



Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council

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Co-Chairs: Rep. Phil Miller, Jeffrey Walter & Hal Gibber
Meeting Summary: February 13, 2013

Next meeting: **March 13, 2013 @ 2 PM in LOB 1E**

Attendees: Hal Gibber (Co-Chair), Rep. Phil Miller (Co-Chair), Paul Acker, Dr. Karen Andersson (DCF), Rick Calvert, Terri DiPietro, Howard Drescher, Dr. Ronald Fleming, Catherine Foley-Geib, Dr. Steven Girelli, William Halsey (DSS), Peggy Hardy, Dr. Charles Herrick, Jennifer Hutchinson (DMHAS), Thomas King, Mickey Kramer, Sharon Langer, Steve Larcen, Dr. Sabina Lim, Lois Nesci, Kimberly Nystrom, Kelly Phenix, Sherry Perlstein, Galo Rodriguez, Dr. Jeffrey Shelton, Lori Szczygiel (CTBHP/VO), Jesse White Frese, Beresford Wilson, Leslie Woods, and Alicia Woodsby

BHP OC Administration

Co-Chair Hal Gibber convened the meeting at 2:10 PM. He introduced the Council's new legislative Co-Chair, Representative Phil Miller and then he asked the rest of the Council Members to introduce themselves. Representative Miller said that it was an honor to be on the Council and that he represented the lower Connecticut Valley where he was the First Selectman of the Town of Essex and that he currently is the Vice-Chair of the Public Health Committee. Hal also welcomed Dr. Jeffrey Shelton from Bristol Hospital to the Council and Dr. Shelton said that it was also his honor to sit on the Council. In her absence, Hal told Council members that Representative Sandy Nafis had also joined the Council as a sitting member. He then talked about the need for approval of the January BHP OC meeting summary and later on in the meeting, the Council unanimously approved the summary without any changes.

Action Items



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Hal then recognized Council member and Adult Quality, Access & Policy Committee Co-Chair, Howard Drescher to talk about a new initiative for a consumer forum to be known as the **Consumer, Youth, and Family Advisory Committee**. Howard said that this would be an ad hoc committee of the CT Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council. Its *Purpose* is to strengthen the voice and influence of consumers, youth and families in the work of the BHPOC

to guide policy and action on behalf of the public. Through a process of regular outreach, education and feedback, the committee will seek several *Outcomes*:

- Greater awareness among consumers, youth and families of the mission and work of the BHP and its oversight Council.
- Greater involvement of consumers, youth and families in the BHPOC through feedback to council members, attendance at meetings of the council and its key committees, and recruitment of new council members advocating for these constituencies.
- Formulation of a better-defined agenda for consumers, youth and families as a basis for engagement, and guidance for policy and action.

Howard concluded by saying that he would introduce this concept to the Adult Quality, Access & Policy Committee and Hal Gibber will introduce it to the Child/Adolescent Quality, Access & Policy Committee. The *Next Steps* would include:

- Creating a core team to work with Hal Gibber and Howard Drescher to prepare presentations and other material to begin outreach and education.
- Designing an initial survey to assess the current state of understanding of the BHP and Oversight Council among consumers, youth and families and gather information about their needs, concerns and key issues for advocacy.
- Identifying key groups to begin outreach, including but not limited to such organizations as RMHBs and CACs, advocacy organizations i.e. affiliates of NAMI-CT and FAVOR, and other interested groups.

The Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council was asked by the Legislative Task Force on Mental Health for Council recommendations to submit as part of its report to the Governor (see above). Co-Chair Hal Gibber said that this was an important item the Council should address because absent a Council representative on the task force, this would be a good way of giving some very meaningful recommendation to the Legislative Task Force and he asked for a motion to discuss the matter and Beresford Wilson seconded the motion. A discussion was held with good input by many Council members. It was agreed that a summary statement should be included. Steve Larcen said that he would help with language. A motion to accept the recommendations with amendments was made and seconded and the Administrator of the Council was instructed to get the recommendations to the Mental Health Task Force by the end of the week.

The next action item discussed was HB 654, an act creating a mental health first aid program for parents. This concept was conceived to develop a mental health first aid program for parents so that parents will be better equipped to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness in their children and the community in general. This bill is supported by DMHAS and DCF, both on a state level as well as nationally. Kelly Phenix reported that the five day training for this program is \$2000 per person and two people per facility must be trained at a time and both must be residents of the state. The federal government is giving \$25 million to the states to train 75,000 people. Kelly is looking to see if one of the agencies will sponsor her. Paul Acker asked, why is this bill directed only to parents and not anyone else at this time. Co-Chair Hal Gibber responded that this training will give parents additional support because they are the first ones who may identify that their children may need psychiatric services. Steve Larcen said that he would like to see this bill expanded to have further reach. Jennifer Hutchinson said that

teachers and schools staff would benefit from this training as well. A motion was held for Council support for the bill. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

Kelly Phenix said that she was composing a letter to all legislators in Connecticut on educating them on Mental Illness 101. (See above document) The Council agreed to support her initiative.

Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership Agency Reports

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Due to lengthy discussions, the DCF Department update and discussion on changes at the Solnit Center and timelines for response to specific Council data requests were postponed and held off until the March BHP Oversight Council meeting.

Presentation and Discussion



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The topic was the Governor's budget proposal to eliminate the BHPOC (HB 6376, see above) which would significantly impact the Behavioral Health Partnership. Co-Chair Hal Gibber spoke of parity when it comes to BH issues and medical issues. He commenced the discussion and asked Council members if they could give any background to as why the Governor would call for this measure. Some thought that OPM may see the Council as a duplicative effort of the Council on Medical Assistance Program Oversight (MAPOC). Others thought that the Administration would like to reduce oversight and combine advocacy into one office. The BHPOC was created because BH issues were often overlooked and set aside on the often busy MAPOC agendas. A motion was made, seconded, and all in favor to write a letter to the Governor in support of the Council. It was suggested that the appointing legislators to the Council be brought on board and that testimony be submitted, both in person and in writing, to the Appropriations and Human Services Committees during the following two weeks when those committees hold their public hearings. Steve Larcen suggested for the March Council meeting, the OPM Secretary, the three Agency Commissioners, and all the appointing legislators be invited to attend. Lois Nesci suggested that Terry Edelstein from the Governor's Non Profit Office also be invited. Beresford Wilson expressed his concern for families and if the Council is eliminated, how will their voices be heard? He said that the state cannot afford to lose this Council. Leslie Woods said that oversight is a wonderful opportunity and it is a part of the checks and balances of government. Alicia Woodsby said that the Council does a massive amount of work and BH issues would get lost without the Council. Lori Szczygiel said that the Council gives transparency to the process like no other in the country. Lois Nesci said MAPOC should be contacted so that its members could make their own statement. Another motion was made, seconded and all in favor to accept all of the above steps the Council should make and accept all of the recommendations to show it support.

Committee Reports

Due to a lack of time stemming from the previous topic discussions, the committee chairs did not give their reports opting to report next month.

Coordination of Care: - Sharon Langer, Maureen Smith, Co-Chairs

Sharon Langer reported that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 27, 2013. Topics will include transportation (NEMT) issues and other updates.

Child/Adolescent Quality, Access & Policy: – Sherry Perlstein, Hal Gibber, and Robert Franks, Co-Chairs

Adult Quality, Access & Policy: - Howard Drescher, Heather Gates, and Alicia Woodsby, Co-Chairs

Committee Reports

Operations: – Susan Walkama and Terri DiPietro, Co-Chairs

Adjournment

Co-Chair Hal Gibber asked for further comments, questions, or other business. Hearing nothing, he adjourned the Council meeting at 4:19 PM.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 2013 @ 2:00 PM 1E LOB