

**MAYOR'S MENTAL
HEALTH
TASK FORCE
REPORT**

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MAYOR'S MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

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MAYOR'S MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

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“Charge”

- ◆ **Assess the state of the mental health care system in the greater Chapel Hill community, focusing on the services provided, funding, and impact on the community as a whole**
 - ◆ **Create broader awareness of mental health care issues in Chapel Hill and generate discussion**
 - ◆ **Provide recommendations regarding the future of mental health care services for residents of Chapel Hill and Orange County**
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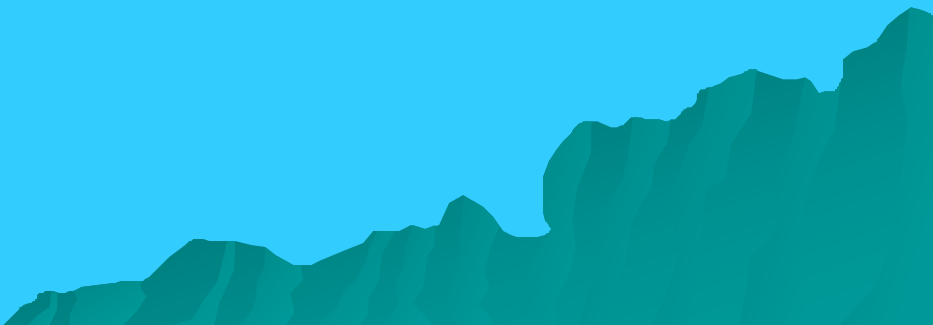
NOTE!!

- ◆ Intent of the Mayor to understand “the community as a whole” to mean both the Town of Chapel Hill and its environs – extending to Orange County as a whole.
- ◆ “Mental health services/system” understood to encompass the mental health (community and institutional), developmental disabilities and substance abuse domains.

Our Work

- ◆ 7 Task Force meetings
- ◆ 2 Public “listening sessions”
- ◆ 2 Work groups that met 5 times
- ◆ Solicited input from Town of Chapel Hill department heads
- ◆ Blog site – public comments; reports and information
- ◆ Web page within Town website

***Assess the state of the
mental health care system
in the greater Chapel Hill
community***



MH Reform mandated in 2001. State of system in 2009:

- ◆ **Fragmented, complex, inequitable system characterized by "silos of care" and service/access gaps**
- ◆ **State leadership has been weak and "reactive"**
- ◆ **Providers are losing money**
- ◆ **Many under-served individuals, including those...**

- ...lost from the system during reform and never found again
- ...at risk of homelessness or already homeless
- ...whose care is not already funded through Medicaid or private insurance or is funded through Medicare
- ...in the 18-25 age group

Strengths of the mental health service delivery system in Chapel Hill and environs

- ◆ Committed provider community
- ◆ UNC network of inpatient/outpatient services = *de facto* "safety net"
- ◆ Local government services/supports
- ◆ OPC strives to maximize services
- ◆ Orange County Mental Health Association and NAMI Orange County lead active education/advocacy efforts

*Positive outcomes **CAN** be
achieved*



Challenges of the mental health service delivery system in Chapel Hill and environs

◆ Gaps in service

Transportation - Adult day programming - After hours and weekend services - Post-hospitalization continuing care - Services for 18 to 25 age group - Social work services for shelter residents - Services for elderly individuals

◆ Over-reliance on UNC as both first and last resort.

◆ Attraction of our area for people with mental health issues (UNC and the general climate)

◆ Navigating the mental health system - no simple road map

◆ The advantage for access to services held by individuals with Medicaid coverage.

◆ Inadequate supply of safe, affordable housing

The Newest Challenge: State Budget Cuts

- ◆ 2010 state budget takes some \$75 million from MH/developmental disabilities/substance abuse service system – including elimination of community support services
- ◆ OPC: This translates into \$2,250,518 in cuts to the state funds available for services in Orange, Person, and Chatham Counties - 21.5% of our non-crisis state service funding
- ◆ Reductions in Medicaid services will also affect people with these challenges

Task Force Member/Provider re Cuts

"As a community, we are in lot worse situation than we were when the task force was actively meeting. Community support is going away with nothing yet in place to replace it; Medicaid rates have been cut across the board; provider agencies are laying off staff or at least reducing pay.

The proposed definition of a comprehensive service agency will favor large, corporate providers and make it harder for smaller agencies to survive.

In our adult mental health community, we have historically had providers whose services complemented each other. With the new proposed requirements we will have to duplicate services and compete."

Provide recommendations regarding the future of mental health care services for residents of Chapel Hill and Orange County

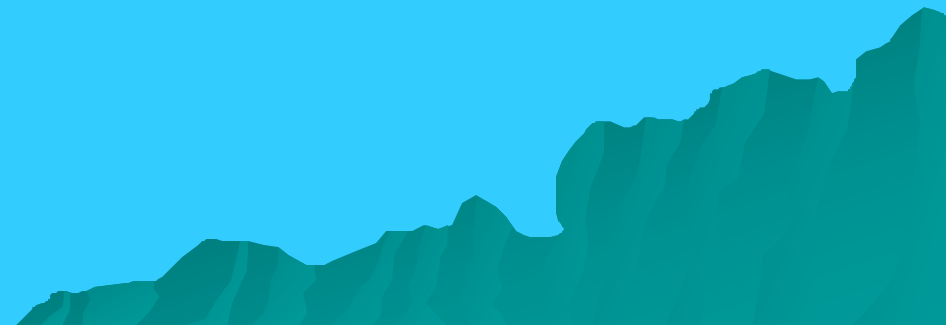


Advocacy at State Level

- ◆ **BE AWARE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING to compound an already bad state of affairs - Add our voices to those of active advocates for change at the state level (e.g., our local legislators; NAMI; Mental Health Association; other professional organizations).**
- ◆ **Encourage local provider agencies to come together and speak collectively to increase state legislator/policy leader awareness of the impact of the choices they are making.**

Local Action

Where we can make an impact



Service Capacity Increases

- 1. Increase MSW student placements in provider agencies and add clinical supervision for students and provisionally licensed workers.**
- 2. Create a partnership with the Mental Health Association in Orange County to expand the Pro Bono Counseling Network.**

Enhanced local law enforcement/safety personnel awareness of/sensitivity to mental health issues

- 3. Extend Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) throughout the ranks of local law enforcement and, ultimately, to other safety personnel.**

Strong local government leadership

4. Use local government offices (Mayors and Managers) and legislative bodies (Council, Commissioners, Aldermen) as platforms (“bully pulpits”) and vehicles of support for campaigns/efforts to proactively increase community awareness of mental health/developmental disabilities/substance abuse issues and to reduce associated social stigma.

Specific Ideas

Establish ongoing capacity for providing issue leadership over the longer term.

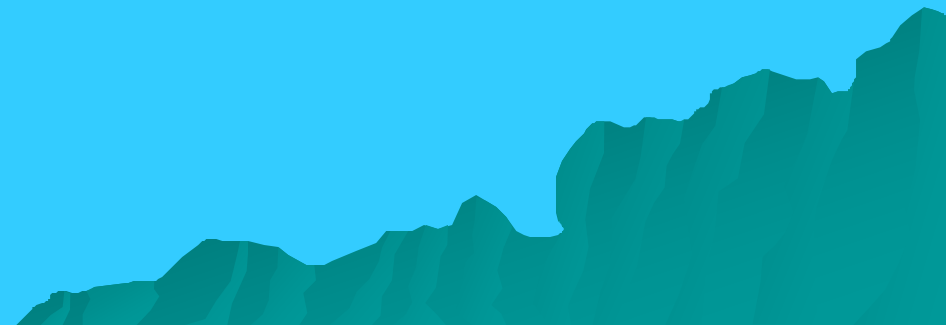
- **Standing committee(s) of Town Council/Commissioners/Aldermen**
- **Subcommittee(s) of Human Services Advisory groups**
- **Joint local government committee/group formed through Assembly of Governments**
- **Capacity within Mayor/Manager offices**

With capacity for local government issue leadership in place, a significant, ongoing public information campaign could be implemented through:

- ◆ **Collaboration with MHAOC, Healthy Carolinians and other advocacy groups to reduce social stigma associated with mental illness (use of bus advertisements; PSAs; materials distribution)**
- ◆ **Dissemination of information in town/county employee orientations, through pay check notices, OWASA bills, etc.**
- ◆ **Increased collaboration between schools and mental health professionals for family education about signs of depression, substance abuse, etc.**

- ◆ **Increased local government collaboration with UNC Center for Excellence.**
- ◆ **Use of local government webpages.**
- ◆ **Local government support for existing volunteer groups that are working to increase public awareness of the needs of persons with mental illness.**
- ◆ **Local government/OPC collaboration to increase awareness of the OPC Star Unit as the primary entry point into the mental health system. Campaign to publicize telephone numbers - 919-913-4100 or 1-800-233-6834.**

Continuing Commitment of Task Force Members



- ◆ **Work with the Town of Chapel Hill to ensure that the Town website includes important information**
 - ◆ **Seek media opportunities (letters to editor, profiles of provider agencies, Op Eds, etc.) tied in with a campaign to increase public awareness**
 - ◆ **Increase community awareness through appearances before various local government bodies, meetings with governmental staffs, dialogue with the County Human Services Commission and Town Human Services advisory groups, presentations to local service groups, etc.**
 - ◆ **Seek to partner with the county Third Sector Alliance – perhaps a MH/DD/SA work group?**
 - ◆ **Partner with the Town of Chapel Hill and the UNC Center for Excellence to convene issue-focused symposia.**
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