

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. SAC's Presentation at CAFE'

CAFÉ was a great success for both SAC and LAC members and those in attendance. SAC's presentation was "What To Do When You're Denied Services". This presentation taught consumers and families how to advocate for services and the process for requesting and going to a hearing. As a result of this presentation SAC was successful in helping two families that attended the workshop in getting the needed services for their children shortly afterwards. SAC will be doing a presentation on HIPAA in 2004.

2. Psychotropic Drug Investigation

From 2001 to 2003, SAC continued to investigate the use of psychotropic drugs in foster children with specific concentration on children under the age of five. The full report on the investigation was completed in July of 2003. The Council also released a report on problems discovered during the investigation, related to foster care records. As a result of these reports, the Governor's Office requested a review be conducted of those children on psychotropic medication.

3. Operation Spot Check (Jacksonville)

The LACs in the Jacksonville area have been participating with the Office of the State's Attorney in "Operation Spot Check" to clean up facilities that are not up to standards and or codes of the state, city, or county. All of the facilities visited to date have been assisted living facilities, of which 11 have been closed. All of the closures have related to some type of violation, which places the residents in a life-threatening manner. The LACs continue to participate with the Operation Spot Check.

4. New LACs Now Operating

SAC approved new LACs in Perry/Madison and Orlando/Brevard. Both are up and going strong. There is one council that has been approved and should be operational in the next year. It is in the Florida Keys.

5. Standards and Training

SAC's Standards and Training Committee during the past year (FY 2002-2003) updated and modernized the training program for both new members, local council officer training, HIPAA and Train the Trainer.

6. Florida Mental Health Institute's Study on State Hospital Continuity of Care

SAC requested that AHCA fund a study on the continuity of care for clients that are discharged from state hospitals. This report was completed and released in FY 2001-2002. The study raised many questions on the effectiveness of community care and a follow up study is being conducted during FY 2002-2003.

7. "Marchman Act" Survey

The SAC conducted a statewide survey of the Florida County Sheriff's jails to monitor the use of section 397.6772 Florida Statutes, also known as the "Marchman Act." This survey found that the Marchman Act was being used very little at the present time by law enforcement. A large percentage of the Sheriff's Departments reported that they were utilizing the use of hospitals and alcohol and drug centers versus county jails when faced with citizens who were under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the point of being a danger to themselves or to the public.

8. Points of Light Award

Betty Busbee, Florida Statewide Council Chair Emeritus, and Dr. Harold Turner, Service Area 12 Local Advocacy Council member, were both recipients of Governor Bush's Points of Light award this past year. Ms. Busbee received the award for the councils' outstanding advocacy work. Dr. Turner received the award for his outstanding work in providing dental services to the developmentally disabled. Both attended the Governor's reception in their honor.

9. Statewide HIPAA Training Program

The SAC developed and implemented a statewide HIPAA training program to insure that all members would be in compliance by April 1, 2003. Then Vice Chair, Craig Rappel, of the law firm Rappel and Rappel in Vero Beach, provided the training program to both the Florida Statewide and Local Advocacy Councils.

10. Landmark Learning Center Closed

The SAC is continuing to monitor the closing of Landmark Learning Center, a developmental disabilities state institution located in Miami. A statewide council member was assigned to monitor the closing of this institution and during this past year the Department of Children and Family Services has addressed all of the councils' concerns. The moving of clients into the community has gone very well to date.

11. Long-Term Care Ombudsman Council

The SAC and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Council executed an interagency agreement as required by statute to eliminate duplication of efforts in 2003.

12. First Health In Compliance

The SAC accepted an appeal related to prior authorization of children's mental health services by First Health. Based on the contract between First Health and the Agency of Health Care Administration prior authorization was to be accomplished within 24 hours of a request from a provider of children's mental health services. Providers were experiencing delays for authorization in excess of 30 days. When this issue was brought to the attention of the Agency for Health Care Administration, action was taken to bring First Health into compliance with their contract. First Health at the last follow up by the SAC was maintaining the 24-hour requirement.

13. Mental Health Institutional Rules

The DCF Mental Health Program Office has completed its draft rule and held formal rule making hearings. It is anticipated that this rule will be finalized during FY 2003-2004 after 14 years of pressuring DCF to promulgate rules.

