

Congress Meeting  
December 14, 2005

1.) Board of Directors meeting resumed after lunch with the Congress meeting to follow immediately after remaining board business is concluded.

**Directors present:** (10) Paul Meyer, Tom Bartlett, Jane Tremper East, Michelle Lewis, Boyd Roth, Charles Baker, Heidi Davis, Brenda Desmond, Erin Garlinghouse, and Lee Anne Beebe

**Alternates present:** Mike Smith, Lori Holley, Ellen Simmons and Marty Onishuk

**Congress members present:** Ted Jam, Deborah Adams, Dawn Slaven, Linda Roth, Laura Lee Peters, Abigail Sabol, Julia Schooler, David Meurer, Kathleen Driscoll, Barbra Mueske, Pat Ely, Nadine Winnenberger, Denelle Pappier, Maureen O'Malley, Jean Sharkey and Mary Jane Fox, Western Region Field Representative for the AMDD

**Total Present: 30**

2.) Dawn Slaven said that she would like to be considered for an open position representing Native Americans. Tom Bartlett nominates Dawn. Paul Meyer seconds. Michelle Lewis adds that it may be good to get more information from Dawn and follow the process we used in the past and also see if others are interested. Lee Anne Beebe adds that having more than one native member would be good.

Dawn informs the board that she is part Cherokee and part Sioux. She is a member of the Indian Alliance. Dawn currently lives in Butte and has lived here six and a half years. Dawn has contacts with the current tribe. Her main contact will be to the Indian Alliance. Dawn says she would be an interim member. The nomination passed unanimously.

3.) Terms of Service as a Director: Dawn Slaven will serve two years and Charles Baker elected as the director representing Hamilton last month, three years.

### **WSAA Congress Meeting Begins**

1.) Meeting Opens – Tom Bartlett recommends that we spend the meeting discussing the concerns of the LACs and select from them three goals to be presented to the AMDD and the regional providers for 2006. When any of these goals are accomplished we will offer new recommendations.

It was suggested by Tom that each member attending the Congress meeting vote only for the three concerns that they feel are the most important in selecting our goals.

The three receiving the most votes would be the goals presented by the WSAA. Note that at the end of each concern is the number of votes received.

2.) **Mental Health system concerns of the LACs** – They are as follows:

- Michelle Lewis reports on the Gilder House Proposal – Butte and Silverbow County have the highest per capita number of people being sent to Warm Springs. Some of the reasoning is because of the lack of services available in their area. The Butte LAC would like the Gilder House Proposal to be a pilot project that would reduce costs for admissions to MSH. Butte would like the WSAA's support to put this in writing. The estimated total cost is \$700,000. The unit will include detox and be an emergency detention facility. There are currently no inpatient psychiatric hospital beds in Butte. Most people who present in crisis are new to the system because they do not have existing services. Marty Onishuk expresses concerns about supporting one facility and not the overall principal. Instead we should focus on the larger issues. This concept is supported by other participants. The other concern is money and asking the State for dollars to support a facility which has not happened in the past (providers assume cost).
- Hamilton's needs are similar to Butte with the absence of inpatient services, many people with mental health issues wind up going to jail because of a lack of community services. As of now there is not a proposed facility to meet the needs of Ravalli County. Charles Baker says a goal may be crisis stabilization centers in individual counties. Having said this we still can write a letter of support for the Butte project. Brenda Desmond said that crisis stabilization is a goal in our region and made a motion that the **WSAA will give recommendations for the most appropriate implementation of crisis services in our region. Motion passes without opposition. For example, Gilder House in Butte and plans for future services in Hamilton could be combined as one request.** (25)
- Mike Smith states that peer to peer employment is another area of need. This couples with work incentive programs. Right now individuals with disability can lose benefits by going back to work. Paul Meyer adds financing this through Medicaid and that it should be a reimbursable service through the State plan. (9)
- Housing is problematic. It was suggested that a task force to investigate why people with disabilities are being denied access needs would be helpful.
- Transportation with dignity – Jane Tremper East adds that this has been an issue across the region that we have been discussing the passed several meetings (20)

- Peer to peer initiatives: Paul Meyer makes a motion to combine peer to peer employment and Peer Run Drop in Centers and Medicaid reimbursement for these services. Heidi seconds. Motion passes unanimously. Jane explains that Centers run in most states. It creates employment options, provides peer counseling and telephone services. Tom added that he would like to see a model similar to the one in Billings called the Hub. (21)
- Transitional Living Homes - Jean Sharkey expresses a need for housing to support people returning from Warm Springs. WMMHC is considering this as a service in Missoula and Hamilton. (4)
- Psychiatric care – Marty Onishuk brings up the concern of short visits and infrequent visits and accessibility is difficult.
- Accessibility to psychiatric care to those who can not afford services - Lee Anne Beebe gives the example of services in New York where outpatient services were a right and mental health centers received funding to provide the service to those who can not pay. This helps prevent higher end care and keeps hospitals from absorbing high costs (10)

**Paul Meyer made a motion that rather than selecting just three goals that we include the concern with the forth highest vote tally. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

### **3.) AMDD and Provider Goals**

- I. To improve crisis stabilization services in this region. The WSAA will make recommendations for the most appropriate implementation. For example, the Gilder House Proposal in Butte and services development in Hamilton.
- II. To develop peer to peer initiatives i.e. peer to peer employment and peer run Drop in Centers, with Medicaid reimbursement for such services.
- III. To develop and implement a State policy with necessary resources for transportation of consumers with services that respect dignity.
- IV. Funded access to community based mental health services regardless of income.

4.) Mental Health Court – Abigail Sabol from the Missoula County court explains this service. The Mental Health Court works closely with the primary case manager. The primary goal is to provide supports to people with mental illness who may be inappropriate for services in a standard court. A packet was handed out with referral form and other information. The program is brand new. This is a pilot program and federally funded through the summer. There is current funding for 24 people (at a time). The Defense Attorney and Prosecuting Attorney can make referrals. Self referrals will be

accepted and it is strictly a voluntary program. An advisory committee exists (Voc. Rehab., WMMHC, etc.)

**The next Congress meeting is March 15, 2006 at 12:30pm.**

The next SAA Summit meeting is January 11, 2006 in Helena. They are asking for agenda items to be discussed. Please forward items to Tom by email or phone. Paul Meyer suggests the goals we just identified be presented at the meeting.