

**SERVICE AREA 15
MENTAL HEALTH
FLORIDA LOCAL ADVOCACY COUNCIL**

*Serving the residents of Charlotte, Collier,
Glades, Hendry and Lee County*

**Fort Myers Regional Service Center
2295 Victoria Avenue
Fort Myers, Florida
June 5, 2006
Minutes**

Members Present:

Stan Appelbaum , Chair
Jane Bevan
Toni DeFinis
Jim Hogue
Kathy Stick
Kellie Elders
Betty Busbee, SAC

Members Absent:

Leslie Swanson, Vice-Chair
Carol Hayes, 2nd Vice-Chair
Lyn Carlson
Shara Weaver

Guests:

Janet Eustes, Ruth Cooper Center
Michael McNally, Ruth Cooper Center
Joy Gregory, Ruth Cooper Center
Pamela Baker, SAMH
Mike Sedgwick, SAMH
Marcie Gillis, SAMH
Patrick Hendry, SAMH
James Bratt, FACT Ft Myers
Peter Schlel, FACT Collier
Betty Phillips, Coastal Behavioral FACT

Staff Present:

Penny Vallario, LAC staff

Call To Order & Introductions: Mr. Appelbaum called the June 5, 2006 Meeting to order at 10:05 a.m... Introductions were made and a quorum was established.

Agenda : Council members approved the agenda.

Minutes: The minutes for the 5/1/06 meeting were approved and signed.

Receiving Center Reports

Ruth Cooper Center:

- Janet Eustes announced that she will be leaving Lee Mental Health; June 30th will be her last day. The new CEO, Nancy Langman will be starting on 7/1/06. Ms. Eustes stated that Ms. Langman is service oriented with medical staff expertise. Ms. Eustes thanked everyone for their support during her tenure at Lee Mental Health. Mr. Appelbaum and Ms. Bevan shared their gratitude for Ms. Eustes and the work she has done over the past seven years. Ms. Bevan commented on the positive change in staff attitude at Lee Mental Health.
- Joy Gregory of Ruth Cooper, foster care, introduced herself as having 20 years experience with foster children. She explained that there is a desperate need for placement for the 430 children Ruth Cooper currently serves. There are 68 foster homes in Charlotte and Lee counties. There are no facilities for these children and placement has become critical. Case managers now have caseloads with 50 children and it should be 15-20. The children are provided mental health counseling, however, there are no specialized foster homes currently. So far this year foster care has recruited 25 foster families and their goal is 30. Stan asked Ms. Gregory if she could be granted a wish, what would it be? Ms. Gregory wishes for a Children's Home facility for 12-15 kids.

Mr. Appelbaum responded to Ms. Gregory's plight by suggesting that work needs to be done through the lead agency, Children's Network. Mr. Appelbaum asked all present for volunteers to be a part of a work group to address the foster children crisis. Kathy Stick, Toni, DeFinis, Kellie Elders, and Shara Weaver volunteered for the group.

FACT Team Update

Mr. Bratt (Ft. Myers PSI FACT)

- Mr. Bratt stated that he had applied for membership on the council. Mr. Appelbaum asked for a motion to accept Mr. Bratt's application. Toni DeFinis made the motion to accept and Kathy Stick seconded the motion. The council voted unanimously to accept Mr. Bratt to the council.

Betty Phillips (Lee County Coastal Behavioral FACT)

- Ms. Phillips spoke about her recent trip to Chicago, Illinois for the National Act Conference which was focused on client centered issues. There was a presentation on Disaster Preparedness and the presenter was actually from Florida. Ms. Phillips said the conference experience made her realize the great value of leadership.

District Program Office Mental Health Update

Pam Baker reported that the office just finished with contracts and that all the contracts are for 3 years as the state recommended. Ms. Baker stated that there are new funds this year for substance abuse which is the lowest funded program in the state.

Ms. Baker said that the RCC CAT team project is one-quarter funded currently. They will be able to serve 12 children and families.

Ms. Baker also reported the development of a new forensic service that will provide therapeutic family care for those clients who have conditional releases and are found incompetent to proceed. In essence, it will provide adult foster homes from referrals generated by Ruth Cooper Center. There are ten clients currently in homes in Lee County. Comparatively, the beds provided are \$56. per day compared to Manatee Glens at \$291 per day. There is a position associated with this new service.

Mike Sedgewick has recently monitored Riverside and Ruth Cooper Center. He is in the process of monitoring Charlotte Mental Health and David Lawrence.

Forensics :

Marcie Gillis and Peter Schlel reported the process of transition is ongoing at PSF Collier and is scheduled for July 1. An RFP is out for North Fort Myers and Fort Myers. Bids are due by June 13th. There has been a meeting with the Mental Resource Center. Mr. Schlel has been able to maintain his staff.

Jane Bevan stated that she became involved in the CIT training program. Ms. Bevan reported that sixteen offices have had the five-day training and it has been helpful out in the community. Another training will be taking place in November or December.

Ms. Bevan informed all that Lee County is applying for a grant to ensure that evaluations and treatment are done timely for those clients in jail.

Baker Act Reviews: If you are unable to attend a Baker Act, please call.

Chair's Report:

- Mr. Appelbaum explained that the Children's Network is currently owned by Camelot and that it will be breaking away from Camelot. A new contract with Children's is needed and the governor needs to sign off on it. A peer review group will be meeting on June 15 to make sure that Children's is ready to negotiate the contract. The anticipated date for the new contract would be July 1. They are in the process of selecting a local board now.
- Mr. Appelbaum announced the Bob McHarry is now our District Administrator.

Statewide Advocacy Council Report:

Ms Busbee informed the council of the following:

- Ms. Busbee asked the MP council to spread the word the MH council needs a Charlotte member.
- Ms. Busbee inquired with the council as to the intentions of Leslie Swanson in lieu of her absenteeism. Mr. Appelbaum would like to retain Ms. Swanson through the monitorings of Children's Network and Family Preservation.
- Ms. Busbee reported that House and Senate bills that if passed late in the legislative session, and signed by the governor, would limit SAC/LAC jurisdiction to four agencies; DCF, APD, AHCA, and DOEA. This bill also allows the governor, at his discretion, to terminate a SAC member's term before the 4-year term expiration. The qualifications for the executive director would also change. There are supposed to be agreements made

between SAC and state agencies and this is to be done by June 30. These agreements are not to include signed consents.

Monitoring: No facilities were monitored this month.

Old Business: There was no old business discussed.

New Business:

Mr. Appelbaum asked members to personally get with Penny to take care of complaints that are already in process or closed.

Staff Support Report:

- ◆ Jane Bevan inquired about her hours not being logged. She currently has 134 hours. The staff member, Penny Vallario apologized for the important tasks that are not getting accomplished due to lack of staff in this LAC office.
- ◆ Mr. Appelbaum inquired the status of the coffee supply and asked the council to pitch in for the coffee fund. Twenty-five dollars was collected.

CLOSED SESSION:

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held at 2295 Victoria Avenue at the Fort Myers Regional Service Center at 10:00 a.m. on July 3, 2006 in room #110.

Submitted by

Penny Vallario
LAC Staff

Stan Appelbaum
Chairperson

In order to ensure a quorum, members should contact Stan Appelbaum if they will be unable to attend the next meeting.