

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

**Coastal Empire Mental Health Center  
1050 Ribaut Road  
Beaufort, SC 29902**

**August 4, 2011  
Center Presentation**

**Attendance:**

**Commission Members**

Alison Y. Evans, Psy.D., Chair  
Joan Moore, Vice Chair  
Jane B. Jones

J. Buxton Terry  
Everard Rutledge, PhD

**Staff/Guests:**

John H. Magill  
Jerry Stewart

Ray Norris  
Bob Medzie

Andrea Allen

The S.C. Mental Health Commission met at the Coastal Empire Mental Health Center, 1050 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, on Thursday, August 4, 2011. Alison Y. Evans, Psy.D., Chair, called the center presentation to order at 9:00 a.m. Dr. Evans turned the meeting over to Ray Norris, Executive Director of Coastal Empire Mental Health.

Mr. Norris presented an overview of the center as well as the beginnings of the community mental health system. Mr. Norris said the community mental health system began in the 1960's. At that time, it was felt that the community mental health system was a system that would provide a place for persons coming out of the State Hospital. This concept did not work very well as the community at that time only provided minimal care for those individuals who were discharged from the State Hospital.

Mr. Norris said that the idea of "Recovery and Resiliency" was developed and both of these were encapsulated in the mission of the Department, which is to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses. This idea cannot be accomplished without competent and dedicated staff. Mr. Norris said the center has the following staff:

Psychiatrists	4
Nurses	6
Social Workers/Mental Health Counselors	34
Clinical Counselors	6
Job Coach	1
Area Support Staff	12
Administration	13
Client Affairs Coordinator	1
Housekeeping/Maintenance/Grounds	4.5
Total FTE's	95

These 95 staff are spread across six locations. Coastal Empire Mental Health Center serves the following counties: Allendale, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Hilton Head and Jasper, and covers approximately 3,260 square miles. Mr. Norris said that some of these counties are the poorest in the state; e.g. Allendale County, which has also had an unemployment figure as high as 27

percent. On the other hand, Beaufort County has one of the highest per capita incomes in the state. Coastal Empire's catchment area is largely rural in nature.

Coastal Empire has a very active board that is extremely supportive of the center and its activities.

Coastal Empire provides the following services to clients, families and the communities:

- Outpatient services for both adults and children.
- Rehabilitation which is offered through the Recovery Center in Beaufort, Magnolia Place in Walterboro and Home Share in Beaufort.
- Services to children are provided anywhere, everywhere and after hours.
- Child/Family services are family focused
- Trauma services for young children.

Mr. Norris mentioned the Collaboration of Services to Youth (COSY), which has been in existence since 1993. This is an interagency service for out of home placement of children and children who have multi-agency needs.

Partners of Coastal Empire include the following:

- Mental Health America – 20 year partner providing housing in the form of the Canal Apartments, a 20 unit building.
- NAMI – 20 year partner providing housing in the form of Oakview Commons.
- Beaufort Memorial Hospital – 15 year partner providing local inpatient care. The hospital also has a 12 bed mental health unit and is looking to develop a high management unit for use as a step-down from the hospital.

Mr. Norris mentioned the contributing county partners of Beaufort, Hampton, Allendale and Jasper Counties. The center receives no funding from Colleton County. Other partners of Coastal Empire are Hampton School District 2, primary health centers, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs in Beaufort.

Mr. Norris said the center faces many challenges in the coming years, one of which is funding. He said that the state funding levels are currently at 1986 levels. There are also many questions about the challenges surrounding the new HealthCare Reform bill. Medicaid, too, is a challenge and a problem. A continuing challenge for not only Coastal Empire Mental Health Center, but all of the Department of Mental Health is recruitment and retention of physicians and nurses. State salaries are not competitive with the private sector when looking to hire competent people. Mr. Norris said that another challenge for the center is succession planning. Also, the current staff needs to be nurtured so they have the desire to advance in the organization.

The next presentation was by Mr. Robert Medzie, Supervisor of the Recovery Center Clubhouse, who is also in recovery. Mr. Medzie said the Recovery Center acts like a mini mental health center. Its purpose is to help the individual stay on track and avoid decompensation. Other services provided include rehabilitation, psychiatric assessment, visiting nurses who provide medication monitoring, crisis intervention, targeted case management and clinical case management. Mr. Medzie said that the center provides a job coach for the clients, which is currently not a Medicaid funded service. Recovery Center also provides limited transportation for clients in certain areas in order for clients to make appointments. The center also works with

families of the clients to help families and caregivers understand the mental illness their family member is experiencing.

At present, Recovery Center has 92 clients in three areas. Of the 92, 28 are living independently, three clients are living with their spouses, 37 clients live with their families, and 19 clients live with providers. Coastal Empire Mental Health Center serves 215 people on any given day; Recovery Center sees about 68 clients a day. The average age of the clients in the program is 45. Each staff person has a case load of 12 clients.

Mr. Medzie said the psychosocial rehabilitative service program has seen some positive results, such as the increase in the psychosocial rehabilitative service (PSR) rate in 2009 from 59 percent to 70 percent.

Mr. Medzie said the center had a very successful clubhouse model; however, due to changes in the Medicaid rates, it was dismantled in 2009. There were some good things done at the clubhouse, such as, support for the clients in helping them overcome the stigma of their illness, and helping clients identify with others experiencing the same type of problem.

Mr. Medzie said that Recovery Center and Magnolia Place have been training sites for 90 nurses and three medical students. These nurses and medical students come from the Technical College of the Low Country and the University of South Carolina. These individuals are able to get the flavor of the mental health field and are able to see the disability of an individual and the potential they can attain if the person obtains the right amount of supports. Mr. Medzie said the students from Technical College were able to give the center five days over a three week period; University of South Carolina's program was two days over three weeks.

There being no further business, the center presentation concluded at 10:05 a.m.

---

Alison Y. Evans, Psy.D., Chair  
SC Mental Health Commission

---

Connie Mancari, Recording Secretary  
SC Mental Health Commission.

/cm