

**EL DORADO COUNTY
MENTAL HEALTH JOINT COMMISSION
Minutes: September 25, 2013**

TIME: 5:00 PM

**PLACE: Video-Conference at:
Western Slope at 415 Placerville Drive (EMS)
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: Denise Burke, R.S. Lynn, Ben Ehrler, Jim Abram, Jan Melnicoe, Bonnie McLane, Claudia Ball, Craig Therikildsen, Linn Williamson, Maria Quintero, Guadalupe Medrano

Guests: Suzanne Laub, Steve Mannheim, Diana Hankins, Jeanne Harper, Chris Stedeford

Staff: Jan Walker-Conroy, Don Ashton, Patricia Charles-Heathers, Brandi Reid, Ren Scammon, Dennis Plunkett, Janet Stevens, Laura Walny, Alicia Paris-Pombo, James Robbins

II. Approval of Agenda

- Approved

III. Approval of Minutes (August 2013)

- Approved

IV. Public Comment (15 minutes)

- Jeanne Harper spoke to thank Jim Abram for his presentation of the Mental Health Commission's Annual Report at 8/13/2013 meeting of the Board of Supervisors. <https://eldorado.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1463142&GUID=A1B0EF30-0A8B-48AB-93D6-B1B1256293F9>
- Linn Williamson reported that the Interfaith community will be sponsoring a community dialog to better understand how public agencies and members of the faith community can work collaboratively to address local needs and improve mental health services.

V. Questions/comments regarding the Mental Health Division Monthly Report

- Ren Scammon noted an addition to the MHSA section [Appendix A, page 3] of the Monthly Report: The draft of the MHSA 2013-14 Plan will be posted for public comment on the County website [<http://www.edcgov.us/mentalhealth/mhsa.aspx>] by the end on September. Following a 30-day public comment period, the Mental Health Commission will host a public hearing to receive input on the Plan. Ren suggested that the Mental Health Commission schedule the public hearing for Wednesday, October 30 at 5 PM; Commission members concurred. The Health and Human Services Agency will document and consider all substantive feedback during the public comment period and at the public hearing before submitting the final MHSA 2013-14 Plan to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration.

VI. Old Business

- Update/discussion on Mental Health Division move to 768 Pleasant Valley Road:
 - i. Transportation Issues:
 - Dennis Plunkett reported that the transportation team is working with El Dorado Transit to develop a new route that will better serve clients who use public transportation to access mental health services; this is the proposed long-term solution. To meet the immediate needs of clients, the Mental Health Division is hiring extra-help drivers and developing van routes that will run at least a couple of times each day to transport clients from the Mental Health transitional houses and the Missouri Flat transfer center to the Victory Mine location. Vans will run on a regular, published schedule so that clients can more easily access treatment services and Clubhouse activities.
 - Dennis Plunkett also reported that El Dorado Transit will be constructing a bus stop at the Victory Mine location, and will be paying the anticipated \$11,000 -\$12,000 cost. Until construction is complete, the Transit busses will pull into the Victory Mine lot so that clients can be safely picked up and dropped off.
 - ii. Clubhouse Issues:
 - Plans for the Clubhouse patio area were submitted to the Planning Department for approval this week. By Monday, the Health and Human Services Agency expects to know whether the plans will be approved on first pass or if revisions are needed.
 - Linn Williamson noted that the patio area at the Victory Mine location is more exposed than other Clubhouse outdoor areas have been; this may be uncomfortable for clients who have paranoia or anxiety issues. Linn stated that it would be nice if the patio cover were complete by the grand opening. Linn expressed concern about introducing clients to an unfinished facility, noting that once people are scared away they don't return.
 - Don Ashton noted the need to balance the desire for facility upgrades against the rental cost of \$24,000 each month to stay in the Placerville Drive location.
 - The Grand Opening event is tentatively planned to take place on a Tuesday, from 12 to 3 PM, about two weeks after the actual move to the Victory Mine location. The Tuesday scheduling was selected so the clients who live in Board and Care facilities can participate. Event activities will include tours of the facility, refreshments, displays of client artwork, and music performed by clients.
- Update on Laura's Law Committee meeting held on September 23:
 - i. Discuss implications of passage of SB 585
 - SB 585 [full text available at: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb_0551-0600/sb_585_bill_20130909_chaptered.html] was approved by the State legislature and signed by Governor Brown. This measure clarifies that assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) services provided under Laura's Law may be implemented through the use of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds. The potential use of MHSA funds to cover start-up costs for assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) services improves the financial feasibility of implementing Laura's Law in El Dorado County.

- The Laura's Law Committee is planning to invite other stakeholders, including but not limited to the Public Defender, the District Attorney, the Sheriff's Office, Adult Protective Services, and Placerville and South Lake Tahoe Police Departments, to participate in the discussion of Laura's Law, with the goal of developing and presenting an implementation plan to the Board of Supervisors.

VII. South Lake Tahoe Mental Health

i. SLT Wellness Center update/questions

- Don Ashton reported that negotiations between the County Facilities Manager and the landlord of the Lake Tahoe Boulevard facility are ongoing. The Health and Human Services Agency is not a party to these negotiations.
- Dr. Lynn noted that modifications in the facility would not start until an agreement is reached between the County and the landlord. He reported that some of the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center participants are anticipating that Mental Health will be moving out of the Senior Center in October; Dr. Lynn did not think an October move date would be feasible.
- Don Ashton indicated that no one from the County has suggested an October move date; he stated that it is unrealistic to talk about plans for a move before a lease agreement is reached.
- Diana Hankins noted that some individuals at the Senior Center are strongly opposed to sharing space with Mental Health - but others are not. The conflict has been somewhat exaggerated, and Mental Health staff are taking steps to reduce tensions, including the scheduling of more outings and off-site activities for clients.

VIII. New Business

- SLT Client concerns/issues: Suzanne Laub reiterated her experience of events leading up to her son's attack on a family member, which resulted in the death of the family member and her son's subsequent incarceration. Ms. Laub identified treatment barriers and delays that she would like Mental Health program managers to address. According to Ms. Laub:
 - 1) She was "blown off" and did not receive the help she needed during an incident prior to the attack, she when she attempted to use the Crisis Hotline;
 - 2) When her son came out of jail and tried to secure his medication, he was redirected between Jail Medical services, Mental Health, Barton Clinic, and the Barton Hospital Emergency Room;
 - 3) Despite her son's documented serious mental illness, he was dropped from services without a clear explanation;
 - 4) She was not notified that her son was verbally aggressive with staff, or that staff were afraid of him; these behaviors should have indicated a higher need for services rather than referral out.
- Patricia Charles-Heathers noted that the Mental Health Division could not address the specific actions taken by staff without looking into her son's treatment record. Dennis Plunkett, Outpatient Services Manager, will look into the concerns; Suzanne Laub was asked to call Dennis at 530-621-6322. In addition, Dennis has been working with Sabrina Owen-Balme, the South Lake Tahoe Program Coordinator, to address adult service needs in South Lake Tahoe. Dennis invited anyone in the room who would like to participate in these discussions to contact him.

- Linn Williamson noted that the purpose of the Mental Health Commission is to look at the broader issues that impact quality of care, and that there are at least three important areas of concern evident in the experiences that Suzanne Laub described:
 - 1) The Mental Health Commission oversight of Crisis Services;
 - 2) The transitional services for individuals leaving the jail and coming to or returning to outpatient mental health services;
 - 3) Access and ongoing scheduling of medication services.
- Guadalupe Medrano noted that she had a similar experience trying to get help for her brother, prior to his suicide. She wondered why it is so difficult for family members to effectively advocate for those who are mentally ill.
- Denise Burke reported that the South Lake Tahoe NAMI organization had been actively working with Suzanne Laub to secure services. With an active parent and with the support of NAMI it was still not possible to access mental health treatment in South Lake Tahoe. She added that when MHSA was initially passed, mental health services began to flourish. Now advocates can't even get basic services for the severely mentally ill; if we don't take care of basics, the mental health system is going to implode.
- Diana Hankins reported that these problems are typical for individuals coming out of jail: clients are bounced between multiple providers without receiving treatment; it takes too long to schedule appointments and complete the assessment process; transitional housing is not available in South Lake Tahoe; clients have no continuity of care and are not maintained on the medications that have been effective. Diana reports frustration in working with County Mental Health staff: In the past she has made a list of holes in the system, and has presented that to the Mental Health management, but has not gotten any response. Now she has decided to go straight to the State Mental Health Services Division to advocate for client services.
- Claudia Ball reported that she had experienced a similar situation when she tried to secure hospitalization services for her adult son, who was not able to take care of himself. She was told by a Crisis worker that she would have to stop providing care for him in order to demonstrate that he was gravely disabled.
- Linn Williamson addressed the problem of staff turnover and the loss of institutional knowledge. He added that at this point, volunteer organizations like NAMI have more institutional knowledge and a better long-term perspective than the Mental Health Department.
- Patricia Charles-Heathers stated her commitment to making significant changes in the whole mental health system, to be more responsive to client and family needs and to put more focus on serving the adult population.
- Don Ashton stated that current staff members are 100% committed to addressing the issues described. He acknowledged that staff turnover has been the biggest problem.
- Claudia Ball suggested that staff turnover would be reduced and services would be more responsive to client needs if the Mental Health Department made an active effort to recruit employees from family members. She stated that as it is now, the experiences and knowledge of the family is marginalized; parents are not listened to or taken seriously. The recruitment of family members would lead to the hiring of more committed individuals in Mental Health.
- Jim Abram disagreed with the implication that Mental Health staff members are not committed. He described watching a treatment team from the Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) and Outpatient Services work together to develop a program for a client.

These individuals demonstrated by their action that they care. Jim agreed that there are a lot of problems, but asserted that people do care.

- Jim Abram also spoke to the issue of continuity of care for clients going into or coming out of the County jail. He noted that clients who go into jail are not necessarily given the medications that they had been taking. He advocated for a change in the system to allow Mental Health to communicate directly with jail medical personnel, and for Mental Health to prescribe psychiatric medications for clients who are incarcerated.
- Don Ashton noted that Laura Walny will be the Health and Human Services Agency point-person overseeing jail-related transitional services. AB 109 funds have been designated to hire 1.5 FTE staff members to coordinate mental health services for inmates with a serious mental illness upon their release from jail. A background check of the preferred candidate is in-progress to hire for the full-time position.
- Ben Ehrler asked that Commission members be provided with names, phone numbers, email addresses, and assigned duties of Mental Health supervisory staff, so that problems can be addressed directly.

IX. Commissioners Comments

- Jan Melnicoe reflected on her experiences as a member of the Mental Health Commission. When she started, Commission members received their direction from the Mental Health Director. Over the years, the Commission has grown to become a much more independent body, an important part of the process, and a driving force in the push for significant, important changes. While she sees worrisome holes in mental health services, Jan also sees improvements and positive change.
- Dr. Lynn asked that an electronic copy of the weekly contract report be emailed to him every week. Don Ashton replied that the Agency does not have a weekly contract report. There is a database of contracts, contractors, effective dates, and not-to-exceed limits, but to compile this database into a weekly report would be a burden on staff. Dr. Lynn will email Don Ashton to further discuss the information that he hopes to obtain.
- Jim Abram stated that he has noticed more openness among managers in the Health and Human Services Agency since Don Ashton has been the Interim Director. He offered his appreciation to Commission members and guests who are here for the difficult discussions.
- Claudia Ball also thanked the Commission members and noted that Bonnie McLane recruited her to serve on the Commission. Claudia noted that the Commission is more inclusive than it has been in the past, and that Commission members better represent the needs and interests of clients and families. In addition, Claudia offered her thanks to Diana Hankins, noting that, "nobody in the County does more for the mentally ill than Diana."
- Linn Williamson offered his thanks to Suzanne Laub for coming to the Commission meeting last month and again this month in order to bring important issues to the attention of the Commission. He noted that specific items could be brought back to the attention of the Commission after Dennis Plunkett has had the opportunity to look into her son's treatment history.

X. Determination of next Mental Health Commission meeting for October

- Next meeting of the Mental Health Commission is scheduled for 5:00 PM on October 23, 2013.

XI. Adjournment

**El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency
Mental Health Division Update
Mental Health Commission
September 25, 2013 Meeting**

Assistant Director Update (Patricia Charles-Heathers)

- As of September 9th, Laura Walny, Program Manager II, has been reassigned to the Public Guardian's office and will also serve as the Agency's point person on coordinating AB109/Prison Realignment activities.
- Jamie Samboceti will serve as an Acting Manager of Mental Health Programs, and oversee Children's Services on the West Slope, so the Division could continue to move forward with implementing the necessary structural changes.
- The Mental Health Division conducted a workshop with the Board of Supervisors on Wednesday September 18th.
- The move to the Victory Mine Building remains on track with an anticipated move date of October 11th.
- The Mental Health Division continues to actively work on maintaining a balance budget and continues to review funding with regards to service delivery, i.e. in house services versus contracted services.

Outpatient Services (Dennis Plunkett)

WS Children's Outpatient Services:

- 59 clients open to WS Children's services as of 9/17/13
- Jamie Samboceti (Acting Manager of Mental Health Programs) has been assigned management responsibilities for the WS Children's team.
- Jamie is currently analyzing the department to determine strengths and opportunities in preparation for Katie A implementation.
- Children programs continue to be evaluated consistent with anticipated needs and resource availability, i.e., specifically aligned with our MHSA plan.
- Children's staff are working with Ren Scammon to ensure the new location will have a 'child friendly' environment.
- Finalizing the current Program Coordinator vacancy - official results from recruitment will be published as soon as possible.

WS Adult Outpatient Services:

- 477 clients open to services as of 9/17/13.
- Current MH Clinician recruitment (application process) has closed. Initial screening is currently underway and the list of applicants meeting Minimum Qualifications (MQ's) will be forwarded to program personnel to begin interviewing process as soon as possible.
- 2.6 (FTE) Mental Health Aides - interviews completed; request to hire approvals in process. Expect to hire 3 permanent Mental Health Aides for Recovery Oriented Community-Based Services (ROCS) Team.
- New hire Psychiatric Tech, Holly Johnson, R.N., has been training for outpatient and crisis services.
- Holly Johnson RN, will assist with training of the new Clinic Psychiatric Technician (Debra Benavidez) who begins on 9/23/13.

Appendix A

- Materials to support a full range of Evidenced Based Groups being reviewed for purchase. Outpatient services will increase selection and availability of process and psycho-education groups to include topics such as Trauma (PTSD), Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Skills Group (Managing Symptoms of Personality Disorders), Cognitive Behavioral Social Skills Training, and Medication Management (Symptoms and Side Effects). We are actively planning to incorporate a routine group schedule that will include offering at least one of these Evidence Based Groups during each business day.
- Researching the feasibility of offering evening and/or weekend groups (specifically Medication Management) utilizing the benefit of the Psychiatric Technician, on the ROCS Team.
- Bipolar Group that began on July 9; Co-Facilitated by Jerri Shrader, MFT and Felicity Gazowsky MHWII will complete next week. This group will continue until the replaced with an updated Evidence Based curriculum; however, the next group will not begin until our move is completed.
- Transition Group continues with strong attendance (15-20) average attendance. This group is required for clients who reside in our transition houses. ****Note**** This group would welcome community participation (NAMI and/or Mental Health Commission) for Life-Skills Training or Guest Speakers/Topics if appropriate. Please contact Ken Jones at 530-621-6178 if you are interested in providing support for clients in Transitional Housing.
- Collaborative Project Team continues to review all areas of Outpatient Services to increase efficiency, improve quality, access to service, and integrate evidence based groups targeted to our client demographic.
- Currently working on combining PES services with the ROCS Team to provide the most efficient and cost effective system to respond urgent service response for our community.

South Lake Tahoe:

- 164 clients (121 adults/43 children) open to MH Services as of 9/17/13.
- Working to transition the majority of children's cases to Contract Providers in order to develop a consistent treatment approach between WS and SLT.
- Program Coordinator working with local Contract Providers in preparation for State Mandated 'Katie A' implementation. (all children in Foster Care will be screened for Mental Health Service needs).
- EX-Help MH Aide interviews completed; request to hire approvals in process. Expect to hire 2 Ex-help Mental Health Aides to assist with Wellness Center activities.
- EX-Help Driver interviews completed; request to hire approvals in process. Expect to hire 1 Ex-help Mental Health Driver
- Potential relocation space identified; HHSA Facilities Personnel are currently discussing needs/options with building owner.
- Continuing to review space requirements needed to co-locate O/P services together with the Wellness Center and/or other logical collaborative partners (AOD, APS, etc.).

Psychiatric Health Facility (Cheree Haffner)

- 16 bed expansion update: We are very close to the completion of this project. Furniture will be arriving in the last week of September with installation to

immediately follow. We are still waiting for final confirmation on the State review date but it may be as early as October 4th.

- Staffing Update: Robert Bloom has accepted a transfer to Mental Health Program Coordinator for the PHF. He and I will be working with Outpatient Services closely as we transition Crisis Services into a partnership with the developing ICM team. As of September 21st we are fully staffed with our Line Staff. We also hired a new full time Cook. We are still in the interview process for our second Mental Health Clinician and another Registered Nurse. Finally, we are working with HR to develop a job classification for a Supervising Mental Health Clinical Nurse; we will then recruit to fill that position.
- Staffing pattern will change slightly in October. The AM and PM shifts will begin working 8.5 hours with a half hour lunch allow for a half hour shift overlap. The purpose of the overlap will be uninterrupted shift report time for coordination of ongoing patient care.

MHSA (Ren Scammon)

- The Requests for Proposal (RFPs) for the Latino Outreach and Children's Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) have closed. We received responses to both RFPs. The rating and ranking of the Latino Outreach RFP is done and we are in the process of rating and ranking the Children's PEI proposals. Announcements regarding the awards will be issued from the Procurement and Contracts Division of the Chief Administrative Office.
- All MHSA apartments at Trailside Terrace apartments have identified tenants. Tenants have moved into four of the five apartments. We are awaiting approval on the tenant for the fifth apartment.

Behavioral Health Court (Shirley White)

- South Lake Tahoe Behavioral Health Court has 11 active participants in the program; 1 new referral has been made to the team and the Mental Health Assessment is being completed. Four(4) participants will be recognized by the Judge and team for their positive achievements during the month. Next court date is September 19, 2013 at 1:30 pm.
- Placerville Behavioral Health Court has 10 active participants in the program; 3 new client referrals have been made to the program and assessments are being completed by Alcohol and Drug Programs staff and Mental Health staff. Placerville celebrated 1 successful graduation this month and 7 of the 10 participants received recognition from the Judge and treatment team for their outstanding efforts during the month. Next court date will be October 7, 2013 at 2:00 pm.

Patient's Rights Advocate (Doris Jones)

- PHF: Staff is currently conducting a last review of the FAQs and Brochure draft document.
Working with staff to update the daily Community Meeting Agenda.
- South Lake Tahoe: On August 27, 2013 attended the Mental Health Outpatient Staff Meeting & Mental Health/Public Health/Alcohol & Drug Programs All Staff Meeting.
- EDC Jail: Invited to participate in a 2 hour EDC Jail Orientation and facility tour; date to be determined.

Appendix A

- MH Sites Safety: Regularly meet with Mental Health Site Safety Representatives to discuss site safety issues, concerns, policies and procedures. On September 5, 2013, attended the County Wide Safety Meeting which focused on site Emergency Evacuation Plans. Review of Mental Health and County Injury and Illness Prevention Plan continues.
- Grievances/Complaints: Continue to regularly meet with EDC PHF inpatients regarding patients' rights and provide information, resources and representation at Certification Review Hearings.
- Community agencies contact and follow up regarding concerns, grievances and complaints. Mental Health Grievance forms and envelopes provided to Hangtown Haven. Community Outreach with BiPolar Insights, NAMI and Hangtown Haven.