



Coalition Briefs

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

Mary Redd to Chair Community Services Board

Steinway Child and Family Services Executive Director Mary D. Redd, ACSW has been named Chair of the Community Services Board of the Department of Mental Health, Mental retardation and Alcoholism Services by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Mary replaces **Staten Island Mental Health Society, Inc.** President and CEO Kenneth Popler, Ph.D., MBA in this important role. "I am very excited to have this wonderful opportunity and I am very pleased to succeed Ken Popler, [as she did with the Presidency of The Coalition: Ed note] who has done a wonderful job. I look forward to serving, and I am grateful to Mayor Giuliani and Commissioner Cohen for their faith in me." She will chair the Board until December 31, 2002. Congratulations Mary. ▣

Annual meeting

The Coalition's Annual meeting will be held on Thursday, December 16th, 1999 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Pfizer, Inc. Although every Coalition meeting is an opportunity for fun, the Annual meeting is the one time of the year when we officially mix business with pleasure. This year we are very fortunate to have a guest speaker in the person of Pope Simmons, Vice President of Government Relations for the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, who will speak about *Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policies: A Federal Perspective*. In addition, we will be holding elections to fill vacancies in the Board of Directors and celebrating another successful year of working together to ensure access to community based mental health services for all who need them. ▣

www.kendra'slaw.gov

New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) has now published on its web site (which can be reached through www.cvmha.org) extensive materials on New York's new Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) law. These materials include:

- A Summary of the law
- Detailed Highlights of the law
- Frequently asked questions
- Resources (including NYS County Mental Health Agencies and Mental Hygiene Legal Services, with contact phone numbers concerning the law)
- Three sets of forms to be used in court proceedings under the law, as follows:
 1. Forms for use when a city/county mental health official (i.e., a Director of Community Services under the Mental Hygiene Law, which in NYC is the City's Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation & Alcoholism Services) acts as a petitioner;
 2. Forms for use when a hospital initiates the court proceeding;
 3. Forms for use by a petitioner that is neither a Director of Community Services nor a hospital.

Every set of forms includes the following: (1) an order to show cause; (2) a verified petition; (3) a physician's affirmation; and (4) a final order/judgment. Also included in OMH's materials are the OMH Customer Service number for AOT: (800) 597-8481, as well as NYC DMH's AOT information number: (800) 527-7474. ▣

Federal budget deal brings good news

The FY2000 budget signed recently by President Clinton includes increases for block grants administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Most importantly, the mental health block grant, which has not received substantial increases in the last decade, will be increased from \$288 million to \$356 million. The PATH program, which funds outreach services to the homeless with behavioral health disorders was also increased, to \$31 million.

The substance abuse block grant also enjoyed a \$15 million increase, bringing the figure up from \$1.58 to \$1.6 billion. It is important to note, however, that all of these fig-

ures are subject to a .38% cut across the board. SAMHSA stands to lose over \$11 million as a result of this negotiated reduction. We hope that the mental hygiene services increases will help offset the cuts to the Social Services Block Grant, which was cut to an all-time low of \$1.75 billion.

Another important victory is that the budget agreement includes funding to cover the costs associated with the Work Incentives Improvement Act. The Act, which will eliminate some of the institutional barriers that prohibit people with mental illness from returning to work, was passed in both houses overwhelmingly, but was held up over funding problems.

Implementation in New York is up to the Governor and the legislature. ▣

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Responding to the Daily News

We were very disturbed by a November 19th editorial in the New York Daily News that we felt did not help to facilitate intelligent debate, so we wrote a letter to the Editor. Sadly, the Daily News did not see fit to publish the letter, so we will:

To the Editor, The Daily News:

Most persons with mental illness are not violent, and many violent persons in our society are not mentally ill. So we should not automatically assume that the attacker of Nicole Barrett was mentally ill - we simply don't know. Shame on you for your broad-brush "Hospitalize the Deranged" approach (Nov. 19 Editorial), which unfairly stigmatizes the vast majority of persons with mental illness who can live successfully and productively in the community with appropriate supports like case management services, medication management, and supported housing. Your inflammatory rhetoric totally ignores that reality and does us all harm.

Phillip A. Saperia, Executive Director ☐

Assembly roundtable

On December 13th, 1999 the Assembly Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Developmental Disabilities in conjunction with the Committee on Children and Families will hold a roundtable entitled *The Mental Health Treatment Needs of Children in Out-of-Home Placement and Residential Facilities*. The roundtable will be held in the Legislative Office Building from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In the morning, from 10:00 to 12:00 staff from different government agencies will be participating, in the afternoon, from 1:00 to 3:00 advocates and providers will discuss issues relating to children's mental health services. ☐

Anti-violence money available

On November 18th the New York City Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services announced a negotiated acquisition for school violence prevention programs in each of the five boroughs. The Coalition was especially pleased to see this notice because it represents the fruition of our FY2000 City budget advocacy. With the help of our friends on the City Council, particularly Mental Hygiene Subcommittee Chairwoman Una S.T. Clarke, we were able to add funding for this program to the budget proposed by Mayor Giuliani. Applications are due by January 7, 2000. ☐

Upcoming Events

December 6	Government Relations Committee at CVMHA
December 7	PLC: Utilization Review and Resource Management
December 9	Finance Committee at CVMHA
	Board of Directors at CVMHA
	Nominating Committee at CVMHA
	Committee on Children and Families canceled
December 13	MICA Committee at The Bridge
December 16	Annual Meeting at Pfizer
December 24	Coalition closed in honor of Christmas
December 31	Coalition closed in honor of New Years Eve
January 6	Committee on Children and Families at CVMHA
June 15	Mental Health Awards at Pfizer

DMH Mental Hygiene Awards are standing room only

The Public Hearing Chamber at City Hall was filled to overflowing for the New York City Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services Sixth Annual Mental Hygiene Awards ceremony. After a repast provided by **The Bridge** and an exhibit in the Rotunda of artwork by consumers from mental health programs in the Bronx the ceremony began. Among the distinguished guests introduced by host Neal Cohen were Assembly Mental Hygiene Committee Chair James Brennan and City Council Mental Hygiene subcommittee Chair Una S.T. Clarke. Of particular note among the exceptional award recipients were **Queens Child Guidance Center**, which received the Mental Health Agency Award and **Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services**, which was honored with the William A. Charet Memorial Award. Congratulations to the Department for a lovely event. ☐

AOT Forum

On December 15th the Urban Justice Center and NYAPRS will hold a forum on *Involuntary Outpatient Commitment: Implementation and Implications* at Hunter College School of Social Work. Admission is free, and lunch will be served. Call (212) 533-0540x306 for more information. ☐

Building Available

A 20,000 sq. foot brick building is available for use as a mental health program or related facility in the South Bronx on Southern Boulevard between 173rd and 174th Streets. Available November, 1999 the building (currently a daycare center) has a full kitchen, 7 classrooms, 5 offices, lounge, library, 2 conference rooms, 3 baths, common room and 5,000 sq. foot play roof. Air conditioned. Call Mark Marcario (718) 727-9107. ☐

**Annual Meeting and
Holiday Party on December
16th — Join the fun!!!**