



# Coalition Briefs

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

## Winerip champions our cause

Michael Winerip's superb article in The New York Times Magazine on May 23 has had legs. It was followed by a sensitive and supportive editorial in the May 25 New York Times, a Newsday editorial that moved toward a view that appropriate services and case management are the smartest way to address problems of people with mental illness. Upstate print media and subsequent stories in the NYT (The Post continues to shock us in its predictable reach for sensationalism) and elsewhere have kept the story and the issues very much alive.

What are the issues? Folks with mental illness are discriminated against. We call it stigma. The mental health community is discriminated against—in insurance, funding, housing, regulatory spending caps—by law enforcement solutions applied to mental health problems. We need to keep up the momentum. Mental health public policy needs refreshment. The safety net needs repair!▣

## Coalition moves to oppose Assembly's 'Kendra's Law'

The Coalition has filed a memorandum of opposition to A8477, the Assembly's version of Kendra's Law. We have serious difficulties with some of the concepts underlying the recent push for Involuntary Outpatient Treatment (IOT), including: the merging of standards of inpatient commitment and outpatient treatment, including the differentiation between what is appropriate for each, the lack of clarity on standards for capacity for decision making, e.g., how can somebody lack capacity to make decisions about his/her treatment but still have adequate competence to stand trial and be held liable for criminal acts, and that violent acts are extremely difficult to predict, for either the general population or persons with mental illness.

Our memo states that we oppose A8477 ("Assisted Outpatient Treatment Act") for the following specific reasons:

The eligibility standards are neither narrowly enough focused nor clearly defined. It is The Coalition's position that the requirements by which a consumer **might** be eligible for IOT must be very narrowly focused, targeted only at those consumers who are most likely to benefit from IOT, specifically: Clients with co-occurring psychiatric and addictive disorders, a history of violence and multiple recent involuntary hospitalizations. Furthermore, IOT should only apply to persons 18 or over.

The bill does not include money to pay for the costs associated with the higher level of care provided to clients in the IOT program. Additional responsibility cannot be placed on the mental health system without extra funds to cover the enhanced services. However, we strongly support the inclusion in this bill of provisions for presumptive Medicaid eligibility. This is appropriate and necessary. It is The Coalition's position that mandating mental health services for a person

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## SNP RFP and HCFA 1115 Waiver Approved

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, after much waiting, the New York State Budget Division approved the mental health Special Needs Plan (SNP) Request for Proposals (RFP). This means that SOMH has cleared the final hurdle to release of the RFP. HCFA is now reviewing the RFP, and SOMH will brief them shortly and ask for their input. HCFA need not approve the SNP RFP for voluntary enrollment. SOMH is merely sharing it with them, as they have done all along, as a courtesy. When the SNP en-

rollment becomes mandatory, HCFA approval will be necessary. With all of their ducks in a row, SOMH anticipates the release of the RFP sometime in July. (anyone care to bet on September?) At that point, the blackout period will begin and will last until the preliminary contract awardees have been selected.

In related news, HCFA has approved New York State's 1115 waiver to begin mandatory Medicaid managed care enrollment in the phase I zip

codes in New York City. The final issue that was resolved to clear the way for HCFA approval centered on consumers' rights to a fair hearing. A compromise was negotiated wherein Medicaid enrollees have the right to a fair hearing if all other administrative reviews have been exhausted. The implementation date for mandatory enrollment in phase I is as yet uncertain, but should be sooner rather than later.▣

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## White House conference on MH

On Monday June 7, 1999, Tipper and Al Gore will host "The White House Conference on Mental Health: Working for a Healthier America." The conference will be held in Washington D.C. at Howard University. Due to the overwhelming number of requests for space at the conference and the limited number of seats (400), The White House has made it available for satellite downlink.

The conference will be televised at two sites in New York City. The Corporation for Supportive Housing will be hosting a forum surrounding the conference downlink that will include, among others, Coalition Executive Director Phillip Saperia and DMHMRAS Commissioner Neal Cohen, M.D., at the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building. Magellan Behavioral Health will be hosting a downlink at the United Artists Theatre on 64<sup>th</sup> Street.

We are pleased that Fountain House Executive Director Ken Dudek has been invited to attend the conference in Washington. For more information on the conference please check the conference's website at [www.mentalhealth.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.gov). □

## Kendra's Law

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with mental illness must be accompanied by a concurrent mandate to pay for such services.

This bill does not allow for professional decision making by *mental health professionals*. The Coalition cannot support IOT legislation if it does not provide for court-ordered treatment plans that are flexible enough to allow mental health services providers to use their professional judgment to determine treatment plans and medications.

This bill requires providers of services to "promptly notify the regional director or his or her designee of any act or omission of the assisted outpatient, during the period of assisted outpatient treatment, that would reasonably lead to a conclusion that the assisted outpatient is not in compliance with such treatment." The Coalition opposes this provision. The government, not the providers, must be responsible for determining compliance with court orders. The relationship between a provider and a client must be based on trust and a trusting relationship cannot be built if providers are responsible for informing the authorities about non-compliant clients.

IOT should not be used as a vehicle for managed care companies to avoid the costs of inpatient services. A8477 contains no provision ensuring against this eventuality. In addition, the bill does not clarify how IOT and managed care, including this State's upcoming mandatory Medicaid managed care and eventual mental health Special Needs Plans, will interface with one another.

In addition, while we applaud the bill's provision for consumer representation by Mental Hygiene Legal Service or retained counsel "at all stages of a proceeding initiated under this section," we are concerned that the bill does not provide additional public funding for such representation.

Mental health providers are in agreement that the real promise of any outpatient treatment, whether voluntary or involuntary, is in ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR A FULL ARRAY OF OUTPATIENT SERVICES, INCLUDING CARE COORDINATION, CASE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORTED HOUSING. Unfortunately, A8477 does not address the fundamental issue of the lack of adequate funding in this State for effective outpatient mental health services, a stark reality which has been highlighted by recent press reports, including Michael Winerip's excellent article in the May 23<sup>rd</sup> *New York Times Magazine*. □

## 7th SNP passes both houses

The Assembly passed a bill authorizing a seventh SNP (A6781) on May 26<sup>th</sup>. The bill, sponsored by Assembly Mental Hygiene Committee Chair James Brennan, passed unanimously 141-0. A similar bill, (S3312), sponsored by Senate Mental Hygiene Committee Chair Thomas Libous passed the Senate on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

The primary difference in the bills is the inclusion in the Senate bill of an extension from July 1, 2000 to July 1, 2002, of the expiration of provisions authorizing the establishment of comprehensive HIV and mental health Special Needs Plans. Hopefully the differences will be worked out in time for the authorization of the seventh SNP before the SNP procurement process begins. □

## 1/2 Fare Fairness

The two bills that would provide a half fare on the MTA for people with psychiatric disabilities who receive SSI are moving. The Assembly bill (A1807) is currently before the Ways and Means Committee. The Senate bill (S2505) is currently before the Rules Committee. Supporters of the bills are urged to call Senator Bruno (Rules Chair) at (518) 455-3191 and Assemblyman Farrell (Ways and Means Chair) at (518) 455-5491 to urge them to move these bills to the floor. "If we can move them to the floor, we have the support to get them passed." Says **Fountain House's** Fred Levine, a Half Fare campaign leader. □

## Member Notes

The Coalition congratulates Dr. Jacob Barak on his new position as Acting President and CEO of **Postgraduate Center for Mental Health**. We wish him the best of luck in his new role. □

**Park Slope Center For Mental Health** announces two programs in Hypnosis: (1) The Hypnosis Institute which trains Master's level and above health care professionals in clinical hypnosis. Beginner's class starts October 14<sup>th</sup>, 7-9:30 PM. (2) The Sunday evening lecture series from 7 to 9 PM., beginning Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, "Hypnosis and Sex Therapy" and Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>, "The Power of Self-Hypnosis." Phone Susan Lee Bady at (718) 788-2461 for information. □

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## — Help Wanted —

MSW: NY's largest community based nonprofit agency serving the elderly, has an opening for an MSW in our Bronx Geriatric Mental Health Outreach Program. CSW req. Mental health exp. & bi-lingual English/Spanish preferred. Salary: \$33,012. Send resume to Judi Gordon, **JASA**, 2488 Grand Concourse, Bronx NY 10458 or Fax to 718-733-7622. □

Residence Counselor, PT: Duties include counseling adults w/ mental illness and/or substance abuse. Provides rehabilitative & restorative services to residents through apartment visits, individual sessions, group mtgs, and off-site activities. Reports to Team Coordinator & participates in team and staff meetings. 20 hrs./wk. Qualifications: H.S. Diploma or equivalent with 2 yrs. Exp. in mental health or related field. Computer literate & good writing skills. \$9K/yr. Fax resume to: Joseph Wong, Human Resource Manager, **Weston United Community Renewal**, (212) 316-0789. □

Assistant Director, HIV Prevention: Provide clinical supervision for Gay Men's Counseling & Education and Substance Abuse Counseling & Education programs. Provide short-term counseling interventions. Topics include: HIV, STDs, sex ed., relationship issues, & substance abuse issues. Provide supervision and training to staff, peers, and volunteers. Manage case presentations and meetings including program reports and monitoring all funding-related materials. Reports to: Director, Prevention. Qualifications: M.S.W. or M. Psy. + clinical exp. CAC/CASAC eligible including exp. in harm reduction and recovery readiness models. Knowledge of gay/lesbian issues essential. Bilingual Eng./Span. pref. Contact: C.J. Bacino send resume and cover letter position of interest and pay requirements to: Human Resources, **GMHC**, 119 West 24<sup>th</sup> St., NY, NY 10011-0022. □

### Medical Director for Mental Health

Programs: National not-for-profit substance abuse treatment agency serving MICA population, welcomes curriculum vitae from licensed Psychiatrists who are interested in working in a therapeutic community environment as full time staff member. The Medical Director will oversee operations on Long Island and in Queens, provide direction to members of a multi-disciplinary team, conduct diagnostic interviews, identify patients' needs, and assess ongoing treatment. Will work closely with psychiatric emergency rooms; will interact with Office of Mental Health.

Qualifications: Demonstrated clinical skills for hands-on assessments and treatment in acute care settings. Must be a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry; hold ASAAM credential or American Board of Neurology in Addiction Psychiatry. Familiarity with OMH regulations required. We offer a very comprehensive benefits package and salary. Please forward resume, indicating compensation history/requirements to: Human Resources - Dept KMAC, Phoenix House, 164 West 74th St, NY NY 10023. EOE. □

Director of Communications: Direct all communications and act as key advisor to senior management. Manage agency's media relations. Oversee content & production of publications including annual report, *The Volunteer*, and others. Supervise advocacy campaign, ad efforts and marketing of materials & programs. Provide technical assistance to other depts and organizations. Develop & monitor dept. budget. Prepare speeches & policy statements on all gov. levels. Reports to: Exec. Dir. Qualifications: Proven abilities in above requirements. Exp. with an organization in the above fields + community relations & internal communications. Knowledge of design and production of print materials & related technology. Familiarity w/ healthcare issues, HIV/AIDS & gay/lesbian/bisexual community+. Span. language +. Contact: Greg Ratcliff. Please send resume and cover letter position of interest and pay requirements to: Human Resources, **GMHC**, 119 West 24<sup>th</sup> St., NY, NY 10011-0022. □

Social Worker - Counseling Department: The Social Worker will be responsible for "hands-on" supervision and developmental functions of a small afterschool program. Primary focus will be running a small afterschool program for SED adolescents, that is part of larger teen program in multi-service agency and other required duties as assigned. Position is Full-Time with Flexible hours (early evenings and some Saturdays). Candidates must have CSW and specific experience working with SED teens, preferable within a recreational setting. Supervisory experience and bi-lingual Spanish/English a Plus. Comprehensive benefits package. Salary commensurate with experience. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer. If you meet these qualifications then please send us your resume in confidence. Mail resume to: Human Resources/Social Worker, **Hudson Guild**, 441 W. 26th Street, New York, NY 10001. Or fax resume to: (212) 268-9983. No Phone Calls Please. □

## Upcoming Events

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|-------------------|---|
| June 7            | MICA Committee at The Bridge                              |
| June 8            | MCTA: Clinical Pathways at CSS                            |
| June 10           | Finance Committee at CVMHA<br>Board of Directors at CVMHA |
|                   | <b>Mental Health Awards at Pfizer World Headquarters</b>  |
| June 16           | Children's Committee at CVMHA                             |
| <b>June 22-23</b> | <b>Best Practices Conference at Fordham</b>               |