

VTMHCA Annual Meeting
June 12, 2009
Capital Plaza

Legislative report: Pam Sweeney

- Plan to talk to legislators about health care reform this summer and how important mental health care is to overall health care plan.
- The legislature settled on a 2% decrease for Medicaid reimbursements following the Governor's recommendation for a 4% decrease. This compromise was largely due to the efforts of a joint initiative from the Social Workers, Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors and our lobbyist, Pam Sweeney. Thanks for your vigilance.
- There was not much policy work this year with the emphasis being on the budget and cuts to agencies.
- S.114 (mental health regulation bill) led to changes in Rule 10 (this comprises the regulations for managed care activities and requirements) passed in 2008. These new rules will be reviewed by the Legislative Rules Committee (LCAR) before becoming law this summer.
- Magellan and Cigna were both fined \$10,000 for including names of clinicians on panel lists that were unavailable or no longer in practice, i.e. "phantom panels."
- Blue Print for Health: The legislative group met with a number of leaders: Craig Jones, Hunt Blair, health care reform deputy, and Susan Bessio current head of OVHA to discuss how mental health services need integrating into the state's Plan.
- Website: <http://healthvermont.gov/admin/legislature/documents/VTBlueprint2007.pdf>
For Blue Print for Health.

Reviewed minutes from May 8, approved.

Legislative Report: Don

Don thanked everyone for contacting their legislators and is encouraging us to continue this effort and continue to provide financial contributions for our lobbying efforts.

Act 142 Rule Making this summer will look at which codes to reimburse for. This is an accessibility issue because if we can't offer extended sessions for families and couples, (90847) or individuals (90808) then we might not be following best practices. As it is we are not free to make these clinical decision based on need and best practices.

Don also encouraged us to invite colleagues to join VTMHCA.

Act 129 Report: Scott

Scott reported on his attendance at Act 129 meetings. (Thanks Scott, it's a steep learning curve!) He said it seems that access to care and accountability of the insurance companies is seen as a legitimate part of the process. Scott gave a brief overview of the legislation and process that led to the formation of Act 129:

1997: Original Parity Law

2000: Act 129 which brought representatives from all of the mental health disciplines together with regulators and insurance companies to review and assess the industry along specific criteria.

2004: Any Willing Provider bill of 2004 which opened panels
2008: S.114 Mental health regulation reform

Scott mentioned that he hopes the focus will turn toward the reimbursement issue as it applies to obstacles to care and that BISHCA seems to be “getting” the need to address this issue.

Treasurer’s Report: Barbara read the financial report including a list of contributions that VTMHCA made to various organizations.

Conference Committee: Caryn

Conferences are an important revenue source but relying on them is challenging and somewhat frustrating and getting more difficult due to the increasing competition from other organizations and training offerings. We have formed an agreement with the MSWs to advertize their conferences as they will for us. We had a discussion about what sorts of changes we might make to our current conference format and offerings that might be more engaging and experiential as one member mentioned the VT Association for Psychoanalytic Studies seems to do. Someone also suggested that we include more social or networking opportunities. We agreed to take up these suggestions.

Break out session: We broke out into several small groups to discuss various concerns: increasing membership, expanding the presence of mental health issues in the local media, i.e. Letters to editors. Suggestions such as hosting a regional conference, revisiting the practice of meeting with students in mental health graduate studies programs to promote membership, clinician mentoring programs, using Facebook to promote VTMHCA and counseling in general were among some of the ideas folks generated. Each group collected ideas from discussion with the plan to revisit these suggestions either in committees or in the general membership.

Elections were held for offices.

Barbara Nielsen will continue to be treasurer, Scott Earisman will continue to be the Act 129 representative, Evy Smith will be new secretary, Shawn Thompson-Snow, Deb Sargent, Dianne Coffey, Kraye Grymonnt, and Don Rhoades will remain on the board, Diane Tetrault will be president-elect with Heather Pierce as president and Caryn Feinberg continues to be our trusty executive director. Thanks to all who have volunteered and continue to do so to provide leadership to our professional organization.

Submitted by Diane Tetrault