

Coalition Briefs

April 17, 1998

The
Coalition
of Voluntary
Mental Health
Agencies, Inc.

A SEMI-MONTHLY UPDATE ON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK

Merging right along

Commissioner Neal Cohen spoke to Coalition members about the proposed merger of The City Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services with the Department of Health on Tuesday morning, April 9. At this meeting the Commissioner (now a dual Commissioner) unveiled his proposed table of organization for what would be a new Department of Public Health. Commissioner Cohen spoke about his vision of integrated services and the reasoning that went into the merger decision. After his presentation Coalition members had the opportunity to express their concerns to the Commissioner and ask him questions about the specifics of the proposed new department.

Coalition Board members highlighted four key changes that we would like to see made to the proposed merger law before the Departments are joined. Firstly, we feel that the

name Department of Public Health does not reflect all of the component parts of the new Department's mission, lending fuel to the fears of mental health's submersion in the more general mission expressed by "public health." The Coalition has proposed that Department of Health, Behavioral Health and Disabilities Services would be more desirable and accurate both programmatically and symbolically. Secondly, we feel that the law needs to guarantee what the table of organization shows, that the Director of the Division of Mental Hygiene reports directly to the Commissioner. Thirdly, we think it is imperative that there be a fiscal/contracting point person within the Division of Mental Hygiene to ensure that the mental hygiene funding streams are neither lost nor diffused. Finally, we would like to see a review process built into the law that would hold the Department up for review by the City Council at some point down the road.

The Coalition will bring these proposals to the administration and City Council before the law is shaped into final form. We believe these changes to the proposal will serve to benefit people in New York City with mental illness. ▣

Volunteers available

On occasion The Coalition receives email on our website from people who are interested in volunteering for a community-based organization. Most of these volunteers are college students studying psychology or related fields. We are unable ourselves to place these people in a volunteer position, so we would like to know which of our member agencies are interested in some free help. Those who wish to be informed about potential volunteers should contact Joshua Rubin at The Coalition with an email address or fax number to which the volunteer's information can be forwarded. ▣

At the 14th Annual
Mental Health
Awards Ceremony
on June 4, 1998
The Coalition's own
Judeth Podell
will receive the
Mental Health Award

Upcoming Dates

April 17
April 21

April 22
April 28

May 17
June 4

Passover - Coalition building closed

Task Force on Children and Families at CCC
Children's Mental Health Alliance at CCC

Reinvestment Year 5 Public Hearings - Bronx

Managed Care Technical Assistance at NYANA

Reinvestment Year 5 Public Hearings - Manhattan

Mental Health Parity Picnic and Parade

14th Annual Mental Health Awards

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— Help Wanted —

Budget looks like it will be good

At this late stage in the State budget negotiations, it appears that community mental health providers will do very well. The Coalition joined with over a dozen other human services lobbying organizations to call for a cost of living adjustment/Medicaid trended increase (COLA). Our efforts were a success for mental health, substance abuse and several other human services sectors.

The Mental Hygiene Conference subcommittee agreed on a division of the \$61 million that was allocated to them by the full Conference Committee. The big picture shows \$18,630,000 going to OASAS, \$18,262,500 going to OMRDD and \$24,107,500 going to SOMH. Each of these numbers includes a COLA; \$4,755,000 under OASAS, \$8,350,500 under OMRDD and \$8,880,000 under SOMH. Other important items in the mental health budget include (in thousands of dollars):

Supported Employment	5,400
New York/New York II	5,700
New York/New York II Bonding Authority	40,000
Children's Home and Community Based Waivers	2,000
Children's Residences	700
Family Support Programs	646

The extension of Reinvestment beyond the fifth year has been tabled until after the budget negotiations are complete. However, the subcommittee on mental hygiene has agreed in principle to a multi-year extension. The Coalition will be lobbying vigorously for a long-term extension as soon as the budget battles are complete.

With the help of the other members of The Coalition to Preserve Access to Community-Based Healthcare we were able to secure funding to help community-based providers transition to a Medicaid managed care environment. Supplemental payments in year one are authorized for any provider whose Medicaid visits total at least 30% of its overall visits, provided that at least 3% of the Medicaid visits are from managed care enrollees. In year two the threshold increases to 5%. Providers are to be compensated based on their percentage of the total Medicaid managed care visits in any given quarter.

The only hurdle left to jump is Governor Pataki's veto pen. The Governor still has the ability to line-item all of our gains out of the budget. Let him know that he should support this bipartisan legislative deal. Call him at (518) 474-8343, fax him at (518) 486-4466 or email him at <gov.pataki@chamber.state.ny.us>.

Walk the Walk

Tipper Gore, Rosalynn Carter and Donna Shalala are the Honorary Co-Chairs for the "Walk the Walk for Lives Touched by Mental Illness." On Saturday, March 2 a one-mile walk will be held at Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C. to dispel negative preconceptions about people with mental illness and gain them equal treatment. Busses are leaving from New York. For more information contact AMI/PATH at (718) 347-7284.

Free legal assistance

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) offers a free legal referral service for community-based agencies. Agencies who are experiencing a problem with which they need legal assistance should contact Wendy Brennan at (212) 727-2270. Agencies that qualify will be added to a monthly memo that is read by 76 NYLPI member law firms who are willing to take cases pro bono for community-based agencies.

Part-time intake position available (Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.) On a fee-for-service basis. Send or fax resume to: Phoebe C. Frankel, MSW, CSW; Clinical Director; **Advanced Center for Psychotherapy**; 178-10 Wexford Terrace; Jamaica Estates, NY 11432. (718) 658-7091 (fax).

Psychotherapists, MSWs and Ph.Ds to work in dynamically oriented clinic part-time, fee-for-service. Queens locations. Flexible hours. Saturdays and weekday afternoons, evenings preferred. Resume to: Executive Director, **Advanced Center for Psychotherapy**, 178-10 Wexford Terrace, Jamaica Estates, NY 11432.

League Treatment Center seeks Psychologist (behavioral): Nationally recognized agency providing treatment to developmentally disabled adults seeks two Behavioral Psychologists for its day treatment programs. Candidates should have a Ph.D. or M.A. with a strong background in behavioral management planning & staff training. Be a part of our multidisciplinary team! In return for your skills & experience we offer a comprehensive benefit package. Resume to: JBLY, 30 Washington Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Fax: (718) 643-1592. EOE M/F/D/V/SO. Minority candidates encouraged to apply.

Creative Social Worker: Rare opportunity to be a part of an interdisciplinary team in innovative, multicultural, short-term partial hospitalization program. Applicants should be bi-lingual in Spanish and English and have clinical experience in mental health. Competitive salary and benefits. Fax resume to (718) 963-1776 attn: Abbie Karic, CSW, **Puerto Rican Family Institute**-Brooklyn.

Brooklyn mental health clinic has 7-hour position for bi-lingual Spanish and English Ph.D. clinical psychologist with NYS license. Position involves psychological testing, utilization review and treatment with children, families and adults. Fax resume salary history and curriculum vitae to: (718) 963-0814, Abigail Karic, CSW, Director of Programs, **Puerto Rican Family Institute**.