



Coalition Briefs

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

Union bill could endanger MH agencies

A bill recently passed by the legislature could present serious complications to non-profit mental health agencies in contract with the State. Passed by both houses of the legislature and awaiting signature by Governor Pataki, this bill is seen largely as a concession to Unions in an election year.

The bill seeks to prevent the use of State funds in encouraging or discouraging Union organizing. This prohibition would impinge on agencies with State funding of more than \$250,000.

Mental health agencies throughout the State will likely be subject to these regulations as well, as it is linked to all State funds regardless of the source.

If Governor Pataki signs this bill, many mental health agencies will be unable to educate their employees about union issues. Employees would then be asked to

(Continued on page 2)

Coalition tech center delivers the goods

The Coalition is proud to announce that The Karen Horney Clinic is the first, of what we hope will be many agencies, to have received donations of computer equipment through the Technology Institute.

For nearly a year, the Coalition's Technology Institute has been assisting community mental health agencies become technologically proficient. In addition to seminars on HIPAA compliance and Anasazi software, the Technology center has also helped agencies assess their technological needs, as well as how

(Continued on page 2)

Federal MH commission launches web site

Last month, the newly-formed New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, launched a website in order to "promote broad participation, solicit public comments, and provide information." Created by President Bush in April, the group has been meeting since June with the objective of evaluating the public and private service delivery system and how the Federal government might make it better.

The Commission consists of clinicians, providers, family members and consumers who hail from around the country. Although it is holding meetings at which public testimony will be heard, comments can also be submitted through the web site.

Currently the commission is seeking information on three topics: 1) access to mental health services; 2) extent of coordination of mental health and support services; and 3) extent to which people with mental illnesses work, learn, and participate in community life.

Go to www.mentalhealthcommission.gov and click on "public comment." Be sure to check back later, as the topics will change periodically.

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Reinvestment II still needs 'John Hancock'

Or in this case, 'George Pataki'!

Although Reinvestment II was passed by both Houses of the Legislature in June, it has not yet become law for want of Governor Pataki's signature. A continuation of a landmark law, Reinvestment II captures for the community mental health sector savings realized from the elimination of State psychiatric hospital beds.

Begun in 1993 the original Reinvestment has captured more than \$175M which was directed to the community sector for new programs. Since the law's expiration in September 2000, more than \$30M has left the sector.

Reinvestment II is different from the original legislation in that it will go to promote recruitment and retention of staff.

Governor Pataki has been urged by consumers and providers alike to sign this important legislation. ■

Dr. Lloyd Sederer visits The Coalition

On July 18, The Coalition was pleased to play host to Dr. Lloyd Sederer, the Executive Deputy Commissioner for Mental Hygiene. Because of a recently approved charter amendment which created the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Dr. Sederer is the chief officer in charge of mental hygiene for New York City.

Dr. Sederer gave a brief presentation to the Executive Committee on his vision for the delivery of mental hygiene services. Most of his priorities are related to the response to 9/11 or potential terrorism.

First on his agenda was attention to the needs of New York City's kids who have been impacted by 9/11. Although a Board of Education survey estimates that 1.1M kids have been traumatized, there are difficulties in identifying them without causing additional trauma

(Continued on page 2)

Coalition Briefs

Union bill

(Continued from page 1)

make decisions about their future without full and adequate information.

Although all eligible agencies will be subject to additional oversight and burdensome paperwork, the biggest impact will be felt by the smallest agencies. Small programs have few—if any—dollars outside of State contracts and would therefore be unable to speak to the issues without incurring a severe penalty.

Because it has not yet been signed, many advocacy organizations representing not for profit agencies have been mounting opposition to this bill. □

tech center

(Continued from page 1)

technology may increase their efficiency.

After sending out a survey to quantify the needs of member agencies, the Technology Institute began to solicit donations of computer equipment with the objective of providing the hardware to member agencies.

This particular batch of computers was graciously donated by WNYC, and will be used by therapists and for the Clinic's psychology internship program.

For more information about the Technology Institute, to register for or donate computers, contact Gilad Rosner at grosner@cvmha.org (x210). □

Sederer

(Continued from page 1)

to them or their classmates.

In addition, DOHMH is exploring how FEMA funds are distributed for 9/11-related counseling. Acknowledging past challenges and praising those involved, Sederer appeared open to suggestions about possible changes.

During the final portion of the meeting, Dr. Sederer fielded questions from members on a variety of topics ranging from cultural competence, the coordination of services across funding sources, and housing issues for people with mental illnesses.

The Coalition thanks Dr. Sederer for his visit and wishes him great success in New York City! □



Introducing...The WORKbook

The New York Work Exchange is pleased to present the first edition of *"The WORKbook: A Guide to New York City's Mental Health Employment Programs,"* which will be released in August. This guide is designed for individuals who receive or may benefit from employment services in the mental health system. The WORKbook provides a comprehensive listing of the various mental health programs in New York City that assist people in attaining their career goals and aspirations.

The WORKbook currently features 115 employment programs and describes different program approaches and services, details on admission criteria, participation requirements, and training content. A section titled "Going to Work," offers helpful hints about Social Security Benefits, the Ticket to Work program, VESID and other resources. Also included is a list of questions that individuals may ask providers when choosing an employment program.

The first of its kind, the guide captures the full range of mental health employment programs in New York City and helps consumers to make direct and informed choices about available resources. Distribution will include Coalition Members, and a wide range of mental health programs, clinics, hospitals, housing providers, State and local government agencies and many other service agencies. Copies should be received by the end of August.

For additional WORKbooks,

please contact Deborah Short at 212-742-1122 x238 or via e-mail at dshort@nyworkexchange.org.

VESID releases supported employment RFA

The office of Vocational Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) has released the long-awaited Application for Supported Employment Program Approval for contracts which will begin on January 1, 2003. This replaces the structure and process for VESID-funded programs which provide Intensive Supported Employment Services.

Organizations currently under contract with VESID for providing SE services must apply under this new process. The current SE contracts will be extended until December 31, 2002. Organizations providing Supported Employment services without a contract but in an amount that exceeds or is expected to exceed \$5,000 can also apply. All NYC applicants must attend a mandatory Bidders Conference to be held on Friday August 16, 2002 at 116 W 32nd St., 5th floor, 1:30 pm.

The contract system has been redesigned in order to provide more flexibility and state-wide consistency in guidelines and rates.

VESID began the process of creating a new framework last year and gathered input from stakeholders in the planning process. A release for the RFA was originally scheduled to roll out in 2002, but the deadline was delayed for further negotiations.

Hard copies of the application were mailed out to providers on Friday July 26th. For more information, the application is posted on the VESID website www.vesid.nysed.gov/supportedemployment. □

Don't forget!!

The Department of Mental Health, etc. (DMHMRAS) is now
The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)