

Western State Hospital  
Staunton, Virginia  
*Local Human Rights Committee Meeting Minutes*  
*Jeffrey's Building, Rom 95 at 12:30*  
*January 24, 2011*

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

**Absent:** Mark Seymour, Advocate; Zachary DeVore, VOPA

**Guests:** A.T. (C 7/8 patient)

Ms. Gum, Committee Chair, called the meeting of the Local Human Rights Committee to order on January 24, 2011. With motion from Mr. Meyers and a second by Mr. Wade, the minutes from the November meeting were approved as written. A quorum of members was present. The agenda was approved with changes to include welcoming new committee member Mark Schorsch on a motion from Mr. Wade and seconded by Mr. Washington.

The committee opened the meeting to anyone wishing to express concerns during the public comment period. Patient A.T. expressed concern regarding her right to remain safe from other patients who strike out at her. Mr. Collins reported that Mr. Schorsch was appointed as the newest member to the Western State Hospital Local Human Rights Committee. The State Human Rights Committee is very excited about Mr. Schorsch's appointment as he is the first current patient to be appointed to a LHRC. Mr. Collins also reported that five VOPA staff members were present at the State Human Rights Committee meeting and that they presented a very nice overview of VOPA.

Mr. Collins discussed the enclosure being built at New Hope Detox Center which will permit Detox patients to smoke on Western State grounds, which are currently smoke free. Mr. Collins reported that several WSH staff members have approached him regarding this issue, prompting Mr. Collins to alert the LHRC. At this time, no patient has voiced a complaint to their treatment team nor Mr. Collins. Ms. Harrison was asked to gather more information regarding the implementation of this project and any other information that may be helpful to the committee.

Mr. Collins handled six complaints in addition to those listed on the complaints list, all six complaints were resolved. In January 15 complaints were handled. Mr. Collins also delivered a presentation on Self Advocacy to the Citizens Council and other consumer groups. The presentation promotes discussion on how to advocate for yourself, understand the system and techniques to use when handling disputes.

**Upon a motion made by Mr. Meyers, and seconded by Mr. Wade the committee went into closed session pursuant to Virginia Code §2.2-3711 (1) for the purpose of discussion of medical record/treatment plans.**

**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.**

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Dr. Johnson presented C ½ ward rules. Dr. Johnson explained that there had been both minor and major changes made to the ward rules since last year. Minor changes were made on the first few pages of the ward rules; with more substantive changes to include the 6pm cabinet time being eliminated due to staff shortages. Dr. Johnson informed the committee that ward rule changes are always discussed with patients before they are changed. When asked about who is responsible for clean patient laundry, Dr. Johnson stated that patients are not required to do their own laundry, but are encouraged to demonstrate that level of independence when able. The patient advocate number is incorrect on the ward rules and will be corrected. In answering the committee's question "In what way do ward rules enhance or restrict patient rights?" Dr. Johnson replied that (paraphrased) C ½ tries to restrict rights as little as possible and that the ward rules are written *to* the patient, not *about* the patient. With a motion by Mr. Meyers and a second by Mr. Webb, the C ½ ward rules were approved.

Ms. Haw reported that at the end of every fiscal year reports are done for federal funding. One that applies to Western State Hospital; Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness is posted on the VOPA website. Additionally, there is a weekly legislation update on the website for those interested.

Monthly reports for Patient Complaints, Barriers to Discharge, and IFPC Minutes were all reviewed. Housing continues to be the main issue in barriers to discharge. A report was given at the SHRC meeting and Western State Hospital was listed one of the lowest, if not the lowest of all facilities in terms of people being hospitalized longer than necessary. Only 4% of the total number of patients are here with barriers to discharge; which is very low in comparison to the rest of the state facilities.

Dr. Bass presented a minor change in C 7/8 ward rules. The current ward rules indicate no time limitation on telephone usage. C 7/8 would like to have a 15 minute payphone limit added to the ward rules. Individualized treatment plans will be developed if payphone monopolization is problematic. Additionally, a clause will be added for extenuating circumstances when more time is required for payphone usage. Upon a motion by Mr. Wade and a second by Mr. Webb the change to C 7/8 ward rules was approved.

Mr. Collins presented Human Rights Training on Regulations. This training was informative, thorough and included, but was not limited to, the following topics from the "Blue Book": Dignity (safety), Services (sound treatment practice), Participation in decision making (consent, AR's), Confidentiality and Access to records (HIPAA), Restrictions, Restraint and Seclusion (emergency), Work research, Complaints, LHRC and SHRC, Reporting regulations, Enforcement/Sanctions, and Responsibilities (Advocate, Providers, LHRC, SHRC).

During annual planning, the committee decided to use Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 as the date for the combined November/December meeting. All other dates on the LHRC meeting schedule were approved.

The committee discussed goals and how the group has advanced human rights or protected them. In keeping with this goal, the committee would like to learn more about the hospital's processes by inviting a staff member who handles discharge (Donna Baldwin) and a staff member who handles admissions (Cindy Caldwell) to the March 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. The committee is also requesting that a written paragraph answering the question "In what way do ward rules enhance/restrict patient rights?" be added to ward rules presentation. The committee would like for Western State to consider providing refreshments for monthly LHRC meetings.

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Reverend Sault has stepped down from her position which leaves one community member seat available. Ms. Gum will be in contact with several people (Rosemary Tanner, Kathy Belcher and Cynthia Long) in hopes that one of them may have interest in joining the committee.

Under Community Connections, Ms. Gum announced that a pizza fundraiser for Mental Health of America will be held on March 31<sup>st</sup> at CiCi's Pizza at 5pm. The Mental Health of America golf tournament will be held in May and the Annual Meeting is in November.

The next meeting will be held February 28, 2011 at 12:30 p.m. With no further business to discuss and from a motion made by Ms. Gum and second by Mr. Meyers, the meeting was adjourned.

**APPROVED:**

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Donna Gum, Chair

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Elizabeth T. Little, LHRC Secretary