

**EL DORADO COUNTY  
MENTAL HEALTH JOINT COMMISSION  
Minutes: March 27th, 2013**

**DATE:** Wednesday – March 27, 2013  
**TIME:** 5:00 PM  
**PLACE:** Facilitated by Video-Conference at:  
Western Slope - 415 Placerville Drive (EMS)  
Placerville, CA 95667  
and  
South Lake Tahoe – Public Health/Mental Health Offices  
1360 Johnson Blvd., Suite 103  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

I. Call to Order; Roll Call; Introductions

Members: R.S. Lynn, Michael Pickens, Claudia Ball, Bonnie McLane, Jim Abram, Guadalupe Medrano, Jan Melnicoe, Craig Therkildsen

Guests: Bill Ball, Larry Hartrum, Cathy Hartrum, Brady McGuire, Jackie Noren, Melanie Reece, Tomi Ryan, Doug Gradall

Staff: Patricia Charles-Heathers, Lori Walker, Jan Walker-Conroy, Don Ashton, Janet Stevens, Stephanie Carlson, Tracy Melton, Laura Walny, Doris Jones, Cheree Haffner, Dennis Plunkett

II. Approval of Agenda

- Agenda was approved, with the removal of Item VIII(b): MHSA Update/discussion.

III. Approval of Minutes (Nov 2012 - Feb 2013) - drafts on website

- Minutes from November 2012, January 2013, and February 2013 meetings of the Mental Health Commission were approved with the following correction:
  - February 2013, Item VII(a): Request by Senior Peer Counseling Program to make presentation. Item should reflect that the Senior Peer Counseling Program provides more than 1000 peer counseling sessions over the course of a year.

IV. Public Comment (15 minutes)

- Diana Hankins noted that South Lake Tahoe continues to experience problems with the provision of psychiatric medications to jail inmates. Diana reports that the jail psychiatrist is taking inmates off of their medications in order to complete a new assessment, and then either changing the medications prescribed or prescribing no medications. Judge Bailey would like to talk to the jail psychiatrist about this process and inmates who have had their medications changed or discontinued are currently being advised that they can submit a State habeas corpus for a judicial review of their medical care. Jackie Noren indicated that she would bring this information to the attention of the Sheriff's Office.

V. Presentation on current programs by EDC Senior Peer Counseling

- Doug Gradall presented an overview of the services provided by the Senior Peer Counseling Program, the types of needs that are addressed, and the value of the program. His presentation included the following:
  - The Senior Peer Counseling Program currently has 16 volunteer peer counselors and 32 clients. Volunteers are all seniors who have completed a 40 hour training program and receive weekly clinical supervision. Clients range in age from 55 to their early 90s. Many of these individuals have functioned well until faced with age-related mental health issues, including the loss of a spouse or adult child, serious or chronic health problems, loss of the ability to drive or live independently, and isolation. Many seniors who use the Senior Peer Counseling Program would be reluctant to ask for services from Mental Health, but are comfortable talking to a peer.
  - Until 2010, the Senior Peer Counseling Program received funding from Mental Health. Since that time, Human Services has provided the Program with office space and a telephone. The majority of Program costs have been met by an \$11,000 grant that was co-sponsored by El Dorado Community Foundation's Older Adult Services Fund (\$9,000) along with the Women's Fund El Dorado (\$2,000). Costs are kept low because Dr. Carolyn Sauer provides the volunteers with weekly clinical supervision at a low cost to the Program, and the peer counselors volunteer their time. The Senior Peer Counseling volunteers are not looking for financial or programmatic support at this time, but they are trying to outreach to individuals and partner organizations across El Dorado County in order to get the word out about their Program.
  - Projections from the US Census indicate that senior citizens are the County's fastest-growing demographic group. In addition, a Proposition 63 [MHSA] survey identified seniors as having the highest unmet need for mental health services.
  - The presenters acknowledged that the Senior Peer Counseling Program is not currently able to offer services in South Lake Tahoe due to a lack of local, trained volunteers. They hope to recruit Tahoe residents when training is next offered, and plan to use Skype to provide clinical supervision so that SLT volunteers will not be required to commute in order to receive supervision.
  - Dr. Lynn pointed out that the Senior Peer Counseling Program has high value for its costs, and he encouraged Mental Health to recognize the multiplier effect and provide support, should it be needed in the future.
  - Claudia Ball asked that the Department look into reinstating the MHSA Advisory Board. Laura Walny noted that Ren Scammon will be reconvening the Advisory Board as part of the MHSA community planning process. Claudia also asked that the Department look into why services for seniors are not included in the MHSA Plan when this population represents an area of greatest need.
  - Dr. Lynn asked that the Mental Health Commission Minutes reflect how to contact the Senior Peer Counseling presenters; the contact number is 530-621-6304.

VI. Department Reports

- A written update of Mental Health Department news was distributed. Departmental updates are also included as an appendix to this document [Appendix A].

- At the request of Jim Abram, Laura Walny reviewed recent staffing changes and recruitments that are either anticipated or currently underway. This information is reflected in the written update provided by the Department [Appendix A].
- Dennis Plunkett was introduced as the Program Manager of Mental Health Outpatient Services.
- Laura Walny reported that regular meetings to develop and discuss processes for providing preventive and supportive mental health services to jail inmates who will soon be released from custody. Captain Peshon from the Sheriff's Office, along with Laura Walny, Patricia Charles-Heathers and Dennis Plunkett from Mental Health, and Shirley White from Alcohol and Drug Programs have participated in these discussions. Future meetings will also include an eligibility worker. The intent is to complete assessments while inmates are still in custody, so that a plan is in place to provide necessary mental health services upon release, in order to avoid crisis situations. The same intent applies to social service eligibility; involving an eligibility worker will facilitate a prompt reinstatement of appropriate Social Security, Medi-Cal and other health and welfare benefits.
  - Diana Hankins asked that these transitional jail services be implemented in South Lake Tahoe as well as on the West Slope.
- Don Ashton was introduced as the Acting Assistant Director of Administration and Fiscal for the Health and Human Services Agency.
- **MOTION:** Jim Abram proposed that Departmental news and reports be provided as a written update and distributed to Commission members five days prior to the monthly meeting. Departmental Reports will continue to be included on the Commission's monthly agenda, but Commission members will read the updates in advance of the meeting and the time allotment will be used for questions and discussion rather than a comprehensive reading of the updates. Motion was approved.

## VII. Old Business

- a. Status update on Western Slope Mental Health Clinic location: Jan Walker-Conroy reported that the landlords of both properties under consideration have been asked to submit their "best and final" offer to Russ Fackrell, lead negotiator for the County. Both landlords have been asked to address a number of issues in addition to cost, including compliance with ADA and HIPAA requirements. The expectation is that the County will receive offers from both landlords, and the Department will take both offers to the Board of Supervisors in open session, so that stakeholders can see both offers and state their concerns and preferences. This item has not yet been placed on the Board of Supervisors agenda, but the discussion is expected it to be introduced sometime in April. [Note: The Board of Supervisors will not meet on April 16, 2013.]
  - 1) Current location: 670 Placerville Dr., Placerville
  - 2) Diamond Springs location: Logan Building, 768 Pleasant Valley Road
  - The Board of Supervisors has been advised of the concerns voiced by MH Commission members and other stakeholders regarding the Diamond Springs facility. In particular, the Supervisors were informed of safety issues, limited public transportation, proximity of other local services, and the client/family inconvenience and barriers to care that may result if the Mental Health Clinic relocates to the Diamond Springs location.
  - Dr. Lynn expressed his concern that the Department is not being transparent about their reason(s) for pursuing a move. He stated that under the law

(Welfare and Institutions Code 5604.2) the duties of the Mental Health Commission include the following: (1) Review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, services, facilities, and special problems; (2) Review any county agreements entered into; and (3) Advise the governing body and the local mental health director as to any aspect of the local mental health program. Dr. Lynn argued that the Commission cannot complete its legal duties when members are not fully informed, and added that if contract negotiations are presented to the Board of Supervisors with the Department advocating a move to Diamond Springs, the move will become a fait accompli without consideration of the Commission's recommendations.

- Jim Abram expressed his belief that the opinions of the Mental Health Commission have been made known to the Board of Supervisors, and said that his goal is to see that the best interests of clients are represented. Jim added that both landlords have been asked to make modifications to ensure their buildings are ADA and HIPAA compliant, and that ultimately the Board of Supervisors will choose the most cost-effective facility. Jim said that he cares that clients will not be burdened by the County's priority to save money.
- Claudia Ball noted that before the Logan Building (Diamond Springs facility) was under consideration, the Department made a strong argument for another facility on Mother Lode Drive in Shingle Springs, which was found to have multiple problems. Claudia noted that it seemed that there seemed to be reasons that the Department wanted to move, but these reasons were kept under the surface. That experience left many of the Commission with the feeling that the Department was not valuing the best interests of clients in their analysis of potential Clinic facilities.
- Don Ashton reported that Daniel Nielson has said that if all facility considerations were equal, he would prefer not to move the Clinic location.
- **MOTION:** Commission members collaborated to develop wording on a motion, "The Mental Health Commission is requesting that once all contract negotiations are complete, the Board of Supervisors shall postpone their final decision for a period of two weeks in order to allow the Mental Health Commission time to review and evaluate the proposed facility contracts, and present their recommendations to the Department and the Board for consideration." Motion was approved.

b. Laura's Law

- 1) Report on Committing Meeting of 3-21-13
  - Jan Melnicoe reported that the Laura's Law Subcommittee met with Michael Heggarty from the Nevada County Behavioral Health Department. Mr. Heggarty provided history and background information on the use of Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) across the country, and he responded to questions from Mental Health Commission members with a 28-page document detailing those questions and his responses. In particular, Mr. Heggarty outlined how Laura's Law might be implemented in El Dorado County, and what benefits the County might see as a result.
  - Commission members requested that Mr. Heggarty's 28-page document of questions and answers be distributed to the full Commission.
  - Jim Abram also recommended that anyone interested in AOT programs, implementation, or funding look at the information available on the Nevada County website, at:  
<http://www.mynevadacounty.com/Pages/home.aspx>

Specific documents available from the Nevada County website include:

- The Nevada County Experience:  
<http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/hhsa/bh/docs/Laura's%20Law/AOT%20The%20Nevada%20County%20Experience%2003082013.pptx>
  - California Funding Strategies:  
[http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/hhsa/bh/docs/Laura's%20Law/Assisted%20Outpatient%20Treatment%20in%20California%20Funding%20Strategies%20\(2\)%202013.pptx](http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/hhsa/bh/docs/Laura's%20Law/Assisted%20Outpatient%20Treatment%20in%20California%20Funding%20Strategies%20(2)%202013.pptx)
  - Use of MHSA Funds for AOT:  
[http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/hhsa/bh/docs/Laura's%20Law/Assisted%20Outpatient%20Treatment%20in%20California%20Funding%20Strategies%20\(2\)%202013.pptx](http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/hhsa/bh/docs/Laura's%20Law/Assisted%20Outpatient%20Treatment%20in%20California%20Funding%20Strategies%20(2)%202013.pptx)
  - Cost Savings realized by AOT:  
<http://www.mynevadacounty.com/nc/hhsa/bh/docs/Laura's%20Law/Cost%20Effectiveness%20Analysis%20of%20AOT%20Implementation%20in%20CA%20Civil%20Sector.pdf>
- Craig Therkildsen noted that while most programs have hidden costs, AOT has hidden savings. Statistics from Nevada demonstrate savings through the prevention of homelessness, hospitalization and incarceration.
- 2) Legislative Update
- California SB 664 was introduced by Senator Yee to amend Laura's Law in order to facilitate implementation by authorizing the use of MHSA funding and easing restrictions. SB 664 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health.
  - The "Excellence in Mental Health Act" [S. 264 and H.R. 1263] is designed to increase access to community behavioral health services and to improve Medicaid reimbursement for community behavioral health services. This proposed legislation has been referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.
- 3) Department actions: Discussions between the MH Commission Subcommittee on Laura's Law and Departmental leadership regarding AOT concerns, program design, and implementation are expected to continue.
- c. Bipolar support group report on department progress: The Bipolar Support group is scheduled to meet on Tuesdays from 10:30 until noon beginning April 2<sup>nd</sup>. This will be a closed group and will run for 13 weeks; Judy French will facilitate. It is not known whether the group has yet received approval from the BHC Judge as an approved alternative to Bipolar Insights.

## VIII. New Business

- a. CIT & MDT Update/discussion
- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT): Brenda Bailey reported that the Board of Supervisors received and filed the recommendations of the Mental Health Commission regarding the CIT; however, the Board of Supervisors does not have authority to direct staffing levels or work assignments within the Sheriff's Office.
  - Jackie Noren reported that the Sheriff's Office applied for a Federal grant to increase funding for CIT deputies and to offer CIT training to all El Dorado County first responders, free of charge. Supervisor Briggs and NAMI El Dorado County wrote letters of support that were submitted along with the grant application.

- Jackie Noren reported that the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) discussed a person who had made serious threats in the County, and subsequently enlisted in the National Guard. The MDT contacted the National Guard and this individual was discharged from his post.
  - b. MHSA Update/discussion: This item was removed from the agenda as the MHSA Program Manager, Ren Scammon, was not scheduled to attend this meeting.
- IX. Determination of MHC meeting for April 2013
  - Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, 2013 at 5:00 PM

**El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency  
Mental Health Department Update  
Mental Health Commission  
March 27, 2013 Meeting**

**PM II Update (Laura K. Walny):**

- **Staffing Changes/Updates:**
  - Program Manager II - Laura K. Walny
  - Manager of Mental Health Programs: Outpatient Services - Dennis Plunkett
  - MH Program Coordinator Psychiatric Emergency Services - Robert Bloom is now located at OP Office @ 670 Placerville Drive; Robert will continue his role as PES Coordinator and will be working with Dennis to implement ROCS, the Intensive Case Management Program.
  - **Recruitments (either active or to be posted shortly)**
    - Manager of Mental Health Programs: PHF - recruiting for this position; Cheree will continue as Acting Manager and have support from Jessica Solomon as Acting Program Coordinator
    - MH Program Coordinator Adult OP Vacancy - initiating recruitment
    - MH Program Coordinator: Resources & Special Projects - internal recruitment
    - Clinician Recruitment in process: 17 candidates; 8 scheduled for second interviews this week and next to fill up to 6 positions (Adult OP, Children's OP, SLT, AB 109 funded position, PES position moving to ICM afternoon shift)
    - Analyst (MHSA)
    - Mary Ellen Kinnings, Psych Tech Adult OP retirement 4/30/13 - recruiting to fill this position; 1 Clinician on leave - filling with extra help psych tech
    - Drivers - 14 Interviews scheduled this week.
- **Budget Prep/Contracts:** Focus of the last month has been budget preparation and the beginning review of contracts for next FY. We have held meetings with some contract providers; particularly re: children's service providers as we evaluate services for next FY.
- **EQRO:** California's External Quality Review Organization will be conducting their annual review on Thursday, April 18th. Laura Eakin, our QI/UR Coordinator is leading our effort and coordinating the days schedule with EQRO.
- **Katie A Collaboration:** MH is working collaboratively with CPS in developing the County's implementation of the Katie A Settlement Project. Katie A Settlement derives from a class action lawsuit filed in 2002 against the State and LA County on the issue of failing to assess the mental health needs of children in the foster care system or being at risk of entering the foster care system. The result of the lawsuit was a settlement which is now a statewide initiative to change the way we work with children and families; shifting the focus from working as an individual agency or system to working as a team to build a culturally relevant and trauma-informed system of services and supports that is responsive to the needs of families being served jointly by child welfare and mental health.

## **Adult and Children Outpatient Services SLT (Laura K. Walny/Dennis Plunkett)**

- **Adult Caseload:** 522 clients open as of February 28th among 7.6 clinicians/workers averaging 68 clients per staff.
- **Transitional Housing Update:**
  - Transitional Group: Beginning early April, this group is required for all T-House residents and will focus on improving and developing ADL's, developing community capacity and tapping into resources available to assist in the transition to independent living.
  - Mallard House: Anticipated opening April 1; 5 beds available, co-ed. Currently exploring additional housing options nearby.
- **Bipolar Substance Abuse Group:** for clients with a dual diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder and Substance Abuse; 13 weeks beginning Tuesday, April 2nd 10:30 - 12:00. Contact Josh X 6376 for additional information.
- **CWS:** Adult Team is 3 weeks live in our new electronic medical record system, staff actively working at increasing proficiency, past the initial learning and already seeing better communication. Tremendous asset to be able to access crisis information in the system and some of our PHF partners started using the system ahead of schedule enabling greater collaboration. Children's Team
- **Children's Caseload:** 166 clients open as of February 28th among 5.75 clinicians/workers averaging 28 clients per staff.
- **South Lake Tahoe Caseload:** 164 adult and children's cases as of February 28 among 5.2 clinicians/workers (not including extra help staff) averaging 31 clients per staff

## **Psychiatric Health Facility (Cheree Haffner)**

- **Referrals and Admissions:** 93 referrals to the PHF in February. There were 34 admissions, of which, 23 were from EDC and 11 were from contracted counties. 58 referrals from other counties were denied. Our practice is to hold two beds for EDC if beds are available.
- **Discharges:** We had 33 discharges in February. Of those 29 had a funding source and 4 did not. We have an eligibility worker that checks census daily to assist clients who are uninsured to apply for programs for which they are eligible.
- **PHF Expansion Progress:** General Services is currently working on the contract for the construction and painting portion of the project. A draft of the patient care plan has been written. Approval of this plan is required from the State prior to implementation of the project. Project will be completed in four phases.
  1. Remodel CRT space, 20 days
  2. Remove a door to open new space to current PHF space, 2-3 days
  3. Paint the current unit, 20 days
  4. Install new, floor mount Polymer Furniture, targeting 7/15/13 for shipment.
- **New Program Schedule:** A new program schedule has been implemented. The program includes two daily nursing groups, a therapist lead group and several other group lead by other mental health staff. Patients are responding well to the activities. We are in the evaluation stage, asking patients and staff about how topic areas are going and adjusting based on feedback.



## Psychiatric Emergency Services (Cheree Haffner)

- **Crisis AM Staff:** Robert Bloom and the AM crisis worker moved over to 670 Placerville Drive this month in order to integrate with the Intensive Case Management Team.
- **Crisis PM Staff:** Remain at the PHF for safety concerns, however integration into the ICM is in the works.
- **Crisis NOC Staff:** As of March 9th, NOC Crisis response is managed by an on-call team.
- Crisis Services are now supervised by the Outpatient Managers.

## MHSA (Ren Scammon)

- **New Grants Available to Foster Community Dialogue on Mental Health Issues:** Through CalMHSA's Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Initiative, grants from \$10,000 to \$30,000 are available to small or rural counties or community-based organizations in small or rural counties to foster understanding of mental health issues through "Community Dialogue" events. As a starting point for community discussion, groups will view an upcoming documentary produced by KVIE set to air on PBS stations statewide this May and facilitate community dialogue stemming from the topics discussed in the documentary.

Information about the grant was sent to the contact person for the Lake Tahoe Collaborative, CAPC, and Community Strengthening Committee/Ready by 5 Coalition, asking that the information to be distributed to coalition members to gain a wide distribution. Intent to apply and questions are due Friday, March 29th. Final applications are due Friday, May 3. Applications are available online at <http://calmhsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/CalMHSA-Rural-Grant-App-FINAL.pdf>. Questions and correspondence should be directed to [grants@rs-e.com](mailto:grants@rs-e.com). A copy of the application has been printed for the Commission.

- **FY 12/13 MHSA Plan Update:** The initial draft of the FY 12/13 MHSA Plan Update is finished and is under review by staff, verifying project descriptions accurately describe current practices and identifying service stats. It will likely be published for the 30-day comment period in mid-April, which sets back the initial planned timeline by approximately two weeks. The delay from initial estimates is largely due to high staff workloads and recent staff turnover, which affects the ability to benefit from historical program knowledge. We are doing our best to keep a tight timeline on the entire process to move it along as quickly as we can.
- **RFP/RFQ:** There has been questions about a RFP/RFQ for services that was discussed earlier this fiscal year. On September 25, 2012, the Board of Supervisors authorized "new/expanded Children's Programs to apply for funds through the RFP/RFQ process once the Fiscal Year 2012/13 MHSA Plan is approved." The RFQ is being drafted concurrently with the FY 12/13 Plan Update so that the RFQ can be released as soon as possible after the Board of Supervisors approves the FY 12/13 Plan Update, rather than waiting to draft the RFQ after Board approval.
- **FY 13/14 MHSA Plan:** Mental Health anticipates starting the community planning meetings for the FY 13/14 MHSA Plan the week of April 22. A series of public meetings will be held to discuss MHSA in general, the individual MHSA components,

and the programs and projects under each component, both current and those that will be proposed for inclusion in the FY 13/14 MHSA Plan. At a minimum, meetings will be held in the following areas: El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, Placerville, Greenwood, Mt. Aukum and South Lake Tahoe. Room reservations are being worked on, and meetings will be scheduled during the day and evening to allow a wide cross-section of community members and organizations to participate. A schedule of meetings will be distributed once the dates, times, locations and topics for each meeting are confirmed.

### **Behavioral Health Court (Shirley White)**

- South Lake Tahoe Behavioral Health court proceedings were held on March 21, 2013. Lake Tahoe has 9 active participants in the program. 6 of the participants received positive recognition from the Judge and team for their outstanding efforts throughout the month. There were no positive drug tests for any participants in the reporting period since last Mental Health Commission. It was noted that 2 of the participants in Tahoe have had long term involvement with law enforcement and Mental Health and are now doing “extremely well” in the program and have been stable for a number of months. Next court date in Tahoe is scheduled for April 18, 2013 at 1:30 pm.
- Placerville Behavioral Health Court celebrated a successful graduation on March 4, 2013 and anticipates another graduation on April 8th. We are very proud of our graduates and all they have accomplished in Behavioral Health Court. There are currently 8 active participants in Placerville and 3 new referrals pending assessment. 7 of our 8 participants received positive recognition from the Judge and team for their efforts throughout the month. Next Behavioral Health Court proceedings will be held on April 8th at 2:00pm. Commission members are cordially invited to attend either session of Behavioral Health Court.