

Western State Hospital
Staunton, Virginia
Local Human Rights Committee Meeting Minutes
Jeffrey's Building, Rom 95 at 12:30
April 25, 2011

- Present:** Donna Gum, Hal Meyers, Mark Schorsch, Rob Wade, Ski Washington, Committee Members; Chuck Collins, WSH/Regional Advocate; Mark Seymour, WSH Advocate; Erin Haw, VOPA; Ellen Harrison Liaison to WSH Director
- Absent:** Kathy Belcher, Mahlon Webb, Committee Members; Zachary DeVore, VOPA
- Guests:** J.S. (patient)

Ms. Gum, Committee Chair, called the meeting of the Local Human Rights Committee to order on April 25, 2011. With a motion from Mr. Meyers and a second by Mr. Washington, the minutes from the March meeting were approved as written. A quorum of members was present. The agenda was approved 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 J.S. discussed the need for an announcement the week before pre-hearing dates. J.S. also expressed that advanced directives do not seem to be working in the community.

Mr. Seymour reported that it is typical for complaints to lessen during this time of year with Malls being on break. Mr. Seymour also reported that most recently there have been several complaints related to the perception of inappropriate use of electronic communications. Mr. Collins reported receiving 16 complaints in April in addition to those reflected on the monthly Complaint List. Highlighted by Mr. Collins was the complaint made by a patient who wanted complete access to their SSI funds without regard to monetary needs upon discharge.

Ms. Haw notified the committee that preliminary work is being done to provide outreach for the deaf and hard of hearing community. The expectation is that coordination with specialists in this area will provide additional devices on units for those that are deaf and hard of hearing that can then be used in the community upon discharge. Such devices include video phones which are provided free of charge to the individual requiring assistance.

Mr. Stevens presented the Stribling Mall Program Description. Mr. Stevens explained that the Program Description serves as a standard of conduct that allows for an environment of learning while also providing a therapeutic environment. Mr. Stevens stressed that input from the Citizens Council is always considered and valued. The Program Description document is not posted in the same format in Mall areas; however guidelines for conduct are pulled from the document and posted. There was discussion around the policy on restrictions stemming from complaints received by patients who perceived consequences/restrictions being applied unevenly. Mr. Stevens assured the committee that restrictions are monitored with a log that reflects all pertinent information regarding a patient on restrictions. Raw data is shared directly with the Regional Advocate for purposes of monitoring and trending. It should be noted that to date there are no variances in consequences applied and a low number of restrictions have been reported since the beginning of the year. Moreover, 50% of restrictions are related to smoking. The Stribling Mall Program Description was approved on a motion from Mr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Wade.

Dr. Waldrop discussed his role as Chaplain at Western State Hospital. Dr. Waldrop has been Chaplain at Western State for 23 years and plans to retire in 2011. Dr. Waldrop explained that his role as

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Chaplain is a representative role. This role includes answering questions, providing affirmation and facilitating hope. Services are provided on Sundays and resemble services at many churches in the community. Dr. Waldrop acknowledged that medications can present secondary outcomes that often involve the perceived loss of "God's presence". Dr. Waldrop works with patients and staff on recognizing therapeutic issues that are present in scripture. Most see Dr. Waldrop as a source of encouragement which is not always based on religious beliefs. Dr. Waldrop believes that spirituality in the psychiatric community involves respect for psychiatric and spiritual equality. The committee thanked Dr. Waldrop for his presentation and for his service to the patients at Western State.

Mr. Collins shared with the committee his self advocacy presentation titled "Don't Back Down – The Seven Principles of Effective Self-Advocacy". Mr. Collins explained the idea of this presentation being to teach people how to advocate for themselves. Core Beliefs include a reading from the Declaration of Independence stating that all men are created equal. Mr. Collins explained each of the seven principles: Change your attitude; Know your rights; Know the system; Practice kindness (and forgiveness); Don't be discouraged, intimidated or afraid; Do your best today and an added principle; Help other people. A reminder to consider Self Advocacy, Self Empowerment, Self respect and Hope concluded the presentation.

After consideration of the information provided by Mr. Lynch at the March 28, 2011 LHRC meeting and on a motion made by Mr. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Wade, the LHRC Bylaws were approved.

The Patient Complaints List, Barriers to Discharge List, and the IFPC minutes were all reviewed. Several complaints on the Complaints List were discussed. Complaints from patients wishing to be transferred back to jail were discussed. Patients do have the right to request a transfer back to jail. However this request is often dependent upon the reason for hospitalization, capacity for treatment in the jail, etc. The Barriers to Discharge List was discussed The current rating system used for highlighting those patients that are clinically ready for discharge as a one, will now apply to persons that are clinically ready but refuse to allow for discharge to the community (e.g. hospital dependent).

Under Community Connections, Ms. Gum announced that the DBHDS State Board meeting will be held at Western State Hospital with a period for public comment. The WSH Volunteer Services Council annual meeting will be held that same afternoon. The Mental Health of America Golf Tournament will be held in May. May is Mental Health Month. NAMI will be offering a dinner with guest speaker discussing "Choices in Recovery"; reservations are requested by May 1st.

Ms. Harrison updated the committee on the query of how the Advocate's Office receives notification of serious events at Western State Hospital. Any time an event occurs at the hospital a state form #158 is completed and sent to the Facility Director's Office. This information is then reviewed by Risk Management and entered into the PAIRS system within 48 hours of the event; follow-up reports are submitted to PAIRS within 15 days of the event. All incidents entered into PAIRS can be viewed by the Advocates Office. Mr. Collins asked if Peer to Peer incidents are also entered into PAIRS system? All events, including peer-to-peer aggression, are entered into PAIRS as appropriate. Additionally the Quality/Risk Management, as well as The Safety Committee and Quality Patient Safety Council, monitor numbers, frequencies, location, and aggressor in order to look for trends within the hospital.

Ms. Gum and Mr. Meyers were reappointed as Chair and Co-Chair to the committee. Paperwork will be forwarded to the SHRC for final approval and elections will be held in June.

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Agenda requests for future meetings include: Request that Mr. Stevens return to review First Step Mall Program Descriptions and presentation on the NGRI process.

The next meeting will be held May 23rd at 12:30 p.m. With no further business to discuss and from a motion made by Mr. Wade, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

Donna Gum, Chair

Elizabeth T. Little, LHRC Secretary