

Western State Hospital
Staunton, Virginia
Local Human Rights Committee Meeting Minutes
Jeffrey's Building, Rom 95 at 12:30
November 29, 2010

Present: Donna Gum, Hal Meyers, Rob Wade, Ski Washington, Committee Members; Chuck Collins, Mark Seymour, WSH/Regional Advocate; Erin Haw, VOPA; Ellen Harrison Liaison to WSH Director

Absent: Mahlon Webb, Stephanie Sault, Committee Members; Zachary DeVore, VOPA

Guests: M.S. (A6 patient)
J.S (C5/6 patient)
B.C (C7/8 patient)

Ms. Gum, Committee Chair, called the meeting of the Local Human Rights Committee to order on November 29, 2010. With motion from Mr. Meyers and a second by Mr. Wade, the minutes from the October meeting were approved as written. A quorum of members was present. The agenda was approved with changes to include the consumer representative interview during closed session on a motion from Mr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Wade.

The committee opened the meeting to anyone wishing to express concerns during the public comment period. Patient B.C. expressed concern regarding her right to receive additional sugar for coffee and cereal. It was noted that there are no physical or weight related issues that are preventing B.C. from receiving the additional sugar. Mr. Collins relayed that he was informed of the reason for cutting back on the sugar packets to be related only to cost. This claim could not be supported nor substantiated at the time of the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Wade for Ms. Harrison to discuss the clinical aspects of this situation with the treatment team and report her findings at the January meeting. Patient J.S. discussed concerns regarding property rights at Western State Hospital. J.S. is missing a black leather jacket which was on his clothing list but is now missing. Mr. Collins remarked that in the past if property went missing and was recorded on the clothing list, the hospital would reimburse the cost. Ms. Harrison will bring the Hospital Instruction to the January meeting that addresses the reimbursement of missing property. Mr. Collins reported that he attended the Mental Health of America dinner on November 19th where several LHRC members were mentioned and/or recognized. Mr. Collins expressed that he was humbled by the award he received and had a wonderful time at the event.

Mr. Collins gave a verbal Advocate's Report, in addition to the complaints list provided by Ms. Fravel. There were 15 complaints received by Mr. Collins in the prior month. By his report, while this number is high, the rise may be attributed to weekly walk thru's at Stribling building. Mr. Collins reported on the case of an individual who did not want to take a medication due to the daily lab work necessary when taking this drug. Mr. Seymour reported that alternative medicines are often an option and that treatment teams are very responsive in these situations. After a motion from Mr. Wade and a second by Mr. Meyers, an invite will be extended to Dr. Ken Brasfield (Pharmacist) to discuss his role at Western State. Mr. Seymour provided follow-up to a previous question regarding an A2 complaint about a patient not getting their PRN medication. It was found that the PRN was requested too soon and therefore could not be administered at the time of the patient's request.

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Ms. Haw announced that VOPA had the opportunity to meet with Citizens Council, which, by her report, was very informative.

Mr. Jim Stevens, Director of Rehab Services addressed perceived inequality of consequences for similar behaviors exhibited in PSR. Mr. Stevens reported that he met with Citizens Council around this issue as well and they were pleased with the outcome of that meeting. Mr. Stevens explained that treatment plans are individualized and therefore certain consequences are clinical based and individualized. Mr. Stevens reported that the availability of bathrooms during peak use times is being addressed by bringing another bathroom (currently closed) up to the established safety standards for patient use. Mr. Stevens announced that a consignment shop is in progress and it is hoped that Citizens Council will play a big role in the development and implementation of the project.

Monthly reports for Patient Complaints, Barriers to Discharge, and IFPC Minutes were all reviewed. Mr. Collins explained the difference between civil and forensic admissions to the committee.

Under Community Connections, Ms. Gum announced that there was an article in the News Virginian regarding the Mental Health of America Annual Dinner and Auction. The Mental Health of America Symposium will be held tomorrow, November 30, 2010.

The 2011 LHRC schedule/goals include: committee will begin annual review of ward rules, Ms. Little will distribute a new copy of the members contact information, Ms. Harrison will share a copy of ward descriptions and will ask each ward to include the following in their ward rules for 2011: A description of their ward, revised ward rules, and provide an answer to the question "In what way do ward rules enhance/restrict patient rights".

Dr. Jack Barber, Facility Director at Western State Hospital, discussed the hospital budget and changes for the future. Dr. Barber offered a handout which showed the history of budget cuts for Western State Hospital since 2002. Fiscal Year 2011 will not require layoffs; however this may change in Fiscal Year 2012 when Western State is faced with an additional one million dollar reduction to the budget. Dr. Barber discussed the things being done to compensate for the loss of positions and money thus far. One example is the use of non-clinical staff helping in clinical areas such co-facilitating PSR groups and working in the malls. Eventually most non-clinical staff will spend 5% of their time assisting with direct care operations. Additionally clinical staff will set aside 2 additional hours of time to use in PSR, or to be available for patients by being more present on the wards. The promotion of more personal contact isn't only due to shortages, Dr. Barber believes that more personal contact means less violence, less injuries and instead more patience and listening. He believes patients need to feel they are being heard. While it is expensive to train peer providers, Dr. Barber hopes that by hosting the training at WSH sometime next year the training will be well attended. In paying attention to employee morale, Western State formed an Employee Recognition Committee made up of different disciplined employees whose task will be to design a program which rewards employees for their efforts at the hospital. Dr. Barber has a goal of getting out and about more to talk to employees; he also sends emails regularly to explain things that are happening with the hospital. The biggest challenge ahead is the next projected round of cuts for FY12 which may close beds at Western State Hospital. This will prove difficult with the proposed NVTC and Danville closures. Utilization of volunteers may be looked at as a way to bridge the gap that larger wards and thinner staff will create.

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Upon a motion made by Mr. Meyers, the committee went into closed session pursuant to Virginia Code §2.2-3711 (1) for the purpose of discussion and consideration of appointments for the WSH Local Human Rights Committee.

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 lawfully exempt from statutory open meeting requirements, and only public business matters identified in the motion to convene the closed session were discussed in closed session.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Wade the WSH LHRC accepted Mark E. Schorsch as a Consumer Member to the LHRC. Mr. Schorsch's application will be forwarded to SHRC for final approval.

The next meeting will be held January 24, 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