

# CONTRA COSTA MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

## MINUTES

April 26, 2007

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS.

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m. by Co-Chairperson Karen G. Sloma.

Commissioners Present:

Dave Kahler  
Judy McCahon  
Kathi McLaughlin  
Cynthia Miller  
Teresa Pasquini  
Daniel L. Ruxin  
Scott Singley  
Karen G. Sloma  
Diane Soto  
Barbara Whittingham

Commissioners Excused:

Bobbie Arnold  
Geet Gobind  
Bettye Randle  
Lisa Ronan

Staff Present:

Karen Shuler, Executive Assistant

Attendees:

Frank Barham, M.D., Psychiatrist  
Kitty Barnes, Aging & Adult Services  
Thomas Cloney  
Marla Ferrara, CFS  
Art Honegger, President, NAMI-CC  
Fran Kelly, Supv. Susan Bonilla's Office  
Anne Perridge-Heavey, Family Steering Committee  
Herb Putnam, NAMI-CC, CC Clubhouse, Inc., Client Network  
Franz Wasserman, M.D., Psychiatrist  
Donna Wigand, LCSW, Mental Health Director  
Janet Marshall Wilson, MHCC

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT.

- Herb Putnam gave an update on efforts to get a Clubhouse model program in Contra Costa County. They have founded a corporation as a means toward getting a local Clubhouse program. It remains a project of NAMI until they receive their IRS number. They hope to have 3 Clubhouses in the county. They plan to get 1 up and running and then seek public funding. Herb asked that this be considered as a future agenda item for the Commission.
- Janet Wilson referred to comments made at the last Commission meeting regarding the Crisis Stabilization Unit and distributed a paper explaining what Title 9 is. She stated she had mistakenly believed it was governed under Title 22 limiting stays to 24 hours maximum, but said title 9 allows longer stays.

### 3. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

- April 26 (Today): Deadline for Commissioners to sign up for CIMH Conference Transition Age Youth Collaboration "Taking It Home, Making It Happen," Friday, June 1 in Burlingame.
- April 27: An invitation to Mike Cornwall's retirement party was distributed.
- May 8: May is Mental Health Month Proclamation will be presented before the Board of Supervisors.

- May 12: NAMI Walk fundraiser starts at 9:00 a.m. at Speedway Meadow, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.
- May 16-18: California Mental Health Advocacy for Children and Youth (CMHACY) Conference at Asilomar.
- Various newspaper articles dealing with mental health issues were distributed.
- June 15: Janet Wilson announced the upcoming Family Member/Consumer Picnic. Raffle tickets will be available at the next Commission meeting.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.**

Approval of the Minutes from March 22, 2007 were approved as presented.

**M-McLaughlin; S-Kahler. Carried.**

**5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT. – Kathi McLaughlin and Karen Sloma**

1. Review of Commissioners Administrative Responsibilities.

- a. Commissioners were encouraged to be on time to all meetings.
- b. Commissioners were encouraged to respond in a timely fashion to phone calls and e-mails from the Executive Assistant.
- c. Other matters pertaining to attendance, speaking with the media and chairmanship responsibilities will be discussed at the Annual Retreat.

2. Report on site visit to CCRMC's Crisis Stabilization Unit and Psychiatric inpatient with Dr. Jeff Smith.

Teresa Pasquini, Cynthia Miller and Dave Kahler joined Dr. Smith and Miles Kramer for a tour of the facilities. Teresa wrote up a report, but it was not distributed to the Commission because it appeared to be incomplete and it wasn't clear if the report came from all the attendees are from Teresa only (Teresa said the report was hers). The Commission had additional unanswered questions regarding how the units were run. Karen said it was clear that there are issues. Lengthy discussion followed during which it was decided to repeat the site visit and come up with specific questions that will help the Commission evaluate the quality of services. Some questions/issues raised were:

- Concern over the staff not being included in dialogue about the changes.
  - Who was informed and when?
  - How many staff have left since the change?
- There is concern that people are being turned away.
  - How many are being turned away since the change?
  - For what reasons are they being turned away?
  - Are the figures different than before the changes?
- Discrepancies between what the Commission has been told and what is seen at the site visit need to be addressed.

A suggestion was made that there should be an outline for Commissioners to take on the site visits. The Executive Assistant will call Dr. Smith and arrange a 2<sup>nd</sup> site visit. In the meantime, Commissioners were asked to e-mail the Executive Assistant with additional questions/concerns prior to the site visit.

3. Entertain a motion to endorse the NAMI Walk on May 12.

**M-Singley; S-Kahler. Carried.**

4. MHC response to request from NAMI to adopt a resolution to send to the Board of Supervisors addressing the current crisis in the County's mental health system. A motion was made "That the Mental Health Commission urge the Board of Supervisors to recognize that the mental health system in Contra Costa County is in systemic crisis requiring a complete restructuring which can only be accomplished by the immediate leadership and supervision of the Board of Supervisors."

**M-Pasquini; S-Kahler. Discussion followed.**

During lengthy discussion, a suggestion was made to have a regular flow of information from the Commission to the members of the Board of Supervisors. Individual Commissioners were urged to meet with their Supervisors regularly as well. Dr. Franz Wasserman addressed the issue of the closing of the gero-psych unit as well as the loss of 20 beds recently. He mentioned discharged patients not being able to get follow-up treatment. He asked how many are being turned away and how many are being placed in the detention unit. He urged that there be an assessment, saying we needed numbers and facts. Donna explained that complete restructuring would tear apart our system. Daniel stated that we need to make suggestions for handling the crisis, and not just go in with a blanket statement. Kathi asked what steps do we want to have taken? Karen expressed her opinion that the motion needs to be backed up further. Scott mentioned the Commission is an advocate to all consumers, including those in private systems. He would want to make sure any motion included them. A change in the wording of the motion was suggested. The original motion was rescinded and a new one made: "That the Mental Health Commission urge the Board of Supervisors to recognize that the mental health system in Contra Costa County is in systemic crisis requiring a ~~complete restructuring~~ *review and possible restructuring of some services* which can only be accomplished by the immediate leadership and supervision of the Board of Supervisors."

**M-Soto; S-Kahler. By a vote of 3-7, the motion was defeated.**

Karen said we need to put more thought into the wording. We need to set the right tone with the Board of Supervisors and engender belief in the Commission as being thoughtful. Daniel feels we need to work on individual items. It was suggested this matter be forwarded to the retreat.

5. Saturday, June 30: Annual Commission Retreat Proposed Agenda Items:
  - a. MHC Oversight responsibilities with regard to the County Mental Health Systems.
  - b. Responding to the Board of Supervisors
  - c. Commissioner responsibilities
    - i. Attendance
    - ii. Media contact
    - iii. Chairmanship responsibilities
6. Response to Miles Kramer's suggestion that the MHC convene a "CCRMC Department of Psychiatry Redesign Oversight Subcommittee."  
*Carried over to next month.*

**6. REPORT: Jeff Smith, MD, Executive Director, Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers**

Dr. Smith was called to an emergency and thus was unable to attend.

**7. MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Donna Wigand, LCSW**

- Appointment of Suzanne Tavano as Deputy Mental Health Director.
  - Donna corrected this – Suzanne has been appoint as Acting Deputy Mental Health Director.
- Update on 2007 budget.
  - Donna distributed some pages from this year's budget. She said there has been discussion of cuts to the hospital and clinics, but no perceived cuts to health services.
- In discussing the Crisis Stabilization Unit, Donna gave a background on psychiatric emergency services. PES was a mental health program that would assess and give primary diagnosis and begin treatment. A couple of years ago when PES was disconnected from mental health, the state DMH and CMH looked at it and said it was the psychiatric portion of our emergency room. The emergency rooms are physician driven. Bow patients see a

physician or nurse first, and if they need ancillary (MH services, then they go to mental health. We cannot go back to the old model. Donna said it's true some people have left because of the changes. Santa Clara uses this model and it has proved to be unsuccessful financially. Any county that has this model will be financially unsuccessful. Alameda opened up a non-hospital-based CSU. The feds are secure with an offsite facility next to the hospital. Donna suggested we start looking at models in other counties. She further stated the skill-set and funding are not there for a children's psychiatric unit.

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

Due to the length of the meeting, only reports involving action items were given.

- Children's Committee – Kathi McLaughlin, Chair
  - Entertain a motion to send a letter in support of SB840, the California Health Insurance Reliability Act.
    - i. Place on next month's agenda.
  - Entertain a motion to send a letter of inquiry as to how the decision came about to have Contra Costa County Family Court cases handled by Santa Clara County legal aid, asking how this is benefiting the children; what process was used to come to this decision, and what safeguards there are.

**M-McCahon; S-McLaughlin. Carried.**

- Executive Committee
  - Entertain a motion to approve the Executive Committee's action on behalf of the Commission regarding changes in the "May is Mental Health Month" Proclamation for 2007.

**M-McLaughlin; S-McCahon.**

**Carried by a vote of 7 ayes; 1 nay, and 2 abstentions.**

- Entertain a motion to approve the Executive Committee's action on behalf of the Commission in forwarding a letter of support of AB1494, a bill introduced by Assemblyman Mark DeSaulnier to allow Chris Adams Center for Girls to become a licensed group home.

**M-McLaughlin; S-Miller. Carried with 1 abstention.**

## **9. REPORTS FROM ANCILLARY BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/ COMMITTEES.**

Due to the length of the meeting, there were no reports given.

## **10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.**

See above.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. in memory and honor of the students and staff who were killed and injured at Virginia Tech, and with sincere sympathy for the families and friends left behind.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Shuler, Executive Assistant  
Contra Costa Mental Health Commission