

Western State Hospital
Staunton, Virginia
Local Human Rights Committee Meeting Minutes
Webb Learning Center, Room B1031 at 9:30AM
May 23, 2016

- Present:** Kathy Belcher, Vice Chair; Karen Cochran, Secretary; and Cheryl Talley, committee members; Erin Haw, dLCV Advocate; Artea Ambrose, OHR Advocate; Becky Shaw, Liaison to WSH Director; Glenda Sheffer, WSH Administrative Support
- Absent:** Heidi Campbell, Committee Chair, John Beghtol, Teri Sumey and Ski Washington, committee members
- Guests:** Ms. AM, a patient from 1 Pine, Ms. MG, a patient from 1 Hickory, Dr. Tim Jana from unit 1 Elm, Ms. Rachel Isaks from Rehabilitation Services.

The Local Human Rights Committee was called to order on May 23, 2016, by Ms. Belcher, Vice Chair. A quorum of members was not present. The members in attendance represent a subcommittee that may tentatively accept those items being presented. The minutes from the April 25, 2016, regular scheduled meeting, and May 5, 2016, a called meeting, were reviewed and tentatively accepted by a vote of the subcommittee.

During the Public Comment time, Ms. AM, a patient from unit 1 Pine, asked the LHRC to provide assistance regarding a recent letter to Dr. Mary Clare Smith, WSH Director, to which she has not received a response. Ms. Ambrose explained to the committee that Ms. M has formally requested a hearing with the LHRC regarding her request for discharge and a violation of her privacy. Ms. M commented that she has presented no self-injurious behaviors for 107 days. She feels there is no reason for her to remain at the hospital and that she is being denied discharge because her fiancé is also female. She further explained that it is her desire live with her fiancé, who is a former employee at WSH, when she is discharged.

Ms. MG, a patient from unit 1 Hickory, expressed her concerns regarding a proposed Hospital Instruction (HI) for personal hygiene products. Her understanding is that the policy will restrict the type/brand of products used by all patients to a limited selection. She stated people have individual needs due to sensitivities to fragrances and certain types of soap and may feel they need specific products based on their hair and skin types. She further commented that baby shampoo, such as is provided by WSH, is harmful to adult hair, and Dove soap is harsh on sensitive skin.

Ms. G expressed great concern that the HI is being developed without input from patients. She feels the committee developing the HI should include at least one current patient. She was advised that the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee (CLCC) is currently reviewing a draft of the HI, and that she should contact Rev. Cynthia Long regarding the possibility of attending a CLCC meeting. It was also suggested that the Citizens' Council meetings would be another venue to express her concerns. Ms. Ambrose expressed an interest in attending Citizens' Council meetings. Ms. Shaw will obtain the dates and times of Citizens' Council meetings and share that information with Ms. Ambrose.

Dr. Tim Jana presented the Unit Rules for 1 Elm. Unit 1 Elm is the only all-male, extended care unit in the hospital and that its census is primarily forensic patients. Unit 1 Elm no longer uses a token system to incentivize patients. They have adopted a monetary reward system. The other changes to the rules were minor items concerning the timing of specific events on the unit. The 1 Elm unit rules were accepted with a motion from Ms. Cochran and a second from Ms. Talley. The subcommittee voted to tentatively accept the 1 Elm Unit rules.

Officer Elections were deferred to the June 27th meeting due to the limited number of members present at the current meeting.

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The members present discussed the possibility of removing Mr. Washington from the committee roster and beginning a search for a new consumer committee member. Ms. Belcher indicated she would email committee members to ask that they reach out to their contacts to begin a search for a new member. Ms. Cochran will contact Ms. Donna Gum with Mental Health America – Augusta (MHA-A), for possible recommendations.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Talley, the committee entered closed session pursuant to Virginia Code §2.2-3711, a.15 and §2.2-37.05.5 for the purpose of discussion of medical record / treatment plans.

Dr. Mike Shutty presented the quarterly treatment plan review for Mr. SM. The subcommittee voted to tentatively accept the treatment plan with a motion from Ms. Talley and a second by Ms. Cochran. The plan will receive a vote of a quorum of members at the June 27th meeting.

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.

Ms. Rachel Isaks, a therapist with expertise in Sensory Therapy from the WSH Rehabilitation Services Department, provided a brief overview of Comfort Carts, why they were developed and how they are utilized on the patient care units. Ms. Isaks developed the concept for the carts as a result of information gathered by the Seclusion/Restraint Reduction Committee. The items included on the carts, such as stress balls, aroma therapy and chewing gum, are intended to provide sensory modulation and reduce the physiological response to stress. In addition to the Comfort Carts, each unit has established a Comfort Room. The Comfort Rooms are still being developed; however, some of the possibilities being explored include murals, softer or full spectrum lighting and comfortable chairs. A sensory work group is being considered. The group will include a psychiatrist, a psychologist, representatives from nursing staff, and representatives from the Occupational Therapy team.

Regarding Community Connections, the art show in downtown Staunton will continue until the end of May. Classes for suicide prevention have been made available by MHA-A and NAMI for citizens in the community.

Ms. Artea Ambrose, with the Office of Human Rights (OHR), presented the Advocates' Report. Arrangements have been made for an advocate from OHR to physically be at WSH twice a week until a full-time advocate has been appointed. Interviews are being conducted this week for the vacancy.

The Patient Complaints Report for April was reviewed. The subject of internal advocates at WSH was discussed. Ms. Haw indicated that she understands that Shannon Conner, Kim Burns, Barbara Nulty and Trent Humphries have been appointed as internal advocates. Ms. Sheffer indicated that these appointments are tentative, with the exception of Ms. Conner, and that the role and duties for internal advocates has not been finalized at this time.

Complaint number 751 is regarding a patient bathroom being locked. The committee questioned how and why this would happen. All of the private bathrooms were designed so they could be locked in the open or closed position. Patient bathrooms are only locked (open or closed) for the safety of the patient and by a doctor's order.

The Extraordinary Barriers List was reviewed. There are 37 patients still on the list. Some of these are NGRIs who are difficult to place. Many of these individuals are waiting for funds. Ms. Shaw

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indicated we have just received additional DAP funds, providing more opportunities for patients to return to the community.

The next meeting will be held June 27, 2016, at 9:00 a.m. in Room B1031 of the Webb Learning Center. Committee members will gather in the lobby to be escorted to the meeting room.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

Heidi Campbell
Chair

Glenda D. Sheffer
WSH Administrative Support