The Berkeley/Albany Mental Health Commission
Adopted Minutes

2640 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Berkeley, CA 94704

Regular Meeting
February 27, 2002

Members Present: Kathleen Gresher, Sandi Harrington, Nancy Gagnon, Maudelle Shirek, Lorraine Taggart, Edward Webster, James Rinaldi, Susan Isles, Artensia Barry

Members Absent: Catherine Auman

Staff Present: Harvey Tureck, Rebecca Kahan, Audrey Mehl, Carlos Morales

Guests: Katherine deRaadt, Paul Clermont

1. CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by Chair Kathleen Gresher.

A. Approval of Agenda and Minutes
The agenda was modified to address New Business before Old Business. Harvey Tureck also requested that a portion of the Director’s report be moved to immediately after “Announcements.” Minutes from January were modified to reflect that Councilmember/Commissioner Maudelle Shirek was absent, and to reflect that the California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH) training in Livermore will take place in April. Minutes and agenda approved with the above changes (M/S/C Rinaldi/Gagnon).

B. Public Comment
- Harvey Tureck distributed a research paper entitled “Schizophrenia: Proposed Cause and Cure;” the author had expressed interest in presenting this paper to the Commission but was unable to attend the meeting.
- Paul Clermont announced that his presence at recent meetings of the Mental Health Commission (MHC) is at the behest of Susan Isles, and that he has submitted an application for membership on the MHC.

C. Announcements
- Kathleen Gresher announced that the election-related vision statement included in the February packet was not an accurate reflection of her hand-written original, and distributed the original statement for review by Commissioners.
- Lorraine Taggart announced her involvement with Protection Advocacy, Incorporated (PAI), an advocacy group for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. She further inquired about the appropriateness of conducting a focus group for clients of the Drop-In Café for purposes of determining awareness of/interest in this resource among Berkeley Mental Health (BMH) clients. Harvey Tureck suggested consulting with the clinical staff of the Drop-In Café.
- Kathleen Gresher announced her appreciation for all Commissioners during her tenure as Chair, and expressed gratitude for the hard work and commitment contributed by all.
2. CHAIRS REPORT
   A. Chair’s Report – Commissioner transportation
      Chair Kathleen Gresher expressed concern for Commissioners lacking transportation: in past months, some Commissioners have risked their personal safety by walking home for lack of a ride. Commissioner transportation will be discussed at the beginning of each meeting to assure that everyone who needs a ride will have one.

   B. Client’s Report
      Susan Isles presented an article in the February 21, 2002 edition of the San Francisco Chronicle that discusses the financial problems of the Medi-Cal system and proposed potential cuts to mental health services. She also noted that another Chronicle article dated February 25, 2002 discussed Governor Davis’ pleas for Federal assistance regarding Medicaid. This is a serious issue that may have implications for mental health services in Berkeley; Kathleen Gresher remarked that consumers may expect far less money for essential services and suggested that the Commission maintain awareness of future developments.

   C. Commissioner’s Ad-Hoc Projects
      1. Wellness and Recovery: The Wellness and Recovery Ad-Hoc Committee met prior to the Commission meeting on February 27, 2002, and will be meeting next month at the same time. Issues discussed at this meeting included: ideas of what “Wellness and Recovery” means; opportunities for BMH clients to access services at the clinic and in the community; visiting other self-help groups/programs in other counties. BMH has begun facilitating the first Wellness and Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Groups.

      2. Public Relations: The Public Relations Ad-Hoc Committee discussed plans to focus on “May is Mental Health Month.” Meetings of the MHC are again reported in the Berkeley Daily Planet.

3. LIAISON REPORTS
   A. Council Report
      Maudelle Shirek reported that many controversial ideas are being considered by the City Council at this time. The Housing Element of the City of Berkeley Master Plan has been passed and the Council is now considering issues of redistricting. She also reported that the recent media attention on the City of Berkeley policy regarding American flags on fire trucks resulted from an objection to very large flags, not to the flags themselves. The City Council will soon be considering and voting on the budget for the next Fiscal Year.

   B. California Network of Mental Health Clients (CNMHC)
      Nancy Gagnon announced that she has been reporting on the activities of the California Network of Mental Health Clients, and regional meetings that include the ACNMHC and the Berkeley chapter. No meetings have occurred since the last report.

   C. California Association of Local Mental Health Boards and Commissions (CALM)
      A written report was distributed. The Boards and Commissions training opportunity in Livermore this April will be presented jointly by the California Association of Local Mental Health Boards and Commissions (CALM) and the California Institutes
of Mental Health (CIMH). The training will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn.

4. DIRECTORS REPORT
   A. Budget Updates
      The State is in huge financial trouble, carrying a multi-million dollar deficit, and the State legislative analyst is making recommendations to reduce the budget. Harvey Tureck interpreted the article discussing potential cuts to Medi-Cal psychiatric services as cuts to non-community mental health services. Recent state support for mental health may help prevent cuts in Medi-Cal mental health; budget cuts to the Department of Mental Health (DMH) are likely but the focus is on eliminating administrative costs without impacting services. Regardless, a contentious struggle is to be expected during the “May revise” to the Governor’s budget. The City of Berkeley is projecting a $1.8 million deficit for both the current and the upcoming Fiscal Years, and the City Manager is recommending certain cost-saving techniques, including a hiring freeze. Reductions in General Fund dollars for Mental Health is likely—General Fund has been steadily reduced over the past several years, but increasing State Realignment funds have thus far offset local funding cutbacks. However, it would be unrealistic to expect State funding to continue at its current rate.

   B. Introduction of New Staff
      Carlos Morales is a new staff member with Berkeley Mental Health’s Administration, sharing leadership with Quality Improvement Supervisor Dawn Mills in the area of Policy, Planning, and Quality Improvement. He has been a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in mental health for 18 years, and has worked with Phoenix, Westside ACT, UCSF forensics, and the Northern California Drug Court. Carlos’ current work has been focusing on internal and external facets of the Berkeley adult system of care, particularly improving interactions with community agencies. Thus far, BMH staff have been out-stationed at various community agencies as part of a “no wrong door” policy, intended to assure that clients are being served appropriately and according to need, regardless of which particular agency is the entry point. Many clients of community agencies either can’t or won’t receive services at BMH, often because they lack insurance. Agencies with out-stationed staff include the Multi-Agency Service Center (MASC), Options, Trinity Church, and the Women’s Daytime Drop-In Center; the Suitcase Clinic is also scheduled to be assigned staff. The variety of needs displayed by clients of each locale dictate different activities: some staff are mostly involved with referrals, others lead groups, etc. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) are being developed with these agencies through the Berkeley Adult System of Care Policy Council (BASoCPC). Next steps will be to disseminate orientation materials and to develop inter-agency referral and release forms. Within BMH, Carlos has been working on Utilization Management—assuring that the right individuals are served at the best level of care according to available resources—and client outcomes. Welcome Carlos!

   C. Administrative Move
      The administrative staff of the Mental Health Division moved on Monday February 25 from 2636 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way to 2809 Telegraph Avenue, increasing the amount of room for clinical staff at the old location. Senior clinicians, Program Supervisors, and staff members who work primarily in the community have moved into the building at 2636 MLK. Telephones should be connected at the new location.
on the evening of February 27, and an entirely new phone system for all of Mental
Health should be in place on Friday, March 1. All numbers with the 644-prefix will
no longer be in use.

D. **Client and Staff Demographics**
   Due to the administrative move, Harvey Tureck was unable to extract the relevant
   reports from the computer system. These reports will be sent out with the March
   Commission packet.

E. **Russell Street Residence**
   The Russell Street Residence (a Board and Care facility operated by the Berkeley
   Food and Housing Project) opened on January 1, 2002 and has accepted six new
   clients, many of whom have been homeless for more than 10 years and frequent users
   of the hospital and jail system.

F. **North County Jail**
   The North County Jail facility is closing operations of a 20-bed psychiatric unit
   within the jail. A ward of 20 beds has been appropriated by the jail system at John
   George Pavilion. This creates increased pressure on the availability of beds, resulting
   in higher prices for each individual bed. Some individuals are concerned about
   “mixing” of inpatients (clients with criminal histories vs. those without criminal
   histories); Sheriff’s deputies will be in place at the criminal psychiatric ward to
   prevent issues.

5. **OLD BUSINESS**
   A. **Alameda County Mental Health Board Liaison**
      Laura Beiss, the aide to Supervisor Carson, noted the Mental Health Commission’s
      desire for an Alameda County Liaison and has made herself available to assist.

   B. **Commission Retreat**
      A few ideas for next year’s Retreat were expressed, including a trip on the Blue and
      Gold ferry and a barbecue in the woods.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**
   A. **Appointment of Commissioners**
      Susan Isles, whose term will expire in April, was re-appointed to the Mental Health
      Commission for a three-year term. (M/S/C Harrington/Rinaldi)

      Katherine deRaadt was appointed to the Mental Health Commission for a three-year
      term. (M/S/C Shirek/Harrington)

      As Paul Clermont’s application has not yet been received by the City Clerk, the
      Mental Health Commission will vote on his appointment in March.

   B. **Elections**
      Edward Webster was voted in as Commission Chair.

      Kathleen Gresher was voted in as Commission Vice-Chair.
C. **May is Mental Health Month**
   The next meeting of the Executive Committee will discuss this issue.

7. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
   **A. Mental Health Commission Committees**
   1. **Recruitment and Selection**: Katherine deRaadt is soon to be a member of the Commission, as is Paul Clermont. Kathleen Gresher has phoned Lieutenant Jim West of the University of California Police Department and will hopefully receive some response regarding law enforcement representation on the MHC.
   2. **Budget**: The Budget Committee has been waiting for the return of Catherine Auman, who has extensive experience with mental health budgeting, to analyze the BMH budget.

   **B. Berkeley Mental Health Committees**
   1. **Cultural Competence**: Edits to the BMH Cultural Competence Master Plan are due by March 12, 2002. Much work has been going on train laypeople in the Latino community to break down the cultural stigma regarding mental health. Many good activities in the community have been occurring that focus on single adults, families, and children.
   2. **Continuous Quality Improvement Committee**: The CQIC devotes a portion of time at each meeting to a review of the objectives for the year. Safety is always a matter of importance and translation of BMH forms into Spanish is nearly complete. The Community Outreach sub-Committee has not yet determined the topic of the next focus group. A new sub-Committee of CQIC focusing on Outcomes is in the process of formation and will be requesting a representative from the Mental Health Commission. It is mandated by the State that the Mental Health Commission have oversight of mental health outcomes; whoever is appointed to this sub-Committee should contact Al Lozano at BMH.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**
   The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.