

Consumer Council News

November 27, 2001

Volume 5, Issue 7

New Presidential Commission on Mental Health

There is a new Commission being formed by the President on Mental Health. This is related to the Executive Order 13217- "Community Based Alternatives for Individuals With Disabilities". This order is to assist with the swift implementation of the Olmstead decision. A mission of the Commission is to review current quality and effectiveness of public and private health care delivery to persons with serious mental illness.

Newsletter sponsored by
VA Mental Health
Consumer Council
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SMI Committee Responds to Consumer Issues

The SMI Committee met in November 2001 and several issues were discussed by the Consumer Liaison Council. Among the issues discussed were:

- * Changing the name of the Committee of Care of Severely Chronically Mentally Ill Veterans to Veterans with Serious Mental Illness putting the person first. This was approved as a recommendation.
- * That employment needed to be integrated with support and that work and treatment need to be separated.
- * The Recovery approach needs to be emphasized where the veteran would take more of the responsibility for their own care.
- * An evaluation by consumers would be a useful study and this would strengthen our relationship with con-



sumers.

- * CARES initiative needs to be monitored carefully for mental health services since this may be the model of the future and there was concern with the VISN 12 report in regards to mental health.
- * The SMI Committee was supportive of the issues raised and identified some actions that could be taken. One action was approving a proposal for training on Psychosocial Rehabilitation that would encompass stigma issues and recovery based models of care to be presented to VA management and staff.

Integrating Models of Care

Dr. Fred Frese is a lead author on an article in Psychiatric Services (November 2001) on Integrating Evidence-Based Practices and the Recovery Model. A distinction is drawn between the evidence based practice model and the recovery model. The more seriously disabled consumers are highly supportive of research that is grounded in evidence-based practices. Those consumers who are further along the road to recovery are more likely to be in support of the recovery model. The recovery model offers more autonomy to make decisions about what services are best for the person. The evidence based model puts forth a practice of mental health care that has been developed by scientific investigation. This does appeal to families of persons with mental disabilities and those who

are more seriously ill. For consumers that are recovered to the point of being able to discuss their treatment but have not become advocates there is a tendency to want both models available. This paper uniquely reviews the viewpoints of three groups of consumers. There is a recommendation to involve consumer advocates in groups that are responsible for conducting, overseeing, and implementing evidence-based practice activities. This can lead to more ownership of the practices that are being developed to help persons with serious mental illness. This also educates consumers who can make a contribution to the process.

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