

**PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR
INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS (PAIMI)
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
Final Minutes
August 15, 2007**

Members Present: Ward Marsteller, Irene Rebholz, Lisa Ritchie

Members Absent: Jacquelin Brown, Byron Stith, CW Tillman

Guests Present: Holly Albrite, Dr. Martha Guadalupe G. Alvarez, Charles Cooper, Jane Fetterman, Michael Newcomb, Ali Parker, Charles Putnam, Ronda Turner, Jeanne Tysinger, Bonnie Young

Staff Present: Sherry Confer, Julie Kegley, Kim Mendella, Colleen Miller, Lisa Shehi

**Call to Order/
Welcome/Introductions:** Irene Rebholz, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 and asked that Council members, guests, and staff introduce themselves.

Public Comment: No public comment was offered.

Agenda Adoption: Council members discussed agenda items. A quorum of Council members was not present and no vote for adoption was possible.

**February, June 2007
Minutes:** Minutes for the February and June 2007 meetings were provided to Council members prior to the meeting. Ms. Rebholz asked Council members to review and make recommendations for change. Lisa Ritchie, Council Vice Chair, questioned wording in the February minutes pertaining to the Board Report narrative. Ms. Confer clarified the statement and the February minutes will be changed to read “formalized several Board policies and presented new operating policies for consideration at the April Board meeting.”

With no quorum present, no vote was taken to approve the February and June 2007 minutes.

**Executive Director
Update:** Colleen Miller, Executive Director, referred to the Progress on Objectives report found in the Council packet. Ms. Miller explained the organizational structure of VOPA to Council members and guests. Council members and guests discussed areas within the report and Ms. Miller provided updates.

FY08-09 Objectives Work Session

Ms. Miller discussed the Litigation Report with Council members and guests.

Julie Kegley, Staff Attorney, stated that VOPA develops objectives annually. Council members and guests discussed the goals and recommended objectives in the following areas:

Goal – People with Disabilities are Free from Abuse and Neglect

- Define “abuse and neglect”
- Educate individuals on how to obtain power of attorney
- Physical abuse
- Denial of medications, including psychiatric medications not being dispensed when hospitalized for non-psychiatric and psychiatric reasons
- Medication administration issues
- Educate individuals on the importance of developing a Psychiatric Advanced Directive prior to medical event necessitating its use
- Communication
- Ensuring that individuals receive all personal items when discharged
- Staff on resident abuse

Goal – Children with Disabilities Receive an Appropriate Education.

- Accessibility of assessment and testing procedures to individuals with multiple disabilities to ensure adequate evaluation (visual, hearing)
- Schools need to provide training to teachers regarding Autism and Autism-related disorders
- Educators need to understand that students exhibiting “behavioral issues” may have an underlying diagnosis that is not behavior (i.e., children with depression can be introverted, may be seen as a “day dreamer”, but that may be because the student has a hard time focusing)
- Ensure that technical training centers are equipped to accommodate needs of students with disabilities
- Community provider involvement to transition to community living after discharge

Goal – People with Disabilities have Equal Access to Government Services.

- Increase understanding that mental health issues is a physical disability
- Transportation
- Continue working with local communities to assure that state and local government buildings are accessible
- Ensure that individuals diagnosed with claustrophobia or panic disorders are afforded the ability to vote through absentee ballot

Goal - People with Disabilities Live in the Most Appropriate Integrated Environment.

- Transportation in particular underservice in small towns as well as poor service in larger municipalities
- Educate individuals with mental illness on the need for Advanced Directives and Powers of Attorney
- Financial assistance for parents or caregivers of adults with mental illness to support community integration

Goal – People with Disabilities Are Employed to their Maximum Potential.

- Educate individuals fearing the potential loss of SSA medical benefits about work incentives
- Income resources during interim when waiting for SSI and SSDI benefits
- Educate Department of Rehabilitative Services to ensure they are open to all areas of employment
- Educate DRS regarding individuals with mental illness who suffer relapses and the resources needed during the interim period before benefits are restored
- Educate DRS regarding individuals with professional careers and re-integration into the workforce

Goal – People with Disabilities Have Equal Access to Appropriate and Necessary Health Care

- Communication, especially with individuals whose native language is not English
- Dental Care – local dentists in Stafford have provided free dental care in the Stafford area through the Arc
- Vision care
- Physicals and general medical care that is not included in Medicaid

- Educate DMHMRSAS regarding smoking ban at state facilities and the hesitancy individuals may have to seek services due to the smoking ban

Lunch:

The Council adjourned for lunch at 12:20 and reconvened at 1:00.

Governing Board Reports:

Charles Cooper provided a summary of the July 24 Board meeting including that Brent Brown had been re-elected as Board Chair and Susan Kalanges had been re-elected as Vice Chair. Mr. Cooper extended gratitude from the Board for the work of the Council including the development of the Goals and Focus Areas. Mr. Cooper invited Council members and guests to the next Board meeting--September 25 in Richmond

Governing Board Committee Reports

Ms. Rebholz shared that the Public Policy Committee met on July 23 and noted that the issues presented for action had been addressed and settled prior to the meeting. No actions were taken by the Committee.

Council feedback for Board/staff

Ward Marstiller, Council representative to the Finance and Resource Development Committee, shared that VOPA has recently been successful in litigation and has been able to secure attorneys' fees. The fees must be used within the same grant area that funded the case, but the interest earned on those funds is discretionary and may be used as VOPA determines best. The Board approved the budget presented by the Finance and Resource Development Committee.

Sherry Confer noted that the Internal Policy Committee discussed policies on Office Hours, Challenging Behaviors, and Public Awareness at the last meeting.

Lisa Ritchie shared that she resigned from the Public Awareness and Goals Committee. Julie Kegley provided an overview of the June 28 meeting during the Objectives work session. Ms. Ritchie stated that she had been unable to attend that meeting, but wished to discuss an issue which arose surrounding eliminating a goal. Ms. Ritchie stressed her opinion that when a decision is made to eliminate a goal that had received much input from the Councils, that decision should be discussed with the Councils prior to discussion with the Board.

Other Business:

Meeting Dates – 2008

Ms. Miller suggested that staff develop a list of potential meeting dates for 2008 and submit them to the Council for consideration.

Membership

Ms. Rebholz read the resignation of Lisa DuVal. As a Council quorum was not present, no vote was taken on elections. Council members present discussed potential officers: Lisa Ritchie as Chair, Jacquelin Brown as Vice Chair, and CW Tillman as Secretary. Ms. Confer shared that Mr. Tillman had agreed to continue serving in this role if elected.

Other

Ms. Confer presented gifts of appreciation to Ms. Rebholz and Mr. Marstiller whose terms are ending. Ms. Confer introduced Kim Mendella as a new Executive Assistant. Ms. Mendella will provide administrative support to the Councils. Ms. Miller shared that Ms. Confer has been promoted to Deputy Director.

Ms. Rebholz reminded Council members to submit travel vouchers.

There being no further business, Lisa Ritchie made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Ward Marstiller SECONDED the MOTION and the meeting was adjourned with unanimous approval at 2:00 p.m.

FINAL MINUTES

November 14, 2007

Date