

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COUNCIL OF VIRGINIA

VACSB

10128 W. Broad St.

Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 15, 2012

I. Attendance

Present: Susan Williams, Mira Signer, Wayne Barry, Ann Cutshall, Lynn DelaMer, Robert Friedline, Patricia Griggs, Katharine Hunter, Livia Jansen, MargaretAnn Lane, Bonnie Neighbour, Chris Owens, Selena Ruffin, Mira Signer, Becky Sterling, and Rhonda Thissen.

Absent: Anne Burhans, Sherry Confer, Tammy Farmer, Lisa Moore, and Donna Wenzel.

II. Guests

Richard Gilbert, James Martinez, and Mendy Meeks

III. Opening of Business

President Susan Williams called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

IV. Welcome, Introductions, Public Comments, and Announcements

1. Susan Williams announced the death of James Johnson and a moment of silence was observed in his honor.

V. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

With unanimous consent, the Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting. They had been e-Mailed for review to the members prior to the present meeting. Anne Cutshall moved that the minutes be accepted as written. Becky Sterling seconded the motion, and it was passed without objection.

VI. SAMHSA Conference Report

Mira Signer reported on her attendance at the SAMHSA Conference, noting in particular that the problem of transitioning from traditional health councils to integrated behavioral health councils was a problem for states other than Virginia. She noted that a variety of alternative approaches were cited and that the prevailing wisdom seemed to suggest that flexibility was the best approach, i.e., that it was best to do what seems to work pragmatically. In this connection, Rhonda Thissen said that the State of West Virginia seemed rather advanced in its approach to the problem and, on the basis of a contract it has with SAMHSA, is willing to provide technical assistance to other states working on the problem. Further, she said that the West Virginia

contingent had indicated a willingness to come to a BHAC meeting and provide advice and assistance to Virginia. This was consistent with a Webinar held on this subject on July 11, 2012. The Council informally requested that Rhonda seek to have this group attend the next regularly scheduled BHAC meeting.

Jim Martinez said that during his discussions at the Conference there was some concern about the future of mental health and substance abuse block grants at the federal level due to budget constraints. A related concern was expressed about the impact on behavioral health care issues of possible changes in the use of Medicaid and the application of the Affordable Health Care Act. This generated considerable discussion and it was suggested that the BHAC consider taking a formal advocacy position on the matter, either directly or in conjunction with other concerned advocacy groups. Selena Ruffin was appointed to head an *ad hoc* committee composed of Council members volunteers to prepare a position paper on the subject for consideration at the next BHAC meeting. The BHAC Secretary was instructed to coordinate the solicitation of inputs from the BHAC membership on the subject and forward the responses to the *ad hoc* committee.

VII. SAMSHA Housing Report and a related Washington Post Article

Mira Signer cited a conference report concerning the problem of housing instability for the homeless who suffer from mental health and substance abuse disorders. She said that another Conference report dealt with a similar problem relating to health care for those who had served in the armed forces. A Washington Post newspaper report on the subject also raised the consciousness of those in attendance at the Conference.

Pat Griggs explained how the issue impacted her living situation. Jim Martinez noted that Virginia's Inspector General had issued two reports involving the DBHDS, including one concerning the housing issue.

VIII. DBHDS Report

1. Katharine Hunter reported that there were more excellent applications for Crisis Response Grants than funds available to meet the need. She also mentioned an upcoming Virginia Commonwealth University symposium on children's mental health and its relationship to the 1 In Five Kids organization.

2. Jim Martinez reported that the DBHDS was heavily engaged in the 2013 budget exercise and that there was a small budget surplus in the commonwealth's budget which, among other things, would allow the payment of bonuses to some state employees.

3. MargaretAnne Lane reported that DBHDS' Director for Substance Abuse, Mellie Randal, is desirous of providing the Council with a Power Point presentation concerning how DBHDS is dealing with substance abuse issues. It was suggested that such a presentation be placed on the agenda for the October 24 BHAC meeting. To provide background knowledge that would facilitate the presentation, Council members were given a copy of the "2011 Biennial Report on Substance Abuse Services" dated January 31, 2012 that was provided to the Governor and

Members of the Virginia General Assembly. Council members were urged, in particular, to read the overview starting on page 19 and the strategic plan for providing services, including the evaluation of their quality, availability, treatment options, and recovery analysis.

Rhonda Thissen added that the provision of knowledge concerning substance abuse issues to those Council members previously focused on mental health issues was of great importance and would contribute importantly to the ongoing process of integrating mental health and substance issues within the Council. She also pointed out that there are significant funding implications relating to who does the treatment when there are co-occurring conditions and the location of where the treatment takes place.

IX Revision of the Bylaws

Rhonda Thissen formally proposed a suggestion, previously provided to Council members via e-mail, to modify the size and nature of the Council's membership. She briefed the Council Members on her reasons for doing so. The proposal was discussed, with note being made that there were 20 existing vacant positions on the Council. This brought into question the need to increase the size of the Council Membership, the argument being that if it is not broken don't fix it. A counter argument was voiced that, with the inclusion of substance abuse to the charter of the Council, many new participants would need to be recruited. This, in turn, would necessitate the increased size of the Council.

Rhonda Thissen moved that her proposal be accepted. Her motion was seconded by Becky Sterling and the motion was approved with one dissenting vote. Rhonda Thissen then moved that the Policy and Bylaws Committee be charged with the responsibility for drafting the necessary Bylaw language changes required to implement the proposal, as well as assure that all proper notification requirements for the amendment of the Bylaws are met. This motion was seconded by MargaretAnne Lane and approved with one abstention.

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X. Committee Reports

1. The Membership and Training Committee: Chairman Chris Owens reported that the Committee had favorably reviewed membership applications received from Richard Gilbert and Shannon Haworth. He moved that both applicants be approved for membership. The motion was seconded by Pat Griggs and both applicants were accepted for membership on the Council in separate membership votes by unanimously consent.

Chairman Owens also reported that he was resigning from the Council with effect from the end of the meeting. He suggested that Bob Friedline be appointed as the interim Chairman because of his involvement and experience over the past year in reviving and reorienting the activities of the Committee. President Williams agreed and made the interim appointment, indicating that the new President for 2013 would appoint a permanent Chairman upon taking office.

2. Finance Committee: Chairman Serena Ruffin provided an explanation of her summary financial report for the budget year ending in June of 2012 and the approved budget for the

Council's activities in 2013. She made particular note of the inclusion in the 2013 budget of funds for a Council retreat. She said that Becky Sterling and MargaretAnne Lane had agreed to head up a working group to plan the activity. It was suggested that the first day of the retreat would be the regular April BHAC meeting, to be followed up with by workshops on the following day.

XI. Closing Announcements and Notifications

1. Lynn DelaMer reported that she was involved in planning and implementing 2 Conferences for Peers.
2. In a similar vein, Becky Sterling reported that a Peer Support and Training Program which she headed had graduated 23 individuals who had received 90 hours of specialized training.

XII. Adjournment

President Susan Williams adjourned the meeting at 2:38 p.m.