



Peers Linking Peers

Your Bridge to Self Advocacy

Volume 2, Issue 4— September, 2010

This and previous issues can be found on the Network of Care WEB site at:
<http://sandiego.networkofcare.org/mh/countycontent/san-diego/peer-liaison.cfm>

County Peer Liaison Program



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Integrated Health Strategies

By David Jurgensen, Karin Lettau, MS, CRC

Presently, the U.S. spends more per person on healthcare than any other country, and, unfortunately, with poorer outcomes.

According to recent reports, people with serious mental illness, on average, die 25 years sooner than the general population and this disparity is growing. The majority of early deaths are caused by preventable and treatable physical illnesses; primarily cardiovascular (heart) disease, diabetes and pulmonary (lung) cancer.

Clearly this is a dismal prospect, but we can change this trend with a shift in our lifestyle choices; regular physical activity, healthy foods and possibly carefully monitored medication changes (away from those leading to diabetes) with support from county medical practices, and community awareness, education and our own commitment.

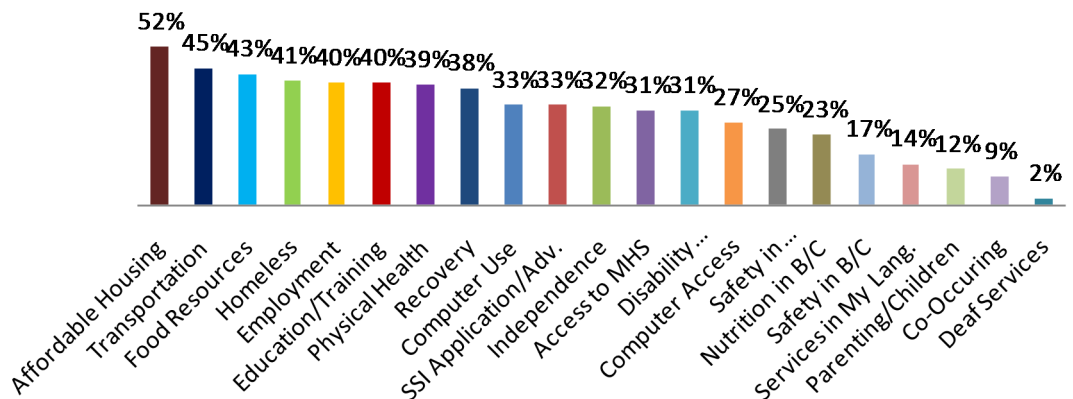
One of the ways to improve care while indeed cutting costs is by integrating behavioral and physical health services. People whose mental health has improved for some time may be transferred to the supervision of a Primary Care Physician (PCP) who has received special training for this purpose and who can now focus on physical health challenges often neglected. Another obvious benefit of having a single source for mental and physical health needs is that all medica-

tions can be tracked on one chart, giving better protection against drug interactions. And this will also free up County resources and psychiatrists to focus on people with the most severe needs.

Dr. Marshal Lewis, County Clinical Director of Behavioral Services, provided compelling consideration of the basis and strategies for integrated care to the County-wide Peer Liaison Meeting last month.

The lack of access to healthcare may be the biggest factor causing early death. Many people don't seek physical healthcare due to fear, stigma and fragmentation of the system of care. One way of improving outcomes is to move toward a person centered care model, replacing the pattern of episodic care with coordinated care and long-term proactive healing relationships that empower people to learn how to best care for themselves. Currently SD County has many projects aimed at integrating mental health and primary care to increase our overall health. Mental health clinics are being paired up with primary care clinics to ensure smooth transitions. Mental health practitioners are housed in primary care clinics and nurse practitioners are located in mental health clinics as well. See more solutions in this issue!

August Peer Liaison Feedback Concerns by % of 340 Forms Received



Contact Peer Liaisons 858-274-4650

Peer Liaisons assist people to advocate for their needs and rights. We act as a two way conduit to gather and disseminate information between the San Diego County Mental Health System of Care and people receiving services and their families. We provide hope, encouragement, and connection to the community through county-wide forums, focus groups, county meeting attendance, and our monthly newsletter.

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In the Community By Karin Lettau, MS, CRC

Peer Liaisons attended 39 meetings including six Program Advisory Groups (PAGs), hosted five area and one regional meeting with a total of 600 participants. Among those facilities we visited were Short Term Acute Residential Treatment-START (crisis houses), residential drug/alcohol treatment, Board and Cares, Independent Living, mental health clinics, clubhouses, case management services, full service partnerships, hospitals, and a homeless women's shelter. We received 340 Input and Feedback forms from participants; see tabulated concerns on page one. Over half of respondents listed affordable housing and 41% listed homelessness as a personal concern. *Please come to our September 28th County-wide Meeting on Housing and Preventing Homelessness from 1-3pm at 3851 Rosecrans in San Diego.* In addition, Peer Liaisons attended more than 20 Mental Health System of Care meetings to bring the voice of our peers to the county table and learn information to bring back to peers. Please let us know in the next month what topics you would like to learn/speak out about in the future. Thank you.

Invitation to people with mental health &/or substance use challenges to engage as representatives of clubhouses and interest groups to learn and to speak-out at Peer Liaison County-wide and Area Forums (see calendar page 4 for dates and locations) on topics of concern to your groups. Develop your skills to state an issue of concern and possibly suggest an appropriate solution with your Peer Liaisons. Then carry it forward to a County Council for the System of Care to consider for improvement. (See Council dates page 4.)

My Transition from MH

By Mercedes Webber

When I started to work for Recovery Innovations of California over a year ago I was very happy, I felt like I was on top of the world. Within two weeks of commencing my work, I received a letter from the County about changes to my mental health care. Since I was doing very well in my mental health recovery for some time I was being transitioned to a primary care physician (PCP) for ALL my health needs.

I felt overwhelmed, scared, and doubted how comfortable I would be with a PCP treating my mental health—and this after I had been feeling so very happy just a few days back! I re-read the letter and opted for calling the phone number at the bottom. When the worker answered she said I should not panic because with a little patience and understanding on my part I could be just as happy as I had been up to now. She explained the program and reminded me that my own PCP knew me from head to toe, and that her oversight of my mental health medications would not be anymore taxing to her than before. In fact it could be safer since she would know ALL the meds I take and guard against drug interactions. The worker said that if my symptoms re-appear or I experience increased side effects, I could be referred right away back to my psychiatrist.

After all my doubts were calmed, I decided to go with the program and started to get my psychiatric meds with all my other meds I was already getting from my PCP. I have not needed to see my psychiatrist since then and my PCP renews my medications every month. She also does regular blood tests to monitor any side effects and together we keep me in tip-top shape.

I am extremely happy with this program now and you can be too. Give it a try. I love my primary care doctor.

10 Year Health Plan & Community Action Networks

Karin Lettau MS, CRC

The county passed a 10 year Health Initiative that integrates and crosses all health and human service agencies to build a healthy, safe and thriving San Diego county by 2020.

To implement this plan we need to build access to a healthy lifestyle and commit ourselves to healthy habits. To exercise we need to feel safe to walk in our neighborhoods, so we need lighting and sidewalks, parks, recreation opportunities. To improve our diets we need access to fresh fruits and vegetables/ community gardens in our neighborhoods. These are issues that the County and your neighborhood Community Action Networks (CAN) are tackling to make this plan a reality. You can attend one in your area. Mid-City CAN is a model and a very active one. You can check their website at www.midcitycan.org or show up the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 8 am at 4440 Wightman in San Diego. We have lists of other CANs.

The State of CA has drafted a new coverage initiative seeking to replace the now expired (August 31)

Federal Waiver 1115 which brings federal matching dollars to the state and county. This was originally designed to cover chronic disease management of diabetes and hypertension for adults with incomes under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$21,660 annual gross income for one person=200%). The new Waiver 115 draft requests an extension to continue coverage for the 3,500 adults already receiving these services. And most importantly the new draft proposes an expansion to coordinate and integrate medical, behavioral and social services into enhanced medical homes to be able to serve complex and chronic mental health conditions. This Expanded Coverage Initiative (EC) would be in line with the County 10 year Health Initiative. Eventually County Medical Services, thus far only for urgent physical health care, would be converted to this EC, which might loosen some frustrating eligibility requirements and include coverage for severe mental health treatment.

So get involved with an action network in your area to help make your neighborhood and us all healthier, safer and thriving all round!



Health Centers Federally-funded

Karin Lettau MS, CRC

So how do you find a primary care doctor. The Council of Community Clinics (CCC) provides support services to member community clinic and health centers in San Diego County, whose mission is to provide access to quality health care and related services for the County's diverse communities with an emphasis on low-income and uninsured people. To find a CCC member clinic in your area, please call (619) 542-4300, or enter your zip code at the website: <http://www.ccc-sd.org/>

Also Federally-funded health centers care for you, even if you have no health insurance. You pay what you can afford, based on your income. Health centers provide:

- checkups when you're well
- treatment when you're sick
- complete care when you're pregnant
- immunizations and checkups for your children
- dental care and prescription drugs for your family
- mental health & substance abuse care
- Health centers are in most cities and many rural areas.

You can go to the website to find one near you: <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>

Section 8 Housing Tips

By Ken Peters

Most people are aware of the Section 8 housing vouchers that are issued by the San Diego Housing Commission, and the fact there is currently a 8-9 year waiting list. But some people may not have applied because they need help or weren't sure how to apply. The application must be completed online unless you have a disability. It is a fairly easy process. The web address for this is given below. If you are a person with a disability and need someone to help you with this, printed applications are available at the San Diego Housing Commission. When a printed application is completed you must write at the top of the form this is a person with a disability before mailing it.

The question of household composition and income can be misleading. It is not asking for this information regarding the household you presently live in, but of who would be included in your household should you receive housing assistance.

Even while on the waiting list, it is still necessary to update your application should there be changes to your contact information or to what your household will be once receiving housing assistance. Be aware some criminal



convictions can prevent you from being able to reside in government supported housing. If you are married to someone that is ineligible it can make you ineligible as well.

There is a rumor that in a few months the San Diego Housing Commission may close their waiting list as other communities in our area have done. Should this happen, while updates can still be made to pending applications, new applications may no longer be accepted until the waiting list is reopened.

To apply for subsidized housing or update your application go to: https://www.formrouter.net/forms01@SDHC/WL_App_v4.pdf

If going online is not an option, to report a change in your address you can either call the waiting list hotline at (619)578-7640, or you may write to: Waiting List, San Diego Housing Commission, 1122 Broadway, Suite 300, San Diego CA 92101. If you write, be sure to include your name, address, and the last four digits of your Social Security number. For a recorded message on general waiting list information, please call: (619) 578-7305.

Calendar of Community Events

Peer Liaisons are a two way conduit of information

<p>September 13, North Inland Area Meeting 2nd Monday of the month. 9:45-11:45am, Escondido Clubhouse 474 W. Vermont Ave., Escondido, 92025</p>	<p>September 21, East County Area Meeting NEW PLACE 3rd Tuesday each month 2-4pm, Alvarado Parkway Institute—All Welcome 215 W. Madison. Ave, El Cajon 92020</p>
<p>September 14, North Coastal Area Meeting 2nd Tuesday of the Month 10:00-12:00 noon , Mariposa Clubhouse (760-439-2785) 560 Greenbrier, Suite C-E, Oceanside 92054</p>	<p>September 24, RICA Program Advisory Group Meeting If you receive/have received services from RICA please come 2-3pm, 4th Friday each month 3565 Del Rey St, Suite 202, San Diego 92109</p>
<p>September 16, Central Area Meeting 3rd Thursday each month 1:30-3:30pm, Downtown Central Library 820 'E' St, San Diego 92101</p>	<p>September 28, Peer Liaison County-wide Mtg 1-3pm, 3851 Rosecrans Ave, San Diego 92110 Dr. Piedad Garcia: Housing 4th Tuesday each month</p>
<p>September 17, South Bay Area Mtg 3rd Friday each month, 1-3pm, Odd numbered month: Visions Clubhouse, 226 Church St., Chula Vista 91910 (Even numbered months: Casa Del Sol Clubhouse)</p>	<p>October 7, Mental Health Board Meeting 1st Thursday of each month from 4-6pm 1600 Pacific Hwy, Rm 302/303, San Diego 92101</p>

Upcoming Peer Liaison County-wide Meeting Topics:

September 28: Housing and Preventing Homelessness
 October 26: Co-Occurring Mental Health & Substance Use Challenges
 November 23: Spiritual Wellness
 December 28: ??? Send us your suggestions for topics!
 January 25, 2011: Employment Services via Clubhouses
 February 22, 2011: ??? Send us your suggestions for topics!
 (In the following month, topic information is carried to areas/interest groups & in our newsletter)

Held the 4th Tuesday of each month, 1-3pm, 3851 Rosecrans, San Diego 92110



<http://www.sandiego.networkofcare.org/mh>

How to Speak to the Mental Health Board (MHB):

1st Thursday Each Month, 4-6pm, 1600 Pacific Hwy, 3rd Fl

- *First, arrive early, fill out a request to speak form,
- *Your name will be called to speak during public comment period
- *Plan to speak for 2-3 minutes only.
- *Maybe write out what you want to say, and practice it be sure it is under 3 minutes...
- *Want help?
- *Contact a Peer Liaison (858/274-4650)
- *Come to a Peer Liaison monthly area meeting

Other County Mental Health System of Care Councils You Can Speak to:

- Adult Council: 3rd Tuesday of month 10-11:30, 3255 Cam. d. Rio S.
- Older Adult Council: 3rd Wed, 1-3pm, 3255 Cam. d. Rio S.
- Cultural Competency (CCRT): 1st Fri, 10-11:30, 3255 Cam.d. Rio S.
- Housing Council: 1st Thursday, 11:30-1pm, 3255 Cam. d. Rio S.
- Residential Care: Last Wed, 10-11:30, 1250 Morena Blvd, 2nd Fl.

