

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

**Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center  
2319 St. Matthews Road  
Orangeburg, SC 29118**

**September 1, 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  
Susan Terry  
Geoff Mason

Bessie Abraham  
Robert Bank, MD

Willie Priester  
Brenda Hart

The S.C. Mental Health Commission met at the Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center, 2319 St. Matthews Road, Orangeburg, SC, on Thursday, September 1, 2011. Alison Y. Evans, Psy.D., Chair, called the center presentation to order at 9:00 a.m., and turned the meeting over to Bessie Abraham, Executive Director of Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center (OAMHC).

Ms. Abraham said the center is very happy to host the Commission today. She said there would be two presentations today. The first presentation had to do with the Crisis Intervention Program, and the second presentation would be on Consumer Housing. Ms. Abraham turned the program over to Mr. Willie Priester, Assistant Director.

Mr. Priester is also the Clinic Director at OAMHC and his first presentation was on Crisis Intervention. Mr. Priester said that the center tries to serve the clients as they (the staff) would like to be served. Clients in crisis are evaluated as quickly as possible in order to relieve them of their symptoms. The Crisis Intervention program has a Program Coordinator and four full-time Mental Health Professionals. The program provides:

- Walk-in appointments for evaluation;
- 24/7 available crisis intervention;
- Post-crisis follow-up and treatment; and,
- Referral services as warranted.

Orangeburg Mental Health received \$125,000 from the Department of Mental Health for the crisis stabilization team. The center also received \$90,000 for the purpose of purchasing crisis beds.

Mr. Priester said the program began in 2006 when the center sent approximately 140 people to the State Hospital. This number is equal to about 11.7 admissions per month. The following year, the center was able to reduce this number to 108 clients, and the number of clients sent to the State Hospital has been on the decline ever since. For the period July 1, 2010 through April 30, 2011, total admissions were 55.2; the goal for FY'12 is 52.4. The number of clients waiting in the emergency room in FY'07 was .42, which is a weekly average. Mr. Priester said that on the Monday morning snapshot report for this week, Orangeburg had no clients waiting in the

emergency room. The average length of stay in the hospital for the period 7/1/08 through 4/30/09 was 8.4 days. For the period 7/1/10 through 4/30/11, the length of stay was 10.4 days. Mr. Priester said that this length of stay is higher because two clients who required an extended period of hospitalization time skewed the average length of stay. If these two clients were excluded, the average length of stay would have been eight days.

Mr. Priester next had a presentation on the housing options available to clients of Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center. He said that Mental Health America (MHA) feels that housing is important to a client's recovery; therefore, MHA has been most helpful with housing to Orangeburg's clients. Orangeburg Mental Health has the following housing units available in the counties listed:

- Bamberg County – Shilito Apartments in Denmark. Four one-bedroom units.
- Calhoun County – 14 units available in Calhoun County. These are four one-bedroom units.
- Orangeburg County
  - Allen Hearth – 14 one-bedroom units.
  - Bracey Apartments – This was previously established through a private non-profit organization out of Sumter. The apartment complex was initially three units, with four additional units added a few years ago. This apartment complex was established for individuals who may be homeless.
  - Enderly East – Twenty one-bedroom units. Enderly East was the first housing project in Orangeburg.
  - Pine Hill Apartments – This was established through a provider out of Charleston. This provider came in and provided housing not specifically designated for mentally ill clients. Pine Hill is a facility containing 70 one, two and three bedroom units. The center was able to carve out five units for mental health clients. Clients in these units are predominantly homeless.
  - Terry Village – The newest apartment complex, has 14 one-bed units. Clients are beginning to move into Terry Village. Ms. Abraham thanked Commissioner Terry for his role in acquiring the land to build Terry Village.

Mr. Priester said the total units available to mental health clients in the Orangeburg catchment area is 79. This is one of the highest available in the state. Mr. Priester said 59 of these units were started in the last ten years. Mr. Priester said that the center is continually staffing to fill all vacancies in the apartments.

There being no further business, the center presentation concluded at 9:30 a.m.

As there was some time before the Commission could begin the business meeting, Mr. Magill had two items to discuss. The first item is the documentary that ETV wants to do on the Bull Street property. He felt at first that it could be done out of ETV funds; however, the final number is well above the initial \$30,000 figure initially given. The proposal is now at \$51,000 and it could increase. This is for a 30 minute documentary. Mr. Magill asked the Commission their thoughts on raising funds to pay for the documentary. He said that he has approached a couple of entities concerning donations; one of which is Lilly. The other source of a donation is the MHA board; however, both of these donations would only cover about half of the cost of the documentary.

An idea brought to Mr. Magill by Gloria Prevost is a film called the Traveling Suitcases. He said it concerns a State Hospital in the Northeast that closed in 1995. After closing, the staff found suitcases filled with clothing from former patients in the attic of the hospital. A traveling display

was created depicting what these individuals went through while patients in the hospital. Mr. Magill is unsure about using this as a fund raiser for the documentary.

The Commission felt that guidelines need to be developed for them to use in trying to secure benefactors for the funding. These guidelines would include what the documentary is about, why the Commission and DMH are trying to have this documentary done, and the significance of the project. Also, a point person should be designated to lead this effort. Mr. Terry was chosen as the point person and a meeting will be called in the next few weeks to brainstorm ideas on fund raising.

Mr. Magill then told the Commission about the meeting at Harris Hospital on Tuesday of this week. He explained it was a hospital collaboration where the CEO's of all the upstate hospitals were in attendance. Also attending the meeting were members from the SC Hospital Association, six to seven directors of the Alcohol and Drug 301's, and DMH staff. The purpose of the meeting was to address the emergency room situation and the use of telepsychiatry. Mr. Magill said there will be follow up meetings. He is also trying to develop the same type of meeting in the Waccamaw area as the hospitals are very interested in this concept.

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

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Connie Mancari, Recording Secretary  
SC Mental Health Commission.

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