

Western State Hospital
Staunton, Virginia
Local Human Rights Committee Meeting Minutes
Jeffrey's Building, Rom 95 at 12:30
August 23, 2010

- Present:** Donna Gum, Hal Meyers, Stephanie Sault, Rob Wade, Ski Washington, Mahlon Webb, Committee Members; Chuck Collins, Mark Seymour, WSH/Regional Advocate; Erin Haw, VOPA
- Absent:** Ellen Harrison, Liaison to WSH Director
- Guests:** A.T. (C7-8 patient)
M.S. (A6 patient)
Dr. Judith Curry-EL, B2
Donna Nulty, B2
Dr. Dave Rawls, B2
Dr. Jeff Bonacci, B2
Dr. Bob Gardella, B2
Staycey Hayes, Social Worker, B2
Eva Wilson, LCSW, B2
Debbie Thompson, RN, B2

Ms. Gum, Committee Chair, called the meeting of the Local Human Rights Committee to order on August 23, 2010. With motion from Mr. Meyers and a second by Mr. Wade, the minutes from the July meeting were approved as written. A quorum of members was present. The agenda was approved on a motion from Mr. Meyers and seconded by Rev. Sault.

The committee opened the meeting to anyone wishing to express concerns during the public comment period. C 7/8 patient A.T. expressed concern regarding a patient on the ward receiving “special treatment” and being rewarded for bad behavior by getting pizza and being allowed to visit Stribling.

Mr. Collins gave a verbal Advocate’s Report commenting on his involvement with a recent case which presented a new situation for him. In this case investigative findings initiated by a patient complaint, were overturned by the Risk Management Officer of DBHDS. The end result is that the Risk Management Officer will write a letter to the Director of Western State Hospital asking that corrective action be taken. Mr. Collins went on to explain that in a case where the LHRC might make a recommendation that was not in agreement by hospital administration; the complaint could then be taken to the SHRC and ultimately the Commissioner for a final ruling.

Ms. Haw announced that VOPA representatives are beginning a new project to encourage consumers in assisted living situations toward pursuing their voting rights. This new project will include helping with absentee voting as well as restoring voting rights for some. The committee asked that Ms. Harrison research voting opportunities for WSH patients.

Monthly reports for Patient Complaints, Barriers to Discharge, and IFPC Minutes were all reviewed. In light of a complaint regarding laundry, Mr. Wade asked how laundry was handled at WSH and whether it was a patient responsibility or staff. Mr. Collins suggested that on the long term wards, doing laundry is

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probably a required ADL written in treatment plans. The committee asked that Ms. Harrison inquire further about the procedure for laundry.

Various team members from B2 presented ward rules. The B2 team reviewed the rules based on policy and made revisions in order to be more consistent throughout; including snack time and telephone use on the unit. The Committee commented that they liked the “community aspect” with regard to language in the ward rules. B2 does allow patient input for ward rules, patients are encouraged to voice opinions and request changes during morning meetings. General discussion ensued around contraband items, privilege levels and dietary restrictions for patients based on treatment team recommendations.

Under Community Connections, Ms. Gum requested feedback from the DVD "Reducing the Stigma of Mental Illness" that was presented in the June LHRC meeting. Committee members commented that the DVD was very well done and impressive. A reminder of the Mental Health of America Annual Meeting was made. This meeting will be held in November with the theme “Building Community”. Mr. Collins called attention to the SHRC Newsletter titled “Human Writes” which informs readers of various advocacy and human rights issues.

The next meeting will be held September 27, 2010 at 12:30 p.m.

With no further business to discuss and from a motion made by Mr. Meyers and second by Mr. Wade, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

Donna Gum, Chair

Elizabeth T. Little, LHRC Secretary