

**S.C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
S.C. Department of Mental Health**

**Waccamaw Center for Mental Health
164 Waccamaw Medical Park Drive
Conway, SC 29526**

**October 2, 2008
Center Presentation**

Attendance:

Commission Members

Alison Y. Evans, Psy.D., Chair (excused)	J. Buxton Terry	
Joan Moore, Vice Chair	Jane B. Jones	Harold E. Cheatham, PhD

Staff/Guests:

Geoff Mason	Murry Chesson	Sam Paggeot
Lori Chappelle	Linda F. Wright	Tom Lucas
M. Janice Smith	Gilmore McManus	Michelle Little
Jackie Brown	Mark Bellamy	Jan Gawith
Richard Ellison, MD	Mary E. Owen	Hunter Richardson

The S.C. Mental Health Commission met at the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health on Thursday, October 2, 2008. Joan Moore, Vice Chair, called the center presentation to order at 9:00 a.m. in Alison Evans' absence.

Murry Chesson, Executive Director of Waccamaw Center, acknowledged that the center's board of directors is very interested in and active in the work that the center performs. He mentioned that the center's staff is involved in many projects of the Department, such as the Co-Occurring State Infrastructure Grant (COSIG) headed up by Ethel Bellamy. Waccamaw Center also has many partnerships in the community. It has partnerships with the schools, the Alcohol and Drug Commission, and the hospitals. Mr. Chesson said that there are seven hospitals in the three counties served by the center; however, there are no psychiatrists at these hospitals. He said that approximately 5 years ago the center entered into a partnership with a private group, Lighthouse Care Center, which provides psychiatric coverage in the area. The center has grown through the years through the many partnerships it has started.

Mr. Chesson said there were two board members present, Gilmore McManus and Mary Owen. He reiterated that the board provides support to the center and the board members are very active in the center's business. Mr. Chesson said that in the many years he has been at the center, he can remember only two meetings where there was no quorum present at a board meeting to conduct business.

At this point, Mr. Chesson asked staff to introduce themselves to the Commission.

Mr. Chesson then introduced Linda Wright, who said there will be two presentations by staff this morning. Ms. Wright said there are over 2,000 clients that are served by the Waccamaw Center. She said that Horry County is unique in that it is a county rich in terms of tourism, but it is also a rural county where many persons live who are at the poverty level.

Ms. Wright introduced Lori Chappelle, Director of Children's Services at Waccamaw Center, and Sam Paggeot, School-based Services Coordinator in Horry County. Ms. Chappelle said that mental health problems affect one in every five young people at any given time. There are approximately two-thirds of all young people with mental health problems who are not getting the help they need.

School-based services refer to meeting with the children and the entire community who interact with the child. In South Carolina, school-based services are delivered in 427 schools; 223 elementary, 126 middle, 77 high, and 31 alternative/other schools. In fiscal year 2008, Waccamaw Center served 2,732 youth in the School-based Services program. In the center's catchment area, School-based services are delivered in 71 schools; 39 elementary, 15 middle, 16 high and 1 alternative/other school. The center has 55 mental health counselors.

School-based services are done in partnership with the center and the schools. Other partners include grant offerings from the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation, which provides funding for 10 positions, and the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant, which provides funds for 14 positions.

Some of the common childhood mental health disorders served by Waccamaw Center are Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, and Depressive Disorders. The center is also beginning to see many children with Bipolar Disorder, various Eating Disorders, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Counselors work with the children to the point where the counselor can remove themselves from the situation. Children are in the School-based program an average of 16 months.

School-based Services has been recognized as a Best Practice by the Surgeon General's Report of 1999, and the President's New Freedom Commission Report of 2003. The school system is the most universal natural setting for treating children with mental health disorders as all children are required to attend school. Goals of the School-based Service Program are:

- To increase the accessibility of mental health services for children and families in need of these services in a community setting;
- Provide mental health programs that address early intervention and prevention services for schools and the community; and,
- Provide mental health consultation for teachers and other school staff on specific children and/or general mental health topics.

Families, students and the schools receive many benefits from School-based services. Some of these benefits are:

- Non-stigmatizing
- Counselors can work with families more often
- Immediate access to discuss problems/challenges
- Support network at school; and
- Crisis episodes are handled immediately

When schools are not in session, families and students are encouraged to participate in counseling during the summer months. Counselors will meet with families at home or in the community at another convenient location. A manual has been developed of School-based activities.

Mr. Fran Savageau, Chief Executive Officer of Lighthouse Care Center, said that his facility was started in 2001. It is a 104 bed treatment center, containing long term care beds for children, a residential treatment facility for adolescents, alcohol and drug beds, and a 52 bed acute psychiatric unit. Lighthouse Care Center has responsibility for evening and weekend coverage in the local emergency rooms. Lighthouse Care Center is a member of the S.C. Hospital Association and is the largest private provider of psychiatric healthcare in the area. The facility is currently applying for a Certificate of Need for 22 additional psychiatric beds. Lighthouse Care Center is part of Psychiatric Solutions. Anne Summer is a full time consultant with Psychiatric Solutions.

The Homeless and Housing team at Waccamaw Mental Health includes Linda Wright, Al Teague and Jackie Spencer Brown. Ms. Brown mentioned there are over 3,000 homeless individuals in the area.

Georgetown and Horry County is part of a group founded in 1997 called the Total Care for the Homeless Coalition (TCHC), whose mission is to end homelessness by bringing services and housing to the homeless. Other counties in TCHC are Lee, Sumter, Clarendon and Williamsburg counties. As this coalition expands, it will be called the Eastern Carolina Homeless Coalition (ECHO). Some of the projects funded through this coalition are:

- Williamsburg Economic Community Commission;
- Wateree Community Actions
- Santee-Lynches CDC
- Any Length Recovery
- Home Alliance Inc.

Balsam Place is part of the Home Alliance. This is a complex that is for single adult males, 18 and older, who were formerly homeless, disabled and have a co-occurring disorder. Several requirements of this program are that the residents maintain abstinence from drugs and /or alcohol; seek and or find employment; and, maintain mental health stability. The Department of Mental Health provided \$173,000 toward the renovation of Balsam Place. Total cost of the project was \$1.2 million. Cost per unit is \$48,920.

Other homeless projects of Waccamaw Mental Health are:

- Swansgate Apartments – 122 apartment complex operated with the City of Myrtle Beach. This is for the elderly and the disabled.
- Alliance Inn Apartments – 44 homeless transitional units.
- Porter Place – 14 units for the homeless and disabled.
- Meadowlands Apartments – 12 units for homeless and disabled in Georgetown County

It was noted there are no homeless shelters in Williamsburg County. Without the housing provided through these various programs, the homeless would be on the streets.

Mr. Chesson said that Horry County has the highest number of homeless individuals in the area. At present, several grants are being applied for by Waccamaw Mental Health to enable expansion of the homeless units. He said the Housing and Homeless Program has been a successful program for the center for many years. He and the Housing and Homeless staff appreciate the efforts of DMH Central Office's, Michele Murff. Meaningful employment and housing are two elements of the Recovery program.

There being no further discussion, the center presentation was concluded at 10:15 a.m.

Joan Moore, Acting Chair
SC Mental Health Commission

Connie Mancari, Recording Secretary
SC Mental Health Commission