

Macon County Mental Health Task Force
February 26, 2010

Members present – Sarah Altman, Ronnie Beale, Jim Bottomley, Jim Bruckner, Rhonda Cox, Jane Kimsey, Paula Ledford, Kathy McGaha, Mike Neidig, Andy Shields and Martin Wadewitz

Guest – Julie Durham-Defee

Approval of Minutes – Kathy McGaha made a motion to approve the minutes. Jane Kimsey 2nd the motion, with a unanimous vote for approval.

Action Items:

Jim Bruckner welcomed the task force members to today's meeting. Mr. Bruckner asked everyone to introduce themselves and tell what organization they represented.

Julia Durham-Defee passed out a handout on **Referral Data for Macon REC: August 2009 – January 2010**. Ms. Durham-Defee said the number of referrals was 243 with 211 attending their first appointment. Ms. Durham-Defee said this was a good response rate at 87%. Ms. Durham-Defee also reviewed the number that met SAIOP criteria (21), the number of referrals that were made to SAIOP (10), the number that met criteria for CST (9), the number of referrals that were made to CST (6), and the number of referrals made to other local providers (8).

Rhonda Cox informed the task force members that Smoky Mountain Center is in the process of transferring its mental health services to private companies. Ms. Cox said this is in response to the latest overhaul of the state's mental health provider network. Ms. Cox said SMC is currently in the process of taking requests for proposals to assume responsibility for the Adult Recovery Unit at Balsam Center, the psychiatric walk-in and outpatient services at Haywood Regional Medical Center, and mobile crisis services in the seven western most counties of North Carolina.

Rhonda Cox said the Community Stakeholders Meetings would start in early April. Ms. Cox said everyone would be notified.

Ronnie Beale asked Rhonda Cox about the status of the Medicaid cuts on mental health services. Ms. Cox stated that the Medicaid situation would probably get worse before it got better. Ms. Cox explained that under the new rules for mental health service providers that they must have national accreditation, a full-time psychiatrist on staff, and take on additional administrative duties to bill for Medicaid.

Andy Shields next passed out a handout titled **Macon County Sheriff's Office Transport Report**. Mr. Shields stated that the Sheriff's Office transported the largest

number of involuntary mental health commitments since they started keeping records in 2006 on these statistics. Mr. Shields said the number of commitments rose from 128 in 2008 to 152 in 2009. Mr. Shields said the average time spent for a commitment process is 17.35 hours and the longest commitment took a total time of 130 hours.

Andy Shields also announced that Macon County will be sending two officers to a law enforcement training program for a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). Ms. Shields explained that CIT is a community partnership working to provide support and available regional resources to assist front-line law enforcement officers as they provide care for the mentally ill citizens and citizens with severe development disabilities who are in a situation of crisis.

Ronnie Beale announced that an Evergreen Foundation Liaison Committee has been formed. Mr. Beale reminded the task force members that the Evergreen Foundation is the nonprofit arm of the Smoky Mountain Center for Mental Health. Mr. Beale said their next meeting would be sometime in March.

Jim Bruckner said some questions and comments have been received on the make-up of the Mental Health Task Force. Mr. Beale said this issue could be best addressed once the changes currently in process (the SMC divestiture of services) are completed. The task force members agreed to look at this topic again once this divestiture has been completed and the new entity is named that will handle these services.

Paula Ledford said enough money was available for the rest of this school year for community support services to the schools. Ms. Ledford stated at this point there was no money available for next year.

Pam Baker with Family Mental Health spoke to the task force members. Ms. Baker explained the situation small local providers, like her, were in with the upcoming SMC divestiture of services.

Veronica d'Entremont, with Easter Seals and the Turning Point, next spoke. Ms. d'Entremont briefly explained both of these programs and the impact they have. Ms. d'Entremont asked if this task force would benefit with being associated with these organizations. Mr. Beale suggested that Ms. d'Entremont meet with Jim Bruckner, Jane Kimsey and possibly Rhonda Cox to further discuss this.

Debbie Roberts with NAMI announced an upcoming 12-week class for relatives and friends of people suffering from mental illness will be offered in Franklin starting in mid-March. Ms. Roberts stated there is no charge for these classes and she can be contacted for further information.

The date for the next meeting of the Mental Health Task Force will be determined at a later date.

Minutes recorded by Rhonda Blanton