

Western Service Area Authority  
Congress Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 20, 2006

Board Members: (11) Tom Bartlett, Paul Meyer, Michelle Lewis, Boyd Roth, Brenda Desmond, Tom Camel, Alyce Anderson, Royalee Bishop, Charles Baker and Leslie Nyman

Alternates: (3) Mike Smith, Lori Holley and Marty Onishuk

Ex Officio Members: (3) Alexandra Volkerts, MAP; Dan Ladd, AMDD and Mary Jane Fox, AMDD

Guests: (13) Seth Barnes, Marcy Brunsvold and Becky Gaul, nursing students; Mike McMeekin, Sheriff, Missoula County; Rick Carpenter; Betty Pace; Cheryl Malland;; Jean Sharkey, NAMI Missoula; Dale Gross; Pat Braae, WMMHC-Missoula Day Treatment; Dorothy Salmonson, NAMI Missoula; Elaine Bruce, Project Director, Rocky Mountain Development Council, Helena and Denelle Pappier

Total Present: (30)

A. Welcome and Introductions

B. What is the WSAA – Alexis Volkerts

Overview: Montana State supported community collaboration to identify mental health issues and determine solutions. 3 regions...

C. WSAA Website – Charles Baker (absent at this point)

Excellent website to inform (calendar, minutes) and links to sources of mental health information. (A brief demonstration of the site to be given later.)

D. Sheriff Mike McMeekin: Missoula Sheriff Office:

- Historically, the problem is that jails are being used to house people with mental health or behavior issues. They have however, not necessarily committed any crime. Environmentally, it's counterproductive and not an appropriate placement.
- Secondly, disproportionately high percentage of mental health disorders represented in prison population. Concerns: continue medication schedule, continuity of services to consumer. As soon as incarcerated, federal law dictates that the person loses Medicaid eligibility. May take long time to re-establish (reportedly up to six mos.). What happens when the person is released back to community? Alexis: Medicaid is not supposed to be terminated, but should only be suspended if person is incarcerated for under 30 days. Lots of confusion over what is the law. Recommend letter writing to agencies to enforce provision. Contact her via e-mail (AlexisV@mtadv.org) and she'll send contact information and sample letter to local Medicaid administrator and sheriff.

- Thirdly, when person committed by court to mental health facility, law enforcement is tasked with transportation. Pending legislation may address this issue. Crisis Intervention Training: Missoula detention officers and deputies have not attended any training so far. Want to attend sooner than grant money may become available. Want to host training and offer it to outlying areas to share/lower costs to all. Alyce asked to have the Lincoln Co Sheriff personally invited to participate by Mike. Mostly because lack of money is a barrier. Board of Crime Control grants may be available; look into that. Contact information was given regarding Gary Mihelish in Helena as president of NAMI Montana chapter to find funding and the training curriculum. (The last training in Helena cost about \$6000 to train 20 officers?)

Dan applauds their action to change transportation structure. Do what's right, not wait for legislature to change law. Tom shared Kalispell proposal to address this issue. One van would be dedicated to mental health client use; paid in part (86% by federal grants) and would include a peer-support person to accompany client to Warm Springs and between local communities. Mike McMeekin will contact Tom Bartlett for follow-up info. Sheriff McMeekin's concerns are primarily safety and dignity, for example, unmarked car and no restraints, but he also has financial concerns. But legislators need to focus on financing prevention programs.

#### E. WRAP Training Program – Michelle Lewis

- Passed out brochures and business cards to describe WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan). A self-directed wellness tool. Key concepts: hope, personal responsibility, education, self-advocacy, support. Used to improve quality of life: not just consumers, also families, coworkers, etc. Seven key concepts (components of education) to discover about self; written by self to utilize to avoid crisis and instill hope.
- Michelle and Mike Smith were recently trained to be WRAP facilitators in San Francisco. Facilitators are held to strict code of ethics and values. The training was dynamic and priceless to recovery. They want to bring follow-up to Intro training to many sites.
- Marty Onishuk mentioned that a similar program is offered free through NAMI: Peer-to-peer support training. Contact her to reach Sandy Mihelish who coordinates program. Tom proposes gathering information on both programs and discuss/vote at next meeting on which to host.

#### F. Nominations and Elections of New Board Members

- Four members, who chose to serve for one year in our staggered term commitments are up for re-election: Heidi Davis (not interested in serving again), Brenda Desmond, Royalee Bishop, and Jennifer Robohm. New terms would be for three years. Alexis nominated Brenda to serve, Tom nominated Royalee; Alyce nominated Denelle Pappier, Tom nominated Carole Lankford (having an alternate of Helen Camel or Kim Azure). We want representation from as many areas as possible: there are 19 board positions; some are allocated to specific groups. Ten seats for LACs, others for other stakeholders. (51% of board members must be consumers.) There are currently

only six formed LACs in WSAA and Mary Jane Fox knows of two others trying to form in Superior & Thompson Falls.

- All candidates were approved unanimously. (Denelle to be one-year term; the other three for three-year terms). Marty Onishuk will replace Jane Tremper-East when Jane resigns as a board member. There are two board positions unassigned. Law enforcement should have a designated position: Mike McMeekin may be interested or can send a designee. Should the WSAA wait to invite until after November elections? The law enforcement member would be representing law enforcement agencies in the Western region, not necessarily Missoula city or county). Charles will ask Ravalli County law enforcement agencies if they'd be interested to be represented.
- (September 22, Tom Bartlett informed the WSAA by e-mail that Sheriff Mike McMeekin would be honored to serve on the board of the WSAA)

#### G. Cultural Competency and Mental Health Issues – Tom Camel

- Working with Native American population (and non-white persons in general). Indians still feel the effects from when treaties forced people onto reservations (also, opening reservation to white settlers), being forced to speak English and working land rather than hunting. Native American tribes are semi-sovereign nations; members are determined by “blood quantum” (that is, Native American ancestry). That also affects how people see themselves (acculturation); individuals may adopt some or all of the white culture system/identity. The different cultures react differently to mental health issues and what should be done. (e.g., Native American families tend to be extended, whereas majority white populations tend to be insular.)
- Tom had worked in a multicultural mental health program in Washington State in the 1990s and he was trained in cultural sensitivity toward clients, including how to develop different strategies of ways to look at things and to solve issues. Tom believes that there is a need for cultural competency training for service providers and for policy and legislation to address and develop solutions to this shortcoming.

#### H. Reports by LACs on Activities in Their Communities

(Deal with at next congress meeting.)

#### I. Question and Answer Period

Announcement by Alexis Volkerts:

Thirty free refurbished Windows 98 computers are available to consumers. (Call 1-800-245-4743, Lyn Winslow with Montana Advocacy Program in Helena. They need to be picked-up there within the next two weeks. Address in Helena: 400 North Park St., Near Benson in the old Federal Reserve Building. Alexis (541-4357) and Mary Jane can transport, let either of them know. *All computers have been spoken for. There may be additional computer available in December—per Mary Jane Fox on October 10 at BVLAC.*

Mary Jane Fox noted that her correct cell number is 471-1074.

Congress meeting ended and group adjourned for lunch at 12:10

Next Congress Meeting – December 20, St Patrick Hospital, Missoula