



Coalition Briefs

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

Del Campo discusses SPOA

On Monday, December 18, 2000, the Coalition was delighted to welcome Elsie Del Campo, Deputy Commissioner for Program Services, NYC Department of Mental Health, to its meeting of the Committee on Children and Families. She was invited to discuss the implementation of a Single Point of Accountability (SPOA) system for children's services.

SOMH and DMH have collaborated in the design of the SPOA, which is funded through a \$5,000,000 Federal Block Grant. Half of this is earmarked for New York City as well as approximately \$1,000,000 that will come from the Commissioners Performance Fund. Over \$1,000,000 is being put into the

(Continued on page 2)

Supported homelessness?

On December 11, 2000 a Bronx housing court dismissed four evictions proceedings for supported housing clients. That the evictions notices will be re-served is only a matter of time, according to Lisa Green at MFY Legal Services, a lawyer who represents the clients. And this is just in the Bronx.

In Manhattan, there are another nine supported housing clients who are facing evictions. This case, however, is one step further along. The original eviction papers were withdrawn after a November 8, 2000 hearing because of a technicality. They have already been re-served, and a new hearing date is set for January 16, 2001. At that time, the judge could rule in favor of the landlord which would result in an order of eviction. And we all know what that means: consumers turned out on the street because providers aren't given the funds by the state to cover the rent subsidies for the program.

The state Office of Mental Health has already enhanced the funding of the supported housing program, but only new beds are eligible for the increased rate. While providers appreciate the improvement, it still leaves unattended the problem of the existing beds. In New York City alone, where the rent issue is most acute, more than 5000 existing beds are ineligible for the enhancement.

(Continued on page 3)

Still fighting for fairness

Thanks to the hard work of advocates, some people with mental illness are finally getting reduced-fare MetroCards from the MTA. However, there have been reports of irregularities and delays in the processing of applications. For instance, some people with mental disabilities have been required by the MTA to submit a letter from a physician which states information already certified by the physician in the application itself. Still others have not been asked to submit a letter at all.

The Half-Fare Fairness Coalition would like to make sure that all who are eligible to receive this benefit do. Under the new law, an applicant must be eligible for SSI and have a serious mental illness to get the reduced-fare MetroCard, but that's the only requirement. In addition, attorneys at the law firm of Deboise & Plimpton have brought a suit against the MTA before the New York State Human Rights Division which argues that a non-SSI recipient with mental disabilities should receive a half-fare MetroCard. The trial in that case is sched-

(Continued on page 2)

Anasazi Update

Anasazi Software, Inc., will hold an in depth demonstration of their product at The Coalition's offices on January 24 from 9:30 am through 4:30 pm. A more detailed announcement will be posted in the future.

This demonstration will also provide alternative methods to implement this product at less expense than full purchasing. For information in regard to this demonstration and other issues concerning Anasazi's product, please contact Marie Scripture at the Coalition offices at x105 or by email at mscripture@cvmha.org.

News Flash!!! Governor Endorses Medicaid Buy-In

On Wednesday, January 3, 2001 Governor George Pataki endorsed the Medicaid Buy-In program in his State of the State speech in Albany. This program would allow people with disabilities who earn above a certain threshold, to purchase discounted health insurance through Medicaid. The Coalition applauds this action and commends the governor for addressing this important issue. We look forward to looking at this program in greater detail. Stay tuned to *Briefs* where we will report the latest developments.

Correction on Lobby Day

The last issue of *Briefs* incorrectly reported our date and partner. The Lobby Day will be February 6, 2001 and will be conducted with our partners, The New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare. We regret the error.

Coalition Briefs



Protocol proposal

Promoting the knowledge that employment for people with severe and persistent mental health conditions is not only possible but realistic is the primary mission of the NY Work Exchange. Education and training are crucial components in this mission. While a wide variety of trainings are offered throughout the city and state (many of which are designed for employment program staff), conversations with providers indicate that knowledge gaps continue to exist and current training capacity cannot meet the sizeable demand.

The NY Work Exchange has formed an Educational Advisory Committee composed of representatives from training providers, mental health agencies, employment programs, and state and city agencies. This committee will work to build collaboration and coordination among agencies and associations that provide training to employment staff. It will identify training needs, review proposed training curricula, and help to manage future training activities developed and approved by the committee.

Turnover and lack of formal credentials for front line employment staff, who need a variety of skills to provide quality services, is a nationally recognized problem. The NY Work Exchange proposed a training curriculum for employment staff at the last Educational Advisory Committee meeting, held on December 13th. The curriculum began with an introduction to supported employment, leading to training on job coaching, job development, counseling skills, benefits management, and ending with special electives. While many of these courses are now offered individually, they are generally not taught within a training continuum as proposed by the Work Exchange. Using a continuum may help to organize the training and promote skills retention by building on knowledge acquired in earlier courses. Recognizing that "one size does not fit all," training will

encompass other employment models such as Individual Placement and Support and Transitional Employment.

The NY Work Exchange also recommends that, when possible, existing course material developed by nationally recognized research and training centers be used because it has been field tested and can be easily replicated. Both paper and web-based courses are available for most of the suggested training areas and NY Work Exchange staff is busy identifying other curricula. A subcommittee will review the web-based supported employment course from Virginia Commonwealth University in January. Work Exchange staff will also identify and support mentoring services and support groups to supplement training activities.©

nyworkexchange.org

As of December 11th, the New York Work Exchange can be visited online at www.nyworkexchange.org. The website includes the mission and goals of the project, information about upcoming employment trainings and events, and job postings for mental health agencies hiring employment program staff. The site also includes a link to JOBHELP, a user friendly, comprehensive referral system to educational and vocational programs, child-care programs, and alcohol and substance abuse treatment services. Agencies who wish to list employment trainings, events and/or job postings on this site are encouraged to contact Holly Kempner at (212) 742-1122x236. Comments and suggestions about the website are welcome.©

Events calendar

The NY Work Exchange plans to inaugurate an events calendar feature on our new website. In particular, it will include employment related information such as events, forums, workshops, and conferences held in the five boroughs. Let us help you publicize your employment related events and increase the size of your audience! Send this information to Holly Kempner by fax at (212) 742-2132, or by email at hkempner@nyworkexchange.org. We will do the rest!©

(Continued from page 1)

budget for Family Support Services to beef up professional and support staff levels and to enhance conference/educational facilities for family resource centers. DMH expects to complete these enhancements and build up the infrastructure in early January. HCBW programs will fall under SPOA and will experience a big expansion from 112 to a total of 236 slots all of which will prove valuable to foster care agencies.

The service component of the design will include care coordination for ICM, SCM, ACT, HCBW, and blended case management. DMH expects case management services to increase by 81%. RFPs will go out in January and DMH expects to engage 10-12 contracts for these high-end services. DMH is setting up an advisory group in January to provide counsel on the details of the implementation of the infrastructure and the model for blended case management. The Coalition is working closely with other child advocates and providers to refine the design. If you have any comments, concerns, or questions, please contact Ed Smith by email at esmith@cmvha.org or by phone at (212) 742-1600x103.©

Half-fare

(Continued from page 1)

uled to begin in March. If this claim is successful, it may go a long way toward extending the half-fare benefit to all the disabled, including people with mental illness, regardless of income or employment status.

The Half-Fare Fairness Coalition would like to know whether you know of any people with a serious and persistent mental illness who have been denied a half-fare card or haven't applied because they face rejection under the MTA's application process or under the new law. If you know of someone who is eligible for a reduced-fare MetroCard but has been turned down for an inappropriate or inexplicable reasons, please call Peter Glass at (212) 909-7316. You should also call if you know of a person who you don't think is eligible for any reason but who has a severe and persistent mental illness and wants a half-fare MetroCard.©

Coalition Briefs

Free forensic training

Join the New York State Office of Mental Health and the Mental Health Association of New York State at a training seminar for agencies that provide services to those with mental illness who have been released from state prison. The seminars are designed for direct care staff and supervisors of mental health agencies. The presenters, Dr. Merrill Rotter and Michael Steinbacher, will teach participants about the culture of incarceration and its impact on people with mental illnesses, and how techniques for adaptation while incarcerated may manifest in treatment settings.

The seminar will be broadcast via satellite on January 16th from 10:00-11:30 am. Contact Iris Mead at (518) 434-0439 or imead@mhanys.org to register and find a viewing location near you. ©

Evictions

(Continued from page 1)

Since no state solutions seem imminent, Ms. Green and her colleagues at MFY-Legal Services are working overtime to prevent the eviction of clients. Today she is representing 13. But these are just the tip of the iceberg. Other providers report being faced with the Faustian choice of allowing the eviction of clients with whom they have a strong and lasting relationship, or jeopardizing the short- and long-term financial stability of their agency as a whole.

By design, the supported housing case manager is supposed to have resources to fight just such an eviction. There's just one problem: not enough contract dollars. Makes you wonder, doesn't it?

It's time for the state to ante-up and prevent these evictions. ©

? COLA sing along ?

(Sung to the tune of LOLA by The Kinks)

We met state officials up in Albany where they were scared of our proposal like it was contagious with Ebola. E-E-E-E Ebola.
We went up there and we asked them per chance would they give us our due, would they give us a structural COLA C-C-C-C COLA
Well I know the state has limited wealth but why should workers be paid less 'cause they're in Mental Health?
Well I'm not Alan Greenspan but I don't understand how case managers live on just 20 grand. In years gone by we've asked for the same but they've doled it out in one shot and we've hardly felt like we got our goal-a. G-G-G-G GOAL-A
This year we asked our members in a little survey "What are your salaries and does it impact turn-ovah?"
T-T-T-T Turn-ovah
They said quite clearly that turnover is high and to adjust for inflation and rent costs we need a COLA.
C-O-L-A COLA
We'll I got a CSW just a week before and I've never ever seen a COLA before!
But the state just smiled and took me by the hand and said "Neophyte I'm gonna make you a man!"
We'll I'm not the worlds most activist man but I know what I am, and that I'm a fan of a COLA. ©

Upcoming Events

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| January 15 | Coalition closed in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| January 18 | 9:00 am The New York Work Exchange hosts the New York City Placement Consortium |
| January 23 | NYAPRS Lobby Day in Albany-- Busses Depart at 6:45 am from various NYC locations. Call Lauren Pareti (212)801-3343 or Jody Silver (212)780-1400 x774 for details |
| January 23 | 9:30 am Professional Learning Center Fundraising Seminar |
| January 24 | 9:30 am Anasazi Software Demonstration at The Coalition |
| January 25 | 3:30 pm Membership Meeting at The Coalition |

— Help Wanted —

Case Manager: Non-profit mental health agency in Harlem has a full-time day position. Responsibilities include admission/discharge process, advocacy, ADL services, groups and participation in team meetings. Knowledge of MICA/homeless population a plus. Good computer and writing skills. BA in human services and 2 years of experience. Bi-lingual a plus. Salary \$26,500 with excellent benefits. Fax resume: (212) 316-0789. ©

Program Assistant: Not-for-profit organization serving mentally ill homeless population seeks F/T Program assistant. Duties include: compiling reports, contact with service providers in 5 boroughs, providing clerical assistance, helping with research projects and program development. Position requires a detail-oriented individual with excellent mathematical, organizational and communication skills. Computer experience with word processing, spreadsheets, and Access databases is essential. Knowledge of SPSS a plus. Salary is commensurate with experience. Send cover letter and resume to: **PPOH**, 120 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10024. ©

Business and Marketing Manager: Non-profit mental health agency in Harlem is seeking a dynamic manager to oversee our three small business ventures (gallery, bookstore, garden) and marketing program. Responsibilities include providing direction and support for daily operations, fiscal management, merchandising and special events. Marketing responsibilities include writing press releases and preparing press packets. BA in business, four years of related retain and supervisory experience with a proven track record of success. Bi-lingual a plus. Salary 40K with benefits. Fax resumes to Joseph Wong, Human Resources Manager at (212) 316-0789. ©