

Vermont Mental Health Counselors Board Retreat Minutes

November 6, 2009

Board Members Present: Heather, Don, Krave, Diane, Scott, Shawn, Caryn, Deb, Barbara (Barbara taking minutes for beginning of the meeting)

9/11/09 Board Meeting Minutes: It was noted that Caryn's name was not on the list of attending members. Minutes were corrected and approved.

Act 129/Legislative Report: Scott reported that there is no legislation that we are directly involved with though the legislature will be working out the details of the budget which will likely include cuts to mental health care services. Issues surrounding reimbursement continue to be addressed. The Council (monthly, 1st Thursday group) has been meeting with Democratic gubernatorial candidates and hopes to have some influence in educating these candidates on the issues that concern us. We will not be hiring a lobbyist for this session, but will want to have some way of being informed of issues we may have to act on if they arise. Diane will find out who might be an appropriate person already in the legislature to do this for us by checking with Alex, at the VPA. Don will contact Pam Sweeney, our former lobbyist, to let her know that we will not need her services.

The results of the 2009 Vermont Healthcare Survey are available on our website. It was noted that 55% of the respondents were mental health providers. BISCHA will decide what steps to take as a result of the survey. (Can we make recommendations regarding what to do with that information?)

Scott described recent contact with the Vermont Workers Center and was given the go-ahead by the board to continue bringing mental health insurance to the table as they advocate for universal health care.

Scott also presented his letter on the "state of the profession" for board review. This will be done at a future meeting with an eye to how the information can be used to support other matters our organization is dealing with.

The board unanimously voted to sign onto the letter written by David Fassler to Michael Hartman urging a reconsideration of the decision by Rutland Regional Medical Center to purchase health insurance for its employees which does not offer parity for mental health treatment and substance abuse disorders.

Finally, a discussion was held on requesting Steve Kappell, author of the "report card" for BISHCA, to answer more questions using the results of the study, particularly creating a more accurate and thorough CPT code comparison. This would involve paying him for this service. At this time the amount is unknown and more information is needed.

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Treasurer's Report/Budget Discussion: Barbara presented the current financial status of VTMHCA and an overall look at the last fiscal year. Raising conference and membership fees were discussed, but no decisions were made on changes.

- The board voted to pay for the President's attendance at the AMHCA annual conference as well as the Leadership Conference, transportation and hotel. VTMHCA will also cover the expense of the President-Elect to attend the Leadership Conference, transportation and hotel. These same expenses will be covered for the Executive Director every other year. However, all of these provisions depend on the health of the budget so decisions will continue to be discretionary.
- VTMHCA sponsored conferences will continue to offered at half-price to board members, unless they choose to pay more.
- We reviewed the new policy between the Social Workers and VTMHCA to promote each others' conference and to offer member discounts to both. It appears to be successful enough to continue.
- We also discussed the possibility of promoting our conferences in local papers, ie. 7 Days, TA/Rutland. Krave offered to help create an 8 1/2 x 11 form (PDF) that someone could fill out online to help with conference registration.

Review of Bylaws: Diane took minutes for the remainder of the meeting.

Article V: Board of Directors—Section 9

We removed "or directors" from this section referring to officers "or directors" receiving payment for his/her services as we do pay the director.

Article VI: Officers

While reviewing this article we discovered that we had changed our election cycle leaving the President in a two year position rather than one year. It should be that the president participates in a three year cycle as president elect, president, and finally, immediate past president.

We discussed the need to begin to planning for the next elections at the June annual meeting. We discussed having something written on the website about what the organization is doing for clinicians as a way to encourage both enrollment in the organization and interest in becoming board members. **Diane and Heather volunteered to do this together.** A nomination committee will be developed a the next meeting (**Jan. 15, 9:30 – 11:30**)

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Article VIII – Committees – Section 1.

The responsibility of the Act 129 representative will be added to the legislative chair's responsibilities.

Job Descriptions:

We will include job descriptions for officers and the executive director in a collection of procedures and forms to be included in a manual that Heather is assembling. We reviewed and made changes to those available at the meeting.

Heather will "flesh-out" the WEB coordinator job description.

Membership Benefits: We also make some changes to the membership benefits page.

Discussion of legal counsel for mental health counselors:

We discussed the need for occasional legal advice/counsel regarding client cases. We agreed to gather information about lawyers who might be willing to take on mental health cases, exploring NAMI, Caryn volunteered to contact Eileen Blackwood, Scott will look into APA professional regulation board, Heather did contact the VT. Bar Association and will research the web.

Next meeting:
January 15, 2010
9:30 – 11:30
Kraye's house