

**HCRS JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
Springfield, Vermont  
March 1, 2016**

**Present:** HCRS Staff: George Karabakakis (Facilitator), Lori Lintner, Will Shakespeare, Karon Eagles, Susan Hennessey, Wendy Smith, Katherine Cook, Charmion Handy, and Crystal Morey  
Client/Community Representation: Chrissy Cheney, Linda Monette, A. Bonnette, Mike, Annie, Kiersten  
Board Representation: Sarah Carter and Diana Slade

**Welcome:** At 12:10 PM, George Karabakakis welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made including those participating via video conferencing.

**Joint Standing Committee Minutes:** The December 2, 2015 Joint Standing Committee Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as written. These minutes will be posted to the HCRS Internet Site. The Internet website is: [www.hcrs.org](http://www.hcrs.org).

**CEO Update:** George Karabakakis, CEO provided an update on the status of the agency. The Legislature has been in session for two months and there has been a lot of advocacy going on at the state level to support our systems. We are working with all of the community mental health centers in Vermont to educate and advocate to legislators about the importance of a cost of living increase of 3% for the next four years in order to achieve a viable and sustainable system of care. Mental health agencies have not received a cost of living increase in over eight years. The 3% would help support infrastructure, staff salaries, etc.

A public hearing was held in February to look at the Governor's budget proposal. A press conference was held where one of our board members, Keith Clark was a guest speaker. He spoke about the need for increased funding to support community mental health services.

On Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, the Vermont Association for Mental Health and Addiction Recovery (VAMHAR) and Friends of Recovery Vermont (FOR-VT) held their 18th annual Recovery Day at the Vermont State House. Hundreds of Vermonters packed the statehouse for a day filled with personal stories, advocacy, testimony before key committees, and annual awards.

Mental Health Advocacy Day will be held on March 17, 2016 at the Vermont State House. It's an opportunity for advocates, peers, family members, mental health professionals, and providers across Vermont to raise awareness among elected officials and to share experiences about Vermont's mental health system of care.

George discussed the financial status of the agency. For the last three months, HCRS has been heading in the right direction with a small surplus. Expenses are going down and revenue is trending in the right direction.

Bill Metcalfe, DS Program Director recently left HCRS to pursue others interests. George would like the DS Standing Committee to be a part of the recruiting process as HCRS begins the search for a new director. Everyone at the agency wishes Bill the best with his future endeavors.

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, HCRS will be a part of an agency wide community initiative in Green-up Day activities. Staff from all sites will come together to pick up roadside trash in different areas all throughout Windham and Windsor counties.

HCRS' 9<sup>th</sup> Annual golf tournament is scheduled for Friday, June 24, 2016 at the Woodstock Country Club. The tournament will begin at 1:00 pm, followed by a buffet dinner. This year's proceeds will go towards supporting the Children's Program.

George noted we have received a lot of responses back from the client satisfaction surveys so far. He encourages anyone who receives services from HCRS to complete one and send it back to their area office staff.

### **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**Children's Standing Committee:** Chrissy Cheney, Children's Standing Committee chair provided an update on what's happening in the Committee. They continue to meet and have discussed the system of care plan with the new changes, specifically around the seven challenges for youth ages 14-17. They are still in the process of creating a pamphlet for the Children's Standing Committee and would like to eventually have it digitally advertised on the HCRS website.

A bulletin board has been put up in the Springfield office as another form of communication for the standing committee to advertise what events are coming up, to provide information that pertains to the group, group info, etc. Chrissy also talked about a couple of guest speakers that will be coming in to talk with them. Christine Reid and Gerda Lenselink, Area Managers in Springfield for the Children's Program plan to attend the next meeting.

HCRS was recently awarded the IFBS Brattleboro grant. Will and his team are in the implementation and transition phase getting this grant up and running.

**DS Standing Committee:** Lori Lintner, DS Adult Services Manager provided an update on what is happening in the DS Standing committee. The group last met in February while DS was in the middle of their QSR review. They will be meeting again on Wednesday, March 2, 2016. Many DS consumers attended a press conference at the Statehouse to address the chronic reimbursement challenges faced by community mental health and developmental disability agencies and advocated for the 3% increase for all DA's.

Special Olympics basketball has begun with 16 players enrolled on the team. They plan to participate in the tournament at UVM on April 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> with practice every Thursday at the Vermont Academy in Saxtons River. A scrimmage is scheduled with a team from Brattleboro on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

The Windsor group will be hosting a St. Patrick's Day dance for consumers.  
Bellows Falls group will be hosting a Bingo game night.

Lori also noted she hopes to be able to send 36 consumers and 12 support staff to the Annual Conference in Burlington that is coming up soon. Lori also continues to help her group complete the client satisfaction surveys with some of the consumers being invited to take the NCIS survey in May.

**Adult Standing Committee:** The Adult Standing Committee brochure is now complete. Katherine shared a copy of it to the group. There are approximately 25 members serving on the Committee. They are currently reviewing the no-show policy and procedure and providing their feedback. Additionally, they continue to discuss all policies and procedures and their role in reviewing them. The state standing committee is a great resource to get clients involved.

The group continues to work on getting client satisfaction surveys completed and handed in to the area offices. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, a Pathways to Wellness conference will be held at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, Vermont from 8:30 – 4:30. Speakers will cover different topics on mental wellness and recovery. There will also be workshops on yoga, meditation, nutrition, spirituality and more. Family, consumers, and mental health professionals are encouraged to attend.

The committee also continues to review funding streams that will aid and support clients and staff in the Adult program within the agency budget. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, In-Shape will be offering a 4-day training in mental health, research, nutrition, fitness, community engagement, and sustainability. It's an evidence-based practice that operationalizes the Recovery philosophy and advances social inclusion and community engagement.

The Hooker Dunham Theater will be hosting a screening of Healing Voices on April 29, 2016, a documentary that explores the experiences commonly referred to as “psychosis” through the real life stories of three individuals over a period of nearly five years. It also features interviews with notable personalities, including Robert Whitaker and Marius Romme. Healing Voices challenges people to rethink their cultural understanding of mental illness by bringing a message of recovery and charting a course for effective and alternative treatment that can enable people to live productive and meaningful lives.

**Next meeting:** The next Joint Standing Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at 12:00 PM. Lunch will be provided.

*Minutes by Crystal Morey, Recorder*