

Western State Hospital
Staunton, Virginia
Local Human Rights Committee Meeting Minutes
Jeffrey's Building, Room 95 at 12:30
April 28, 2014

Present: Hal Meyers, Committee Chair, Kathy Belcher, Vice Chair, Heidi Campbell, Donna Gum, Rob Wade, Mahlon Webb, committee members; Chuck Collins, WSH/Regional Advocate; Mark Seymour, WSH Advocate; Becky Shaw, Liaisons to WSH Director

Absent: Mark Schorsch, committee member; Erin Haw, dLCV Advocate

Guests: Mr. TH, patient on 1 Pine, Mr. Moriah Tolten, Intern from JMU currently working with Ms. Gum

Mr. Meyers, Committee Chair, called the Local Human Rights Committee to order on April 28, 2014. The committee approved the minutes from the March 24th meeting as written with a motion by Mr. Wade, a second by Ms. Belcher and a vote of the committee. Mr. Wade noted that a quorum of members was present. The agenda was approved as written with a motion from Ms. Campbell, a second by Mr. Webb and a vote of the committee.

During the public comment Mr. H noted his concerns regarding his treatment plan and his use of the video phone. His treatment plan indicates that his use of the phone may be restricted if he uses sexually explicit behavior while on the phone. He feels that this is an unreasonable limitation on his use of the device he primarily uses to contact family and friends outside of Western State Hospital.

Dr. Stout was unable to join the LHRC due to prior commitments. He did, however, note by phone that Mr. H's access to the video phone is regulated by the Forensic Review Panel (FRP) in Richmond. The FRP oversees the privileges for all Forensic patients, of which Mr. H is included. This specific limitation is due to Mr. H's prior behaviors when communicating with outside parties.

Mr. Collins advised the committee that Mr. H's "rights" include having access to a reasonable method of communication; however, the type of communication provided is not specified. Mr. H has unlimited access to the TTY phone, which satisfies the human rights requirement.

Dr. Stout will be invited to the May LHRC meeting to further discuss Mr. H's treatment plan and the FRP decision.

The Advocates' Report was presented by Mr. Collins and Mr. Seymour. Mr. Collins noted that a new commissioner has been appointed to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. Ms. Debra Furgusen has accepted this post. There have been many changes at DBHDS Central Office in recent months, specifically in management postings. The changes are likely due to upcoming changes in behavioral health care passed by the General Assembly.

Mr. Seymour noted that there seem to be fewer "Code Purple" alarms recently. There is also a feeling of greater calm on the patient care units. The DBHDS website has been updated to a more user friendly format.

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At the request of the committee, Mr. Patrick Robertson, Risk/Safety Manager at WSH presented information regarding emergency response and ultimately evacuation of part or all of the hospital. He further explained the procedure for evacuation of patients who are in non-ambulatory restraints at the time of the emergency. Mr. Meyers posed the question of taking patients outside of the building after dark. Mr. Robertson explained that they would be moved to the nearest safe location available. He acknowledged that if this were outside of the gated area of the hospital, additional staff would be called. The goal, however, is to keep patients and staff inside the building. The building has been designed to allow for evacuation of one area of the hospital into another area. The fire walls and doors allow for several hours of safe time before a complete evacuation would be necessary.

Mr. Jim Stevens presented the unit rules for the Psycho/Social Rehabilitation Malls. He explained that groups that formerly comprised the Barber Mall have been merged into Webb and Harvest Malls. They are currently in the process of establishing additional "Sentry Rooms" for patients who need time alone or quiet time. The mall staff provide surveys to patients to establish new groups to keep the curriculum fresh. Guidelines for First Step Mall are included with the Webb Mall guidelines as it is a subset of Webb Mall. Mr. Wade made a motion to approve the unit rules. Ms. Gum seconded the motion and the committee approved by vote.

The Treatment Team of unit 2 Elm submitted an updated copy of their unit rules for committee review. The committee was pleased with the documentation and felt that this treatment team had done a very good job.

Ms. Haw was not in attendance to report for disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV).

The committee expressed no concerns in regards to the Complaint Report.

There were also no comments regarding the Extraordinary Barriers List.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Gum, the committee went into 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.

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.

The Internal Forensic Privilege Committee minutes and the Clinical Risk Management Committee minutes were reviewed without comment.

Ms. Gum reminded the committee that May is Mental Health Month. She discussed multiple events that will be taking place and encouraged the committee members to attend as well as share the information with others.

The next meeting will be held May 19th, 2014, at 12:30 p.m. in Room 1085 of the Staff Development Offices.

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

APPROVED:

Hal Meyers, Chair

Glenda D. Sheffer, LHRC Secretary

Please note: The format of the meeting minutes has changed due to information Mr. Collins received from the SHRC. We will continue with this concise format.