



# Coalition Briefs

A SEMI-MONTHLY UPDATE ON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW YORK

## Budget testimony

The Coalition, for the second year in a row, joined with the New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare to testify at the mental hygiene budget hearing. Joshua Rubin joined with Council Executive Director Gayle Farman to offer our budget suggestions to a joint hearing of the Assembly Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees. Atop the budget agenda was the implementation of cost-based mental health rates, beginning with a 10% living wage salary adjustment. Also prominently featured were a substantial children's funding request and suggestions for pilot projects for people with co-occurring psychiatric and addictive disorders. The testimony can be obtained from The Coalition's web site at <http://www.cvmha.org/testmony.html>, or by calling Joshua Rubin at (212) 586-4555x17. □

## CVMHA hosts legal forum

On March 3, 1999, The Coalition will host a special legal forum entitled: **The Clinician, The Client and The Company: Ethical and Legal Issues When Making Treatment Decisions.** Lawrence K. W. Berg, Ph.D., Esq., a former Director of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services will present this forum in Columbia County, N.Y.. In addition to over 20 years direct experience in the health, mental health and human services fields, Dr. Berg was most recently associated with the law firm of Hindman, Straub, Pigors & Manning, P.C. where his expertise was utilized for the development and oversight of managed care contracts for payers and providers.

Dr. Berg will address a number of legal and ethical issues including the following: 1)What are the provider's legal and ethical responsibilities to clients when the Company (MCO) decides not to authorize a service or to deny payment for services? 2) What are the liabilities of providers and MCOs when services are not covered, not authorized and/or not provided? 3)What are the legal and ethical issues that arise under certain provider payment arrangements where a bonus or financial incentive is paid to the provider **for not** utilizing a particular medication, certain procedure or referring to another service provider? 4)What are the respective roles of the provider and the MCO in determining the need for emergency services? 5)Should the client be told about any of the fee arrangements that the provider has with the MCO?

The forum will be held at the **UJA Federation, 130 E. 50<sup>th</sup> St.** from 9:30am to 12:30pm. Reservations for this forum are essential, space is limited to 50 attendees. □

## OMH proposes new PAR regulations

The NYS Office of Mental Health has filed the final text of new PAR ("Prior Approval Review for Quality and Appropriateness") regulations (new Part 551 of Title 14 NYCRR), which will become effective on March 5, 1999, and will replace the existing Part 551 CON ("Certificate of Need") regulations on that date.

OMH's stated goals in issuing these new regulations are to streamline, simplify, and update the mental health project review process. The new PAR regulations are designed to "incorporate residential projects, establish a 30-day review period for many types of projects (cutting the current 60-day full review period in half), also reduce the number of review criteria by more than half, and strengthen the role of local governmental units (LGUs) in project review." The new regulations will require a revised application form. OMH will continue to accept CON applica-

tions until the 3/5/99 PAR effective date.

The text of the PAR regulations appears on the OMH website and may be easily accessed via The Coalition's own website [www.cvmha.org](http://www.cvmha.org) through our "Links" to "Government" sites and then once you access the OMH site, through its "Contents," go to "Policy & Regulations." For questions to OMH about the new regulations, contact John Owens of the OMH Bureau of Policy, Regulation & Legislation, phone 518-473-6945.

To assist with the understanding and implementation of these new PAR regulations, OMH has scheduled brief informational sessions around the state. **The NYC session will be held at the OMH NYC Field Office, 75 Morton Street, Manhattan, at 1:30 PM on Thursday, February 25, 1999.** To attend, please call Jo Henry at 212-675-3803.x300. □

## Y2K OK for MH?

Millennial mayhem may not befall the city as a result of a Y2K computer bug, but The Coalition is working to ensure that even if the power grid collapses as a result of a computer glitch that the provider community will not suffer unduly.

We are in discussions with both the City Department of Mental Health and the State Office of Mental Health to determine their level of Y2K readiness and any impact it may have on providers. We are also looking at their contingency plans so that our agencies can make their own emergency plans. Early results of a City Comptroller conducted readiness review of DMHMRAS are very encouraging. Agencies with additional concerns should contact Joshua Rubin at (212) 586-4555x17. □

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## — Help Wanted —

### Going our way?

It appears that the legislature will move this year to extend the MTA half fare rate to persons with serious mental illnesses who are eligible to receive Supplemental Security Income. A bill (A1807) has been introduced by Assembly Mental Hygiene Chair James Brennan and is co-sponsored by Assembly members Connelly, Sanders, Towns, Greene, Weisenberg, Cohen, Glick, Gottfried, Harenberg, Jacobs, Millman and Weinstein. An identical companion bill has been introduced in the Senate (S2505) by Senator Padavan. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions in the Assembly and the Transportation Committee in the Senate. Given that the study commissioned by the legislature estimated the cost to the MTA at \$7 million per annum, and that the Governor announced a \$379 million MTA surplus, it is an excellent time for the government to act. We will continue to follow this important issue. □

### Member Notes

The Coalition would like to express our welcome to three new agency heads. Pamela Straker, Ph.D. has been appointed Executive Director of **Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers, Inc.** Holly Johnson, Ph.D. has taken over the Presidency of **Blanton-Peale Counseling Center.** And Gordon Campbell has assumed the role of Executive Director of **Victim Services Agency.** We welcome all three of these new leaders to The Coalition. □

### CARF is coming

Several of our members have requested that we invite the various accreditation commissions to present at our monthly membership meetings. On February 25, 1999, Nikki K. Migas, the National Director of the Behavioral Health Division of CARF (The Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission) will discuss the CARF organization and the benefits of being accredited by CARF.

JCAHO and COA will be invited to future meetings. □

### COLA Implementation

The problems encountered during the implementation of the 2.5% COLA passed by the legislature during the special 1998 autumn session are moving the Department of Budget to reconsider some of the restrictions placed on the funds. The Coalition is monitoring the deliberations closely and working with our allies in Albany to remove as many of the strings attached to the allocation as possible. We are attempting to arrange a briefing for provider advocates before the end of the week. We will keep our membership informed. □

### Free legal help

The Mental Health Project of the Urban Justice Center is sponsoring a new legal clinic designed to assist people with disabilities who are having problems related to workfare requirements. The clinic will provide information about the rights of people with disabilities under workfare, information about workfare requirements for people with disabilities, advice on how and when to request a fair hearing and representation at fair hearings regarding workfare. The clinic will begin operation on February 23 at Fountain House (Tuesday 10am-12pm) and Holland House (Thursday 10am-12pm) in Manhattan. For more information call Beth Nuckols at (212) 533-0540x341. □

**The Hudson Guild**, a settlement house with over 100 years of experience providing enriching and innovative programs and services to the Chelsea community, is seeking the following professionals:

**Clinical Supervisor/Social Worker:** Our outpatient community mental health clinic seeks FT CSW with minimum six years experience to supervise professional staff and carry own caseload. Must have significant clinical experience working with and supervising therapy with children, adolescents and adults in group, family and individual modalities. Knowledge of managed care a plus.

**Clinical Social Worker:** Our outpatient community mental health clinic seeks FT CSW to provide a full range of mental health services to children, adolescents and adults from a culturally diverse background. This candidate should have significant experience working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Experience working with children in a play therapy modality essential.

Spanish speaking preferred for both positions, but not required. Fax resume for above positions (state which position) to: Marlene Mendelson, Director - Counseling Services, (212) 268-9983.

**Social Work Supervisor:** Our Early Head Start program serving children 0-3 years and their families seeks FT MSW with 2 years experience. Will supervise family workers, develop and run parent support and education groups, supervise all social service aspects of the program. Carry small caseload. Experience with children preferred. Team player with demonstrated leadership ability. Spanish speaking required. Fax resume to: Marybeth Logan, Coordinator - Early Head Start, (212) 268-9983. □

### Upcoming Events

- February 23 Managed Care Technical Assistance: Clinical Pathways at CSS
- February 25 Membership Meeting with CARF at CVMHA
- March 3 Ethics Seminar with Dr. Lawrence Berg at UJA
- March 5 Government Relations Committee at CVMHA
- March 8-9 Coalition Lobby Days with NYSCCBH in Albany
- March 11 Finance Committee at CVMHA
- Executive Committee at CVMHA
- March 15 MICA Committee at The Bridge
- March 19 Short Term Therapy Seminar with Dr. Simon Budman at UJA
- March 24 Co-Occurring Conditions Roundtable in Albany
- June 10 Mental Health Awards at Pfizer World Headquarters**