

**Minutes**  
**Mental Health Services of Catawba County**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Thursday, April 17, 2008**  
**7:00 P.M.**

The Mental Health Services of Catawba County Board of Directors met on this date in the first floor conference room at First Plaza.

Members of the Board present included: Kitty Barnes, Joe Beaman, Jr., Ray Von Beatty, David Boone, John Dayberry, Lori Faulkner, Danny Graves, David Isenhower, Ronald Kendrick, and Crystal Leathers. Excused and/or absent for other equivalent circumstances were Susan Anderson, Dr. Tom McKean, Charles Phillips, Harold Setzer, Maynard Taylor, and Dr. Robert Yapundich. Mental Health staff present included John Hardy, Melanie Britt, Vanessa Anderson, and Janice Cornett.

A quorum was present.

**Handouts**

Handouts distributed prior to the opening of the meeting included the following: (1) Secretary Benton's Proposal for Voluntary Regionalization of Local Managing Entities; (2) Proposed Board Composition for Mental Health Partners; and (3) Quarterly Financial Report as of March 31, 2008.

**Invocation**

Ray Von Beatty read a newspaper article from 1879 regarding the mental health dilemma. It was noted that we are still struggling with this same issue over 100 years later. Mr. Beatty then led the invocation.

In the absence of Tom McKean, Acting Chair Joe Beaman, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M. He welcomed all in attendance and thanked them for their time.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the March 20, 2008 meeting of the Board of Directors were presented.

Kitty Barnes made a motion that the minutes of the March 20, 2008 Board of Directors meeting be accepted as presented. David Boone seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was voted to accept the minutes of the March 20, 2008 Board of Directors meeting as presented.

**Citizen Comments**

Crystal Leathers noted that there will finally be a chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) in Hickory. This will be of great benefit to many families in this area.

## Commissioner Comments

Kitty Barnes, Catawba County Commissioner, noted that she had just left a ribbon cutting for the Parenting Network. The organization has finally moved into its new larger space and will be able to expand its excellent services to families in this area. Mrs. Barnes referred the group to the *Commissioners' Synopsises* included in the Board packet for additional information of what is happening in Catawba County.

Maynard Taylor was unable to attend tonight's meeting; therefore, an update from Burke County was not available.

## Director's Report

1. The results of the Mercer report have been released and will be discussed a little later in tonight's meeting. Based on findings of the report, Secretary Benton has made a proposal for voluntary regionalization of local managing entities (LMEs). The Secretary presented his proposal to the Legislative Oversight Committee (LOC) today. John was in attendance at the LOC meeting and noted that the proposal was met with mixed reviews. Other State proposals in the arena of mental health included the following:
  - Improvement and additional staffing at state hospitals
  - Improvements in crisis schemes in North Carolina, including expanding the number of mobile crisis teams from 19 to 30
  - Hiring 30 psychiatrists, 15 nurses, and 30 other licensed professionals as state employees
  - Expand the community hospital capacity by offering incentives to hospitals for expanding the number of available beds. The hospitals would be paid a better rate for these beds and would be paid 100% for indigent care. The goal would be to establish an additional 187 beds statewide.
  - Legislators seemed reluctant to focus on the restructuring of the LME configuration during their short session. The Mercer Report was criticized for not providing data as to how the three tiers were determined.
2. Catawba Valley Behavioral Healthcare (CVBH) will be moving into their new space in Morganton next week. There has been a very cooperative attitude between CVBH, Grace Hospital, and contractors during this process.
3. Mental Health Partners continues to move along. Martin Starnes has been hired as the agency's auditor, and an attorney has also been hired. We will do the agency banking with Wachovia. The agreement with Catawba County on the purchase of services has been finalized. We are working on signage logo and securing additional space on the fifth floor at First Plaza.
4. The Burke Office is now fully staffed, with four full time employees as well as those who rotate working in the Burke Office.
5. A survey was conducted earlier this week regarding details of available land near the previous location of Mental Health Services of Catawba County. This land would be used for CVBH.

6. John met with Tom McDevitt of the Smoky Mountains Center to work on a property settlement between Foothills Area Program and Burke County. The resulting proposal has been presented to both Foothills and Burke County. Burke County is agreeable to the proposal, but we have not yet heard back from Foothills.

## **Consideration Items**

### **Board Composition for Mental Health Partners**

John referred to the handout regarding the proposed Board composition for Mental Health Partners. We need to determine which current members of the Mental Health Services of Catawba County Board of Directors can move forward to the Board of Mental Health Partners and where the open categories are. Appropriate Board fits will be determined by who goes off the Board, legislative requirements, and conflict of interest situations. John gave an overview of the Board needs and suggested that either the Executive Committee could work on a proposal for Board composition for Mental Health Partners, or a nominating committee consisting of Board members from both Catawba and Burke could be appointed. The Board's suggested composition for the Board of Mental Health Partners will go to the respective Boards of County Commissioners for approval and appointment of Board members.

After a brief discussion, the Board opted to ask the Executive Committee to work on a draft proposal for composition of the new Board for Mental Health Partners.

### **Discussion of Mercer Report**

Melanie Britt presented an overview of the Mercer Report. The Mercer Group is a private consulting firm from Arizona. They were hired by the State to study LMEs and make recommendations for improvements and streamlining procedures now in place, including the possibility of further consolidations. The study included a desk audit of each LME. LMEs were sent a list of items needed for review. The requested information was sent to the Mercer team for their review. Then the reviewers came on-site to ask questions and clarify certain subjects. MHSCC was visited by three reviewers. They were looking at three major areas – IT and Claims, Clinical Operations and Governance, and Business and Finance. The reviewers looked at our policies and how we do business. They also spoke with front line staff. The reviewers were looking at the following:

1. How is the LME doing?
2. What is the readiness of the LME to take back some functions?
3. What recommendations can be made system wide for more efficient management of administrative functions?

The resulting report rated 7 LMES in Tier 1, 13 in Tier 2, and 5 in Tier 3. Overall, MHSCC was rated in Tier 1. We were in Tier 2 for Clinical Operations. The reviewers were looking for a Medical Director or Clinical Director. We have not yet secured this position. They were also looking to see if clinical staff answered to a licensed clinician. Another issue was whether every Access call can be traced to a specific category and do supervisors listen in to each call.

The Mercer Report contained a choice of three major recommendations: (1) continue consolidating to get to less than 20 LMEs statewide; (2) regional managing entities; or (3) a centralized managing entity.

Based on this report, the Secretary made his proposal for nine regional managing entities. A cost analysis of savings is due from Mercer to the LOC in mid May.

## **Action Items**

### **Appointments to Client Rights Committee**

Vanessa Anderson noted that the Client Rights Committee consists of nine members from Burke and Catawba Counties. The committee meets quarterly. Board members Crystal Leathers and David Isenhower serve on the current Client Rights Committee. The committee reviews quarterly data, incidents, and complaints. They look for trends in the information. They also make recommendations to the LME.

We are in the process of rebuilding the Client Rights Committee. The terms begin July 1, 2008 and some are staggered for one year. The purpose of staggering is to prevent all terms from expiring at the same time. We would like to reappoint Tony Berry as Chair of the Client Rights Committee and extend his current term by four months, expiring in June 2009 rather than in February 2009. It is also requested that David Isenhower's term be extended for one year to expire June 2009.

We will need two appointments from the Board of Mental Health Partners – one representative from Catawba and one from Burke. In addition to the two Board extensions, the following appointments to the Client Rights Committee are requested:

1. Jerry Woolard, Jr. (representing Catawba) – 3 year term expiring June 2011
2. Dorraine Hernandez (representing Burke) – 2 year term expiring June 2010
3. Donna Hollar (representing Catawba) – 3 year term expiring June 2011
4. Laurie Bradshaw (representing Burke) – 3 year term expiring June 2011

Crystal Leathers made a motion to approve the requested appointments and term extensions for the Client Rights Committee as requested. Ray Von Beatty seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was voted unanimously to approve the appointments and term extensions for the Client Rights Committee as requested.

## **Information Items**

The group reviewed the information items. Melanie Britt noted that the **Community Needs Assessment** has been completed. It was compiled using information from consumers, providers, and stakeholders. Melanie thanked the steering committee for their hard work on the assessment. Based on the assessment, we will focus on three main goals:

1. Make sure everyone knows who we are, what services are offered, and how to assess those services
2. Make sure crisis services are available – possibly establish a “warm line” for peer support (someone to talk to) and establish 23 hours observation of a client
3. More integrated services – We are talking with some providers to see how to proceed with this.

The LME will report quarterly to the Board and CFAC on how we are progressing with these goals. John noted that a Board retreat would also be planned for the fall to identify key strategic issues to focus on. We will use the Local Business Plan, Needs Assessment, etc. as tools.

John Hardy noted that per the **Quarterly Financial Report** as of March 31, 2008 we are on target with expenditures.

There are two upcoming training opportunities for Board members – one in Asheville on May 29-30, and the other at the NC Council's Spring Policy Forum in New Bern on June 9-10. Board members are encouraged to attend and the LME will financially support attendance at these trainings. If interested, please contact Janice Cornett.

With no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice D. Cornett  
Administrative Assistant II  
Clerk to the Mental Health Board