

Western State Hospital
Staunton, Virginia

Local Human Rights Committee Meeting Minutes
Jeffreys Building, Room 95 at 12:30
September 28, 2009

Present: Donna Gum, Hal Meyers, Ski Washington, Stephanie Sault, and Robert Wade Committee Members; Jerry Thomas, Patient Advocate; Chuck Collins, Regional Advocate; Zachary DeVore and Erin Haw VOPA, Gail Burford, Director's Liaison

Guests: Steve Johnson, Psychologist C1/2
Alex Gulotta, Legal Aid Justice Center via telephone (on behalf of Mr. CC and family)
Janice Sultenfuss, Psychologist C7/8
Dr. Mary Clare Smith

Donna Gum, Chair, called the meeting of the Local Human Rights Committee to order on September 28, 2009. A quorum of members was present. With a motion from Hal Meyers and a second from Ski Washington, the minutes from the August meeting were approved as written. The agenda was approved with two cancellations and one addition by a motion from Ski Washington, and a second from Hal Meyers

Upon a motion made by Hal Meyers and a second by Robert Wade, the committee went into executive session pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 A. 15 and section 2.2-3705.5 for the discussion of medical and mental records excluded from the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, to solely hear the treatment plan review of Mr. CC.

Present during this closed session were committee members, Donna Gum, Hal Meyers, Ski Washington, Stephanie Sault, and Robert Wade; Advocates Jerry Thomas and Chuck Collins for technical support; Gail Burford, Director's Liaison; Shante Ball, Secretary; Steve Johnson, Psychologist C1/2; and Alex Gulotta, Legal Aid Justice Center via speaker phone on behalf of Mr. CC and family.

With a motion from Hal Meyers and a second from Ski Washington, the committee reconvened into open session. Upon reconvening in open session, all members of the Local Human Rights Committee certified that to the best of each ones' knowledge, only public business matters identified in the motion to convene the closed session were discussed in closed session.

A motion was made by Hal Meyers and seconded by Ski Washington that the WSH LHRC extends its concern and best wishes to Mr. CC and his family during this time of illness.

The committee reviewed the ward rules from C7/8. Psychologist, Janice Sultenfuss, noted a few minor changes that they have made since the last review. The ward was unanimously complimented on how thorough and well written the rules were. A motion was made by Ski Washington and second by Stephanie Sault to approve the rules as presented.

Jerry Thomas presented the Advocate's Report for Human Rights Activities occurring in August. He also announced his intention to retire stating that December 24, 2009 will be his last day.

Zachary DeVore, VOPA, introduced Erin Haw to the committee. She will be the representative assigned to Western State.

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Subsequent to last month's presentation and at the request of Jerry Thomas, WSH Advocate; Dr Mary Clare Smith, WSH Medical Director, attended this month's meeting to expand on the facility's use of the Emergency Restraint Chair (ERC), to discuss the hospital's established protocols, and efforts to reduce overall seclusion/restraint usage.

Nearly every year there is a performance improvement initiative to reduce s/r. As it has inherent dangers for both patients & staff, use of s/r is an alternative of last resort. Hospital policies reflect this and we aim to set this as 'culture' on the units. The hospital constantly reviews s/r data at a number of levels. All the clinical disciplines including medical, nursing, and psychology, review various aspects of S/R use. Quality Patient Safety Council also reviews all the data looking at the individual high users affected and amount used by each ward. Through this review and action, the facility's use of S/R has dropped substantially over the past several years. Some contributing efforts include CME education opportunities (ex. sensory integration approach) which has led to the creation of ward comfort rooms and/or comfort carts. Subsequently, WSH conducted follow-up to determine their use and effectiveness. Staff queried patients for feedback regarding the success of these interventions and staff also recorded their observation regarding the success of the intervention. The data indicates that response to comfort rooms has been generally positive.

We identify and review our specific individual high users of s/r. A project to determine characteristics/profiles of patients who have been high users of S/R was completed.. Medical Staff was further educated in an attempt to identify high risk individuals 'up-front' and they were provided the medication and behavioral regimens that had been most efficient and successful in the past.

In addition, the facility looks outward to garner the most current information. WSH psychology director and assistant director of nursing recently attended a conference aimed at reducing and eliminating the use of s/r. A committee has been formed as a result to review/implement some of the new, learned techniques. It's an on-going effort.

The facility has patient parameters/thresholds that trigger automatic consultation with the established WSH Behavioral Consult Team who review patient treatment and are able to suggest from an 'outside' perspective, actions or alternatives that may aid the ward treatment team in better managing patient behavior. The BCT also meets with treatment teams upon request.

There was a question answer exchange between committee members and Dr Smith. Topics included new facility planning, description of a comfort room, ERC policy and protocols, de-briefing policy (patients & staff), and monitoring the medical needs of patients in the ERC.

Committee members expressed their gratitude and satisfaction with Dr Smith's presentation noting an improved understanding of the use of facility policy and initiatives regarding s/r (including the ERC) at WSH.

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The Patient Complaints, Barriers to Discharge List, and the IFPC minutes were reviewed with no comments.

Donna Gum announced several mental health events that will take place in the community.

Donna Gum also announced to the committee that Mr. Mahlon Webb will be a guest at the next meeting as a potential member. The committee is still in need of one consumer member.

The next meeting date is October 26, 2009. By unanimous decision the Nov/Dec-09 meetings will be combined and held on December 7 beginning at 2:30 pm.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made and passed to adjourn the meeting.

APPROVED:

Donna Gum, Chair

Shante' M. Ball, LHRC Secretary