

Provider Alliance

July 27, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

MACMHB Office

Minutes

Present: Chair Mark Weeks (FWOGC), Mike Caza (Professional Counseling Center), Tory Hudson (Turning Leaf), Robert McLuckie (ASI), Terrance Newton (Harbor Hall), David Pankotai (Consumer Link), Ken Ratzlaff (Beacon), Mike Reagan (Proactive), Sally Reames (Community Healing), Ben Robinson (Rose Hill Center), Fi Spalvieri (Community Living Options), Kathleen Swantek (Blue Water), Greg Toutant (Great Lakes Recovery Ctr), Phil Weaver (Hope Network), Grady Wilkinson (Sacred Heart) Jacque Wilson (TTI), Kathryn Young (New Passages)

Staff Present: Michael Vizena and Georjean Knapp

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Mark Weeks called the meeting to order at 10:10am.

The minutes of the June 22, 2009, meeting were accepted as presented.

2. Legislative Update including State Budget

Association Director Michael Vizena referred the group to the House Republican's proposed budget.

He reported that the Association, along with our lobbyists and PR firm, is planning an event during the week of August 10 with the principle focus on the GF reduction. The plan is to come up with 5 specific vignettes; showing who the cuts affect. Included will be a description of what we have been able to do historically for these people but will no longer be able to do with the cuts that are being suggested.

The group discussed an action plan to:

- Focus on the economic impact of the cuts
- Send a letter to legislators; including interviews with consumers and photos
- Encourage use of social media for broadcasting stories on the people that will be most impacted by the cuts
- Hold a press conference on the state Capitol steps with several legislators present

- Hold a state version of Hill Day
- Improve administrative efficiencies
- Develop strategic partnerships
- Mr. Weeks will extend an invitation each month to legislators to attend a TPA meeting

The Alliance will develop its agenda and send to the Association's Contract & Financial Issues and Policy Committees.

TPA's Policy and Advocacy Committee will begin a project around administrative efficiencies. Ideas will be sent to Dave Pankotai. To date there have been no conversations with DCH regarding where we can find inefficiencies and correct them.

3. Lobbying efforts / MACMHB lobbyist

Mr. Weeks explained the Alliance's plan to Betsy Wiehl from Weiner and Associates.

Ms. Wiehl indicated that jamming the legislature's system with emails will make them mad, but at this point what is there to lose. Do the same to the budget director and the governor's office. Make no assumptions at this point.

What is the best way to communicate? If timing permits, a letter is always welcome. If time is short, phone calls or emails would be best.

How would one go about having a hill day here in Michigan? Ms. Wiehl's recommendations include being well organized, knowing your legislator and the committee members. One potential pitfall is if participation isn't what you hope. This can be demoralizing. If you have a hill day, you must commit to it.

What are the most effective steps for us to take at this time? Rallies using consumers to highlight some of the issues on the table can be very effective. Generate media coverage. Ms. Wiehl believes that now would be a good time to hold a press conference.

Ms. Wiehl stated that the discussion is not about whether a state shutdown will occur, but how long will it last. She believes this is part of the budget process.

How do we engage the Provider Alliance members who do not attend the meetings? Only about one-third of the provider group attend the meetings.

Mr. Weeks will send an email out to the group regarding today's discussion.

Association staff will tweak the talking points on the budget that are already being used. There was discussion on developing a petition for folks to sign and include the talking points. Keep it simple. This does not take the place of individual letters.

Muchmore Harrington Smalley Associates, lobby firm for MACMHB, was unable to attend today's meeting and will be invited to attend the meeting on September 24, 2009.

4. TPA Meetings (future schedule)

There was discussion on whether the number of meetings should be reduced. The consensus of the group is to continue meeting monthly.

5. Update on Provider Alliance Committees

Committees did not meet.

6. Other

Robert McLuckie reported on the meeting of the Editorial Network group regarding combining the Association board member newsletter *Connections* and the *Provider Alliance Newsletter*. TPA will have a column in every issue. The list of recipients of the newsletter will be expanded to include the legislators.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting of The Provider Alliance is scheduled for August 24, 2009, 10:00am, MACMHB office, Lansing.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

Georjean Knapp