



# Coalition Briefs

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

## Council copes with children's crisis

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> the New York City Council Subcommittee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services held a hearing entitled, "Children and Mental Health: The problem of KIDLOCK in foster Care." Responding to an excellent report by the Citizen's Committee for Children of New York, the Subcommittee, lead by Councilwoman Clarke, highlighted the terrible lack of capacity that forces children with emotional disturbances to suffer without the mental health services they need. Copies of the testimony delivered by Phillip A. Saperia at the hearing are available at [www.cvmha.org](http://www.cvmha.org). ©

## New bill threatens parity possibility

A bill introduced by Assembly Insurance Committee Chair Alexander Grannis and Senate Insurance Committee Chair James Seward would have a tremendous negative

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## All-Star award recipients

The Sixteenth Annual Mental Health Awards will be held on Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at the Pfizer Building. This year's awards recipients have all made tremendous contributions to the mental health community. Mental Health Awards will be given to Michael Winerip, Staff Writer for the New York Times Magazine and Gail Nayowith, Executive Director of the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York. The Founders Award will be given to Coalition founder and **Bronx-Lebanon Hospital** Director of Psychiatry Dr. Harvey Bluestone. Office of Mental Health Director of Peer Specialist Services Celia Brown will receive the Consumer Leadership Award. We congratulate all of the award recipients and hope that all *Briefs* readers will be able to join us for what promises to be a lovely evening. For more information about the Mental Health Awards, contact Judeth Podell at x18. ©

## Coalition releases SNP critique

The Coalition released a report critical of the New York State Mental Health Special Needs Plan on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Having heard from its members that the design of the SNP, its rate methodologies and its mandated benefit plan were of overriding concern, The Coalition engaged Norman Brier, the former Director of the State Office of Mental Health's (SOMH) Bureau of Strategic Planning and Financial Services. He was asked to objectively review and analyze the SNP model as it was presented in the State's Request for Proposals.

In a letter to Commissioners James Stone of SOMH and Antonia Novella of the Department of Health, Phillip Saperia, Executive Director of the Coalition stated that "although The Coalition has supported a carve-out concept for seriously and persistently mentally ill adults and acknowledged the po-

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## Finally going our way

On March 28<sup>th</sup> the Metropolitan Transit Authority's Board of Directors finally decided to end its practice of discrimination against people with psychiatric disabilities. Chairman E. Virgil Conway has been authorized to extend the half fare benefit to New Yorkers who receive SSI as a result of a psychiatric disability.

That's the good news... unfortunately the MTA Staff Summary authorizes Chairman Conway to determine "hours of applicability" for the half fare on the Long Island and Metro-North Railroads. This leaves open the possibility that the MTA will opt to prohibit people from using the half fare benefit during rush hours. The technical amendment passed by the legislature this year mandates that the half fare be implemented 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If the half fare is to be effective in enabling people to return to work and school, it will need to be accessed during rush hours.

*Briefs* readers are encouraged to contact Governor Pataki to express our gratitude to him for his support of half fare fairness and to encourage him to sign the technical amendment and press his appointee to implement the program 24-7-365. ©

## 1 down 4? 5? 6? To go

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> the New York State Office of Mental Health and Department of Health, in conjunction with the Western New York Behavioral Health Consortium announced the conditional award of a mental health Special Needs Plan (SNP) to Western New York Behavioral Health Services, Inc. "This represents an important milestone," according to OMH Commissioner James Stone.

The Coalition, along with our allies, continues to advocate changes in the SNP authorizing legislation before the program is implemented. ©

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## What model does the New York Work Exchange support?

In designing and developing our services, the New York Work Exchange has made a conscious choice to avoid the ongoing discussion about which model of employment services is "best". The staff of the Work Exchange are familiar with all of the models of employment services from transitional employment to individualized placement and supports, and believe that the best way to proceed with the process of employment outcomes is to focus on the "best practices" that have emerged from 20 years of mental health services practice and research.

The mission of the Work Exchange is to help mental health care improve employment outcomes. That mission requires that we attend to what works and what does not work, regardless of the model from which any particular technique emerges.

In using this "modeless" approach the Work Exchange is operating in a manner that is consistent with the position paper published by the International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (IAPSRS) entitled "The Single Model Trap". In that paper IAPSRS states:

"The body of research in rehabilitation demonstrates that those who participate in rehabilitation are significantly more likely to improve their level of functioning, to reduce both number and days of

hospitalization, and to gain employment. But there is not sufficient research to demonstrate that any one model is more effective than any other model for all people in all settings. **There is no magic model for all people with serious mental illness.**"

At the New York Work Exchange, our goal is to help in whatever way we can, not to promulgate or promote any one way of working. ©

— Norman Council

## Brennan bill supports work

The New York Work Exchange and The Coalition of Voluntary Mental Health Agencies were pleased to offer support to Assemblyman James F. Brennan and the Assembly Mental Hygiene Committee at his press conference to announce the introduction of "The Work and Wellness Act of 2000."

In comments at the press conference Norman Council, Director of the New York Work Exchange commented: "If the Assembly and the Senate support Mr. Brennan, New York State will join with leaders in the nation in the effort to level the playing field for people with disabling mental illness as they attempt to take their rightful place as workers and taxpayers in New York." If this legislation passes and is signed by the Governor, people with psychiatric disabilities will no longer be forced to choose between working and continuing the medication and services that help them to manage their disability. The Assembly Mental Hygiene Committee and Assemblyman Brennan are to be commended for their foresight in crafting this crucial legislation. ©

## Last rights

On Tuesday, April 4, 2000, Dr. Lawrence Berg, will conduct his final seminar of the year, "The Patients' Bill of Rights: A Comparison of the U.S. Senate and House Bills and New York State Law". In addition, if your agency is still interested in an on-site legal consultation, Dr. Berg still has a limited number of slots available. To RSVP for the April 4<sup>th</sup> presentation or an on-site presentation, please RSVP by calling Patricia Gallo Goldstein at (212) 586-4555x12. ©

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tential conceptual potency of the SNP model," we now believe the SNP as currently designed to be so flawed that its implementation in its current form would "degrade the quality of mental health care for needy and vulnerable consumers and threaten the viability of the public system of community behavioral health care."

The Coalition's analysis determined that 1) the SNP employs a flawed rate methodology that fails to take advantage of the available pool of funds under the Partnership Plan agreement with HCFA and seriously under-capitalizes the SNP; 2) mandates an unlimited benefits package and 3) imposes a regulatory overlay on an insurance model that is rigid and robs the SNP of the flexibility it requires to manage care.

The report makes several recommendations for change of the Special Needs Plan design that are absolutely requisite if the SNP is not to fail.

Copies of the report are available upon request to The Coalition at mailbox@cvmha.org. ©

## Hold the date! June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2000

The New York Work Exchange, in conjunction with The Coalition and The New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, is sponsoring a free, day long conference, "**The Mission for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Employment Services for People with Mental Illness**". The conference will be held at the Brooklyn Marriott, 33 Adams St., Brooklyn, New York 11201. Registration material will be sent in the next few weeks. ©

## Forensic training available

The New York State Office of Mental Health is once again offering three-hour courses to teach mental health workers about the criminal justice system and the impact involvement in the system has on the provision of mental health care. The training, provided in conjunction with CASES, will be held on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Call Carletta McClanahan at (212) 675-3803x301 for more information. ©

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## Coalition members see managed care problems

Twenty-three managed care questionnaires from twenty-one Coalition members were completed and returned. Respondents represent about twenty percent of the Coalition's membership, and roughly half are located in mandatory enrollment zip codes.

Sixty-five percent of respondents indicated that their clients had problems getting accurate information about covered services and sixty-eight percent indicated that their clients had trouble accessing their provider of choice. Other frequently cited problems included obtaining exemptions, exclusions or disenrollments (forty-eight percent of respondents); denial of pre-authorization of outpatient mental health services (forty-eight percent of respondents); and lack of continuity of care (forty-three percent of respondents).

Thirty percent indicated that their clients had been victims of fraudulent marketing and/or misinformation, while twenty-two percent indicated that their clients experienced barriers to care due to language or literacy issues.

Surprisingly, most respondents (sixty-one percent) indicated that they encountered managed care problems infrequently (once or twice per month). A whopping seventy percent of respondents indicated that they are interested in training workshops or educational materials on Medicaid managed care exemptions and exclusions.

An educational pamphlet is available to everyone. Coalition member agencies can schedule free on-site training workshops for their consumers and/or staff members. For more information or immediate assistance in resolving mental health managed care issues, please contact Andrea Ryan of the Mental Health Managed Care Consumer Advocacy and Ombudsprogram at (212) 533-0540x347. ©

*The Mental Health Managed Care Consumer Advocacy and Ombudsprogram is a collaboration between The Coalition and the Urban Justice Center.*

## Insurance bill

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impact on the potential for mental health parity if passed. The bill would require any new (and all current) insurance mandates to be implemented only in policies for state employees for three years. A newly created commission would then analyze the costs and benefits of the mandate **before** the legislature would have the opportunity to extend coverage to those residents of New York who do not work for the government.

The legislative justification, "that the legislature and the public should have an experience-based

cost and benefit analysis before deciding whether to require all policies to include a certain benefit," might make sense if more than half of the country had not already instituted mental health parity and found it to be cost-effective.

In a related item, the March 20<sup>th</sup> issue of *Crain's New York Business* includes an article entitled, "Covering mental health may be a sane solution," which indicates the cost-savings that companies can realize by providing comprehensive mental health care. Highlighting the \$150 billion employers lose per year to mental illness, *Crain's* found ample fiscal justification for mental health parity. ©

## Pushing presumptive eligibility

Susan Harrington's son committed suicide shortly after his release from Rikers Island because of his inability to access mental health care. Within a week of his death, his mother received his Medicaid card. She and **Skylight Center** member Sharon Gravenor were the primary speakers at a March 21<sup>st</sup> press conference in the Legislative Office Building in Albany to push for presumptive Medicaid eligibility for people with psychiatric disabilities who are discharged from jails, prisons and inpatient psychiatric facilities. In addition to the two mothers, who spoke about how much presumptive eligibility would have helped their children, a plethora of mental health advocates (including The Coalition's Joshua Rubin) and Assemblymembers Brennan and Connelly were in attendance.

The Assembly's one-house budget resolution includes funding for presumptive eligibility, replacing a less-comprehensive medication grant program proposed by Governor Pataki. ©

## Upcoming Events

April 2, 3, 4	<i>Mastering the Key Connection</i> at Crowne Plaza
April 4	PLC*: Patients' Bill of Rights at CSS
	<i>Creating a Mental Health Easy Pass for the Child Welfare system</i> at Fordham Law School
	<i>Facing New Trends and Treatment Challenges for the year 2000</i> at Lincoln Medical Center
April 5	Community Environmental Center presentation on building insulation at PRFI
April 7	Anasazi software demonstration at CVMHA
April 12	PLC*: Open Minds presentation on case rates at FPWA
April 13	Finance Committee at CVMHA
	Executive Committee at CVMHA
April 20	Passover: Coalition building closed
<b>June 15</b>	<b>Mental Health Awards at Pfizer</b>

\*PLC = Professional Learning Center

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## — Help Wanted —

**Community Access** seeks Development Associate to provide admin. & tech. support to the Development Dir. and Manager of Special Projects. Will be resp. for assisting w/fundraising, mailings, newsletter, donor database & coordinating w/B.O.D. Must have excellent organization, written & interpersonal skills, computer lit., & able to work w/limited supervision. Two yrs. prior exp. as an admin. assistant and/or college deg. pref. Competitive salary & excellent benefits. Please send or fax resume w/ salary history to: **Community Access, Inc.**, HR Dept., 666 Broadway, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl., NYC, NY 10012; (212) 780-1555.©

**Lexington Center for Mental Health Services** seeks Clinical Supervisor of Children's ICM Program & Outpatient Clinic to provide leadership to MH professionals serving deaf individuals & their families. Must also provide direct services to clients, ensure quality service, liaison btw. MH center and affiliates, ensure compliance with city and state dept. regs. Ph.D. or Psy.D. in clinical psych. W/appropriate cert. & NYS lic./eligibility, or CSW w/appropriate background. 5 yrs. Clinical & admin. exp. incl. staff supervision. Knowledge of deaf pop. Sign language pref. Contact Adele Agin, E.D., (718) 350-3110 or (718) 899-6834.©

**Victim Services** seeks FT & PT therapists to work in trauma-centered, NYS licensed mental health clinic located in downtown Brooklyn. CSW required; Bi-lingual preferred. Fax resume, cover letter & salary req. to L. Kocieniewski at (718) 624-3405.©

**Union Settlement Association** seeks Director of Mental Health and HIV Services for Johnson Counseling Center. MSW or Ph. D. in Clinical Social Work or Clinical Psych., cert. in NYS; 5-7 yrs. exp. clinic/program admin.; management of gov. contracts; budg. prep.; program. dev.; 2 yrs.' in direct service; knowledge of & participation in HIV/AIDS services; exc. writing & presentation skills. Resp. for management of all clinical & admin. aspects of MH & HIV/AIDS services. Send salary history and resume to: Ms. Laura Johnson, **Union Settlement**, 237 E.104<sup>th</sup> St., NY, NY 10029. Specify position.©

**The Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service** in New York City is seeking a Director of Foundation and Government Funding. The outstanding candidate will be a team player and bring demonstrated skills in communication, critical thinking, conceptualization of social service programs and supervision. Successful experience in managing ambitious public and foundation grant-seeking required. Interested candidates should forward resumes to Eva Toth, DRG, 104 East 40<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 304, NY, NY 10016, FAX (212) 983-1687 or e-mail etoth@drgnyc.com.©

**Lexington Center for Mental Health Services** seeks Social Worker for Outpatient Clinic. Must provide direct MH counseling & entitlement services to deaf and hard-of-hearing population. Responsibilities incl: therapy, intake procedures, record keeping, discharge planning, inter-agency coordination. MSW, CSW or MA in psychology (or eligible). Sign language skills req. To apply contact: Human Resources (718) 350-3032 or Fax to: (718) 899-9846.©

**Lexington Center for Mental Health Services** seeks Clinical Social Worker/Clinical Psychologist for Parent Infant Therapeutic Nursery. Req. CSW in Social Work or Ph.D. in Psych., knowledge of child dev., clinical exp., ASL. Will do one-to-one clinical work w/deaf parent - hearing infant dyads in a Nursery setting. For information contact: Diana Silber, CSW, (718) 350-3159 or Fax: (718) 899-6834.©

**Weston United** seeks FT & PT Residence Counselor to counsel adults w/mental illness and/or substance abuse. Will provide rehab. & restorative services to residents through apt. visits, individual sessions, group mtgs., & off-site activities. Participates in ind. & group supervision, team mtgs., & staff mtgs. High School Diploma or equiv. w/2 yrs. exp. in mental health or related field req. Computer literate & good writing skills. Fax resume to Joseph Wong, HR Manager (212) 316-0789.©

**Weston United** seeks Social Worker w/MSW & psychiatric & MICA exp. Will supervise casework staff, intake referrals & interviews, interface w/community agencies, & provide direct clinical services to MI/Homeless pop. Knowledge of Dept. of Homeless Services, compliance standards & supervisory exp. pref. Competitive salary & benefits. New grads, minorities & females encouraged to apply. Fax resume to: Joseph Wong, HR Manager (212) 316-0789.©

**Weston United** seeks Gardener/Landscaper to plant, landscape & maintain urban garden in Harlem. Consumers will have hands-on participation in the gardening process. Also resp. for marketing items grown in garden. Prior exp. req. Degree in horticulture pref. Driver license required. Salary of 30K w/benefits. Fax resume to: Joseph Wong, HR Manager (212) 316-0789.©

**Hudson Guild** seeks Director of Resource Development & PR to work w/ the ED, the Board of Trustees, dev. staff & external consultants, creating & implementing a fund development & PR plan to enhance out org.'s visibility. Min. of 5 yrs. fund development leadership exp. req. Exp. in PR, communications or marketing in a non-profit env. desired. Exp. developing fundraising systems & procedures, & effective use of computerized fundraising programs also req. Salary \$80-\$100K based on qualifications. Please fax cover letter & resume no later than Mon. Apr. 24<sup>th</sup> to: Lois A. Mirabella, Search Consultant (203) 333-4227.©