



Coalition Briefs

A SEMI-MONTHLY UPDATE ON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK

Fingerprinting Bill Keeps Providers in Limbo

In October the Governor signed into law a bill requiring that OMH and OMRDD licensed agencies conduct criminal background checks and fingerprinting of all prospective staff who, if hired, would have regularly unsupervised or unrestricted physical contact with clients. Chapter amendments were then negotiated without public comment or input from OMH or the provider community. Currently, the law is in effect and providers are liable while they are not in compliance.

The Div. of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) is required to provide the regulations necessary to implement the law. No form has been provided and no regulations or guidance issued on how agencies should comply with the law.

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Phil Saperia Speaks to Queens MH Council

In remarks to the Queens Mental Health Council on Dec. 4th, Phillip Saperia, Executive Director of The Coalition, talked about trends in mental health policy and funding. Using demographics developed by the NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene, he pointed to the imbalance between need and supply of mental health services and the difficulties of obtaining adequate reimbursements in a time of economic stringency.

"The "Medicaiding" of services as reflected in the proposed PROS license program is part of a national trend," he noted, not without poten-

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ACE Foundation Awards Coalition

The Coalition is pleased to be able to make grants to member agencies for the provision of services that were initiated by Project Liberty. This opportunity has been made possible by a grant from the ACE Foundation, the charitable arm of the ACE Insurance Company, which has given money world-wide but since 9/11 has focused on New York City. Last year, the foundation gave a \$1,000,000 grant to the American Red Cross Victim Relief Fund and is committed once again to assisting New Yorkers who have suffered emotional distress or trauma from September 11th.

The Coalition will re-grant to member agencies who are or have been in contract with the city to provide Project Liberty services. The majority of Project Liberty services as funded by FEMA through the NYS Office of Mental Health will end Dec. 31st, 2003 after several iterations and extensions. The grant will be used to support agencies who will provide September 11th-related mental health services in areas demonstrating a continuing need. An emphasis will be placed on providers that serve low income neighborhoods with complex multi-cultural needs.

The application was distributed to Coalition member agencies last week and is due December 16th. There will be a ceremony in New York City on December 22nd with the grant recipients and elected officials. World Vision will be present as the other 2003 grant recipient. For more information, please contact Patricia Gallo Goldstein at 212-742-1600x106 or patgg@cvmha.org.

Coalition Calendar

Committee on Co-Occurring Psychiatric and Addictive Disorders Meeting

December 8, 2003 3:00PM

Technology Committee Meeting

December 9, 2003 9:30AM

Children's Committee Meeting

December 15, 2003 10:00AM

Housing/Residential Services Committee

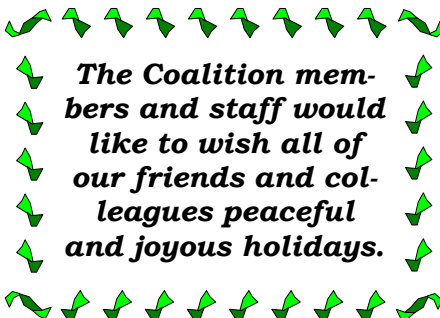
December 15, 2003 3:00PM

Video Premier at Coalition Annual Meeting and Holiday Celebration

The Coalition will premier its new video, "Empowering Lives Through Community Mental Health: 5 Stories," narrated by Mike Wallace, at a special annual membership meeting and holiday celebration for staff, membership and invited guests.

The celebration will take place on Thursday, December 18th, 2003 at the UJA Federation, 130 East 59th Street (between Lexington & Park Avenues), 2nd Floor, from 4:30PM-7:00PM.

Coalition members will hold annual elections at this time. To RSVP, please email Juliana Cools at jcools@cvmha.org.



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VESID's Supported Employment RFAs

The VESID bidders' conference for the recently released RFA was held in New York City on Nov. 19th. Answers to questions providers submitted to VESID are now posted on VESID's website: www.vesid.nysed.gov/supportedemployment/. Details regarding applications due December 16th can also be found at the web site.

In 2002 the Work Exchange undertook a Cost Analysis Project to determine the actual cost of members' supported employment programs. The purpose of this study was to provide information that would help agencies prepare knowledgeable responses to the previous VESID RFA. Project results may assist mental health providers in preparing a response to the current RFA. Should applicants be interested in receiving additional information please contact Alysia Pascaris at the Work Exchange.

The Ways to Work Project

Agencies involved in the Ways to Work demonstration project with the NY Work Exchange met with David Lynde from the NH Dartmouth Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center on Nov. 20th. To examine how PROS may impact vocational initiatives within CDT Programs, the Work Exchange and the five demonstration sites - Brooklyn Bureau for Community Service, JBFCS, Postgraduate Center, Riverdale Mental Health Association, and Transitional Services for New York, Inc.- were joined by David Bucciferro, from the State Office of Mental Health (SOMH) and Susan Friedlander, NYC Field Office SOMH.

Current service definitions and proposed PROS service definitions were discussed in detail, as well as Medicaid language for reimbursement. David Lynde, who is providing technical assistance for this project focused on the New Hampshire Dartmouth 'treatment plan' model, reviewing strategies for documentation of consumer goals, objectives, and interventions.

Videos Available on Consumers and Work

The Work Exchange has obtained two videos that may be of interest to providers offering employment and/or clinical services. Sponsored by the Dartmouth Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center and Johnson and Johnson, the videos are entitled, "It's My Business, Partners" and "3 Faces, 3 Lives". Both videos are 10-15 minutes long and portray consumers working in businesses in Maryland, Connecticut and Vermont. They demonstrate the benefits of collaboration between businesses and supported employment teams and the therapeutic gains through work for consumers of mental health services. Individuals interested in viewing these tapes, please contact Michele Fontaine or Alysia Pascaris at the NY Work Exchange.

Focus Groups for Recipients of Mental Health Services to Discuss PROS

In partnership with Howie T. Harp, our first focus group was held at 90 Broad Street on November 24th. A total of 18 consumers attended; participation was substantial regarding the proposed change of service delivery under PROS. Comments will be analyzed after following the second scheduled group at Howie T. Harp on December 4th. □

New Head of NYS Council

The Coalition enthusiastically welcomes Lauri Cole, the new Executive Director of the NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare. Lauri is a long-time friend and colleague who has been in the community mental health sector for many years. She is a certified social worker, previously of Association for Community Living (ACL) and worked most recently, as the Executive Director of the Council on Homeless Policies.

We are fortunate to have Lauri as a fellow advocate voice in Albany and look forward to a strong collaboration with the NYS Council. We wish Lauri the best of luck and success in her new role. □

Fingerprinting

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The Coalition sent a letter to DCJS outlining our frustration with this law and the inability to comply with regulations that do not exist. The Coalition will keep informed on this issue and follow-up with DCJS, the Legislature and the Governor's Office. □

Saperia

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tial problems of access for consumers and new headaches for community mental health providers. The Coalition and other advocates are engaged in dialogue with the NYS Office of Mental Health and with NYC's Div. of Mental Hygiene to identify and minimize barriers.

Calling for watchfulness and involvement from the luncheon attendees, Saperia remarked that "some of the other trends in mental health and substance abuse, policy and funding, will present new dilemmas to stakeholders and may impose burdens on both recipients and providers of care." □

Correction

In the 10/28/03 edition of *Briefs*, an incorrect web address was listed for the, "Prevalence Study Released by City Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene." The correct site is: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/pdf/mh/mh-2003prevalence.pdf>. □