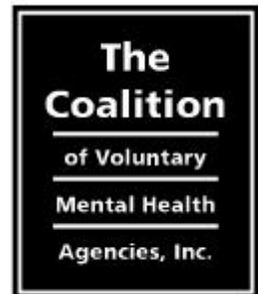


Coalition Briefs

July 17, 1998



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

The children's SNP should be put on hold

On July 15, 1998 The Coalition responded to the New York State Office of Mental Health Request for Information (RFI) on the Children's Mental Health Special Needs Plan (SNP). We stressed that "children's mental health special needs plans, as currently conceived in this RFI, should be delayed until a point in the future when more data and more analysis is available to suggest a clear and workable direction for the State to pursue."

The Coalition arrived at this determination for a number of reasons: Firstly, although the RFI sets forth very admirable goals for a children's SNP, available financing is vastly insufficient to achieve them. The current underfunding of children's mental healthcare would only be exacerbated by the addition of services without concurrent funding increases.

Secondly, there is simply not sufficient data available even from SOMH's "managed care-like" demonstration projects to safely make such a revolutionary change to the system. SNPs are a unique model and even experience in other States is only applicable in a limited way. Furthermore, although we recognize that the differences between children's mental health care and adult

mental health care are immense, we feel that until the adult SNP has operated for long enough to provide an adequate evaluation of any SNP model, we should avoid tampering with a system that provides care for such a vulnerable population.

We noted our concern that the lack of current system capacity to serve mentally ill children would doom the SNP to failure right from the start. SNPs for children are unfeasible without additional study of the capacity of the State and City mental health systems.

Additionally, necessary streamlined regulatory and licensing requirements that would support a children's SNP are not in place. It is imperative that these regulatory reforms precede the implementation of the children's SNP.

Finally, while the SNP concept provides the opportunity to break down barriers to service between agencies, government and other systems, the necessary key linkages are not in place. The ultimate success of a mental health SNP is dependent on the cooperation of multiple systems of children's services. Unfortunately we are not yet at a point where that is operable on a systems or service level. □

Upcoming Events

- July 21 New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities hearing on the impact of the downsizing of the state hospital system at 270 Broadway, 10:30 a.m.
- July 22 Committee on Coexisting Alcohol and Substance Abuse Issues at CVMHA, 10:00 a.m.
- July 28 Managed Care Technical Assistance - Update on new legislation and regulations re: SNPs and MCOs in NYANA auditorium, 9:30 a.m.
- August 11 Outcomes Measurement meeting with NYSCCBH and Access Measurement Systems at CVMHA, 2:00 p.m.

October 13 Discovering and Implementing Best Practices for Behavioral Healthcare

Reinvestment extended

Governor Pataki made Bastille Day festive for the mental health community by signing into law Senate bill 7770, extending the Community Reinvestment Act for 2 1/2 years. With the extender New York State is committed to the growth of a major segment of the community-based mental healthcare system through September 30, 2001.

The new law anticipates a 1,000-bed reduction in the State mental hospital system, reducing the census to 4,600 beds. Meeting this estimate will bring \$60 million dollars (\$60,000 per bed) into the community-based system.

This good news comes with the caveat that all of this funding is subject to appropriation. Continued vigilance by advocates will be necessary. □

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Homeless/MICA RFP is coming

Within the next week to ten days the New York City Field Office of the State Office of Mental Health, in collaboration with the New York City Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) that makes available four different types of funding:

- 200 supported housing beds at \$95,510 per bed
- capital development and operation of 80 SRO beds
- the operation of a Brooklyn-based 8-bed community residence program
- \$11 million for Homeless/MICA programming

The RFP is being released in this fashion to encourage the development of blended programs. Providers are encouraged to propose programs that incorporate the use of more than one type of funding. The majority of the Homeless-MICA funding will likely go to non-residential support services because of the housing development money already flowing through the New York/New York II program.

There are two other things to note. Funding for an additional 150 supported housing beds will be distributed outside of the RFP process to providers who have previously submitted proposals that were deemed worthy but for which funding was not available. The total of the Homeless/MICA funds available to New York City is \$12.8 million. The RFP makes available only \$11 million while the remaining \$1.8 million will go to replacing expiring HUD funding for existing housing services.

Ten days after the release of the RFP a bidders conference is planned. Proposals will likely be due to OMH sometime in late August. ▣

Outcomes measurement meeting

On August 11, 1998 the Coalition will host a joint meeting with the New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare on the New York Community Outcomes Measurement Project (NYCOMP). The meeting will be held at the offices of the **Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services** at 120 West 57th Street at 2:00 p.m. Representatives of Access Measurement Systems (AMS) will be present to discuss their outcomes measurement tool, Treatment Outcome Package (TOP), and answer questions. All members of both associations are encouraged to attend. ▣

Measuring outcomes Statewide

Recognizing that outcomes measurement is key to demonstrating the efficacy of mental health care, The Coalition and the New York State Council of Community Behavioral Healthcare are cooperating on a State-wide outcomes measurement project. The New York Community Outcomes Measurement Project (NYCOMP) is open to all members of both organizations.

Access Measurement Systems (AMS) has been retained to provide their Treatment Outcome Package (TOP). TOP has been used successfully to aggregate data on a large scale in Massachusetts and other states. AMS was chosen because their product is easily administrated, useful in treatment and comparatively inexpensive.

By combining the purchasing power of both organizations' members we have been able to negotiate a reduced rate. Please note that this offer is available only to members. Empirically demonstrating the success of treatment will hopefully nudge the marketplace away from price as the sole determinant of reimbursements. We hope all Coalition member agencies will take part in this important project.

Neither association has any proprietary interest in AMS and does not endorse their products through this initiative. We will be preparing an industry-wide RFP for outcomes measurement as part of The Coalition's technical assistance program. ▣

Martin Begun begins a new phase

Coalition Honorary Director Martin S. Begun has been named chairman of the New York State Liberal Party's Policy and Program Committee. One-time secretary to the Manhattan Democratic County Committee, Mr. Begun has been brought on board by Liberal Party Chair Ray Harding to help restore the party's tarnished image. ▣

Member Notes

On July 1, 1998 **The Association for the Rehabilitation of the Mentally Ill, Inc. (ARMI)** released a survey on the quality of life of its clients. **ARMI's** clients are asked to complete a survey annually on four areas: satisfaction with **ARMI** services, apartment quality, community involvement and respect of their rights and autonomy. This year's surveys found an improvement in responses from previous years, which already demonstrated admirable success rates. 100% of clients surveyed affirmed that **ARMI** responds adequately to their concerns, up from 91% last year. An identical 100% answered yes to the question, "Does **ARMI** help you to manage your life better?" also up from 91% last year. The Coalition congratulates **ARMI** on these encouraging results. ▣