WEST VIRGINIA MENTAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL
MINUTES
FRIDAY DECEMBER 10, 2004

PRESENT: Teri Toothman, Bob McConnell, Deborah Jarrell, Ted Johnson, Paul Macom, Pam Akers, John Kowalski, Bob Hansen, Lon Sizemore, Helen Matlick, Nancy Allison-Schmitt, Melissa Toothman, Debbie Toler, David Sanders, Randy Housh, Michael Ross, Jessica Stewart, Mary Miller, Diana Bailey, Angie Bronson, Kim Walsh, Merritt Moore, Karen Yost, and Linda Watt.

The minutes of the October 29 - 30, 2004 meeting were approved with the corrected spelling of Nancy Allison-Schmitt's name.

Introductions.

A presentation on Medication Algorithms was made by Ted Johnson. Medication algorithms are evidence based pharmacological treatment. An algorithm provides clinicians with a step by step process which identify treatment alternatives at key decision points. An algorithm specifies sequences (stages) with specific options and tactics. Step by step flow charts of best practices in medication use and recommends key decision points. An algorithm is not a substitute for clinical judgement. It is not a "cookbook" for care.

Several positive outcomes have been published including: Reduction of psychiatric symptoms. Reduction of hospitalization. Increased quality of life. Improved social interaction. Improved employment experiences. Satisfaction with treatment.

Some of the issues with medication algorithms that have been experienced in Florida include: Actual practice patterns often differ substantially fro evidence based recommendations and clinical research. Higher costs. Consumers move between treatment settings and receive meds from sever different providers which can create inconsistencies. There are substantial variations across practitioners in terms of drug selection, dosing and duration.

Following discussion of the presentation a motion was made that the WVMHPC will adopt the following:

- Adoptions of an algorithm will satisfy a part of the Council's goal concerning the availability of medications.
- Will host a meeting on algorithms.
- Develop educational materials regarding algorithms for consumers and stakeholders.
- Look at existing policies that might interfere with implementing algorithms.

Motion carried.

A presentation on homelessness was made by Kim Walsh, Executive Director of Roark Sullivan Lifeway Center and President of the WV Coalition to End Homelessness. It is estimated that there are more than 10,000 homeless persons in the state of WV. 1 out of 4 homeless persons is a child.

Kim provided specific information regarding the scope of homeless services being provided within the state. WV's rural nature, the lack of public transportation, the lack of educational opportunities, lack of employment opportunities and the low average wage are some of the factors that impact and complicate the homeless problem. It appears that the homeless population as a whole is getting younger. I significant portion of this population has addiction and/or mental health problems. In general homeless facilities and services in WV are limited to a few metropolitan areas.

The WV Coalition to End Homelessness is relatively new and very actively involved in addressing the issues of homelessness and working to find broader solutions.

A presentation on the System of Care Collaborative was made by Teri Toothman, Karen Yost and Linda Watts. This initiative is focused on the services and care that is available to children. There is a lack of in-state treatment services for children. There is a lack of reimbursement for the services that are needed. There is no coordination among agencies and organizations that provide services. Parents frequently have to give up custody of a child to get services.

The vision for this collaborative is that "Children with, or at risk of, social, emotional or behavior health challenges, and their families will receive individualized services and supports that are family driven, blended across systems and delivered through partnerships among families, providers, communities and systems.

The core of the system of care is involvement of all providers/agencies in ONE coordinated plan for a child or family. Funds from all of the involved agencies would be consolidated to purchase appropriate services and care.

A presentation on WV Transit Needs was made by David Sanders. Dave provided a brief overview of a study that was completed in 2001.

This study suggests that there is some type of transit (municipal, county, non-profit, private, etc) in every county in WV. The study notes that overall these transit systems only meet approximately 27% of the estimated need. A much smaller percentage of the need is being met in rural counties.

This is an extensive study. It indicates projected cost for each WV county to have adequate transportation.

Thanks to all of the presenters.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: January 14, 2005 at the Comfort Suites, Mineral Wells.