

**Professional Advisory Committee
of the
Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services
New Jersey Department of Human Services
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Location: Trenton

Date: November 16, 2012

Attendance: Tony Comerford, Benjamin John Gonzales, Connie Greene, Jean Hennon, Jan Krolack, Diane Litterer, Susan Neshin, Alan Oberman, Jass Pelland, Michael Santillo, Barbara Schlichting, Sue Seidenfeld, Maria Varnavis-Robinson, Linda Voorhis, Donald Weinbaum, Ernestine Winfrey

State Staff: Roger Borichewski, Andrea Connor, Elizabeth Conte, Mollie Greene, Nancy Hopkins, Jude Iheoma, Lynn Kovich, Raquel Mazon Jeffers, Dona Sinton

PAC Business

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Jass Pelland at 10:00 am. The September 2012 minutes were approved.

Overview of PAC

The committee welcomed new PAC members. An overview of the PAC's ground rules and committee schedule was discussed. An announcement was made that a sub-committee needs to be established for the purpose of reviewing and/or revising the PAC By-Laws.

DMHAS Announcements

Lynn Kovich announced that Raquel Mazon Jeffers, who six years ago became the head of the former Division of Addiction Services, resigned as Deputy Director of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Raquel will be joining The Nicholson Foundation as the Director for Health Integration. During the 10 years that Raquel served in various roles at the Department, she has been dedicated to the care of consumers, and has continued to promote and implement program innovation.

Lynn noted that Raquel provided “strong leadership” for the “behavioral health components of the Medicaid Comprehensive Waiver and in the areas of service integration both for mental health and substance abuse and with primary care and

behavioral health." Raquel will be with the DMHAS throughout most of November during the transition.

Discussion/Presentations

Impact of Hurricane Sandy:

- On October 26, 2012, all New Jersey Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) were notified of the impending hurricane and were instructed to use the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) extranet system to request exception for take home medication. OTPs were further instructed to implement their Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that ensures that their organizations do not experience disruption in any of its essential operations. Part of this plan includes client notification and information regarding closing and options for clients to dial the DMHAS emergency hotline 2-1-1.
- As part of the Division's emergency preparedness plan, the Division developed the Guest and Emergency Management System (GEMS). GEMS is a centralized, web-based computer system that interfaces with an OTP's clinical management methadone dosing software system through an upload process, to eliminate additional data entry regarding dosage and take home privileges. It is designed to interface with the New Jersey Substance Abuse Monitoring System (NJSAMS). Since the GEMS is part of the Division's emergency preparedness plan, OTPs were instructed to ensure that clients information were uploaded to the GEMS before the Hurricane.
- Overall, the Division reported that the emergency preparedness plan was effective and well executed. One of the things the Division will need to follow up is to ensure that all OTP's upload their clients' medication information on the GEMS. The Division will also need to streamline the reporting requirements and the 2-1-1 protocols.
- As of the date of the New Jersey Opioid Treatment Sandy Hurricane Disaster Implementation Report on November 13, 2012, all Opioid Treatment programs in New Jersey are in full operation.

Update On Affordable Care Act (ACA) - Post Election

- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) remains intact after potentially having two opportunities to be dismantled this year by the Supreme Court and the Presidential election. Governor Christie will wait until the new federal deadline of December 16, 2012 before deciding what kind of health-insurance exchange New Jersey will use to implement the Federal ACA. One of the key requirements of ACA is a requirement that everyone purchases insurance, and that state's are expected to set up a health insurance exchange. The exchanges are online marketplaces that allow individuals and employees of small businesses to shop

for and purchase coverage and find out whether they are eligible for federal subsidies. Following the election, several states declared they would not set up their own exchanges. New Jersey and six other states have not decided which course they will take.

- Post-election, the harsh reality of the fiscal cliff and health reform loom large with the following: (1) the economy is teetering on the brink of slow growth versus a deepening of the crisis; (2) Income inequality is wider than ever; (3) People who are dependent on SSI, Medicaid and federal programs face cutbacks, and (4) the post-Sandy Storm costs will severely strain state and local budgets.
- The next issues could come from Congressional action to limit ACA and budget restrictions, and from the lack of support at the state level. The issues of access to and coverage of health insurance will remain major issues for decades. As health care costs consume 20 percent or more of the economy, the debate about how much is enough versus the outcomes of care and health status of all Americans will be an ongoing struggle between good ideas and straight-out cost savings.
- Exchanges Timetable:
 - After November 6, 2012; HHS will provide a date for publishing the rules for the health insurance exchanges
 - Based on the rules, insurers determine the plans to be offered and establish their rates
 - States approve health plans' rates and forms
 - States certify health plans and place these certified plans on their exchanges
 - October 1, 2013: Exchanges begin open enrollment

DMHAS is welcoming feedback regarding the topics discussed above.

The remainder of the meeting gave Raquel Mazon Jeffers an opportunity to say farewell to the membership as she embarks on her new role outside of State government.

Next meeting January 18, 2013