned to patrol duty beginning April 20 and will retain CIT and MTD as a collateral assignment. MH Commissioners and guests expressed conviction that the MTD requires a coordinator to be available 24/7 in order to respond to crisis situations. There is concern that this will no longer be possible if Sgt. Hammitt is assigned to patrol. It was noted that SLT lost the MDT function after they lost their coordinator, and that CIT training hasn't been brought to SLT due in part to staffing levels. In addition, there is concern that when the full impact of AB 109 is felt, there will be greater need for MH and MDT services to assist those people coming out of prison. Dr. Lynn noted that the MH Commission should be advocating for best practices, such as the current structure of the MDT. Brenda Bailey recommended that the MH Commission contact Supervisor Briggs, as he is assigned to the Commission and has a genuine interest in these issues. A motion was made that the MH Commission draft a letter to the Board of Supervisors recommending that staffing of the MTD and CIT not be decreased from the current level. This motion was approved, and Claudia will call a Special Meeting of the Commission once the letter is drafted.

VII. Agency News

- Laura Walny addressed the problem of Social Security terminating benefits for client who may be improving but are not yet ready to enter the competitive job market. Currently Social Security is asking for a full 14-page assessment for clients who want to challenge the termination of benefits, but the Department is asking if a letter stating the degree of disability might be acceptable. The Department is also aware that clients might not recognize the urgency of the letter they receive from Social Security; clinicians have been instructed to actively ask clients if they have received any letters regarding their benefits.
- Chris Kondo-Lister has resigned effective March 30. Her position will be recruited at the Program Manager II level.
- Beginning January 2012, PERS implemented a policy change that limits retirees' post-retirement work. Retirees now can work for a maximum of 960 hours/year for a maximum of two years. This impacts several extra-help employees including one of the South Lake Tahoe drivers. As a result, Sally and Barry will be interviewing to hire additional drivers next week.
- The first Mental Health First Aid training class is being offered in South Lake Tahoe this week, and additional sessions on the West Slope are being planned. The Department expects to offer one Mental Health First Aid class per quarter during the next fiscal year.
- The Department is instituting changes in its intake/new client registration process as part of its Program Improvement Project (PIP). The process is intended to be more welcoming, and includes a name change from "intake" to "Welcome to Registration" as well as streamlining the process for new clients. The PIP also will include strategies to better understand no-show rates and discharges. A report of recent discharges showed that 32% met treatment goals; 32% showed partial improvement and 36% showed no improvement.
- Sophie Cabrera thanked the MH Commission members for their support of the Sunset Lanes Housing project at the Board of Supervisors meeting. The project was approved, and Mercy Housing expects to break ground this month.

Construction is expected to be complete by March of 2013 and will include five units that will provide permanent supported housing for mental health clients. The Department will be pursuing a similar project in South Lake Tahoe. While the Aspen project lost its funding when the State eliminated funding for redevelopment projects, American Baptist has expressed interest in developing affordable housing in South lake Tahoe.

- The Department is also working on establishing a contract with Denise Thompson to provide Board-and-Care housing in Placerville, which would include helping clients to develop independent living skills. The level of services provided at the Thompson Board-and-Care is expected to exceed the services available at the CRT, yet be far less expensive. Once this contract is operational, the Department hopes to be able to transition the CRT clients to Denise Thompson's facility and then increase the PHF back to 14 beds. For nearly the past year, census at the PHF has averaged 13 clients and we have had to hospitalize El Dorado County residents in Sacramento-area private hospitals when there have been no beds available at the PHF.

VIII. Committee Reports

a. Membership Committee

- i. Vote on WS Proposed New Member Jim Abram  
Deferred; there was not a quorum of the WS MH Council.
- ii. Vote on SLT Proposed New Member Ben Ehrler  
Approved.

IX. Sacramento Bee article, 3-18-12, "State Needs to Overhaul Its Dated Mental Health Law", The LPS (Lanterman Petris Short) Reform Task Force, and the Task Force's Report: Claudia introduced a recent task force report that reviews implementation of the LPS Act and advocates for a revision to involuntary treatment laws, including the implementation of Community Assisted Treatment. Discussion of this report will be included as a future agenda item for the MH Commission. The report is available at <http://www.lpsreform.org/>

X. Mental Health Services Act Advisory Board  
Discussion was postponed due to time.

XI. Discussion and Vote on MHC Report to BOS  
Discussion was postponed due to time.

XII. Commissioners Comments  
None

XIII. Adjournment