

**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 4, 2012
Center Presentation**

Attendance:

Commission Members

Alison Y. Evans, Psy.D., Chair
Joan Moore, Vice Chair

J. Buxton Terry
Jane B. Jones

Beverly Cardwell
Everard Rutledge, PhD

Staff/Guests:

John H. Magill
Lori Chappelle
Tanya Ray
Jan Gawith

Murry Chesson
Tom Lucas
Cheryl Myers
Martha Scott

Samantha Paggeot
Jackie Brown
Nadine Rochester
M. Janice Smith

Eryn Bergeron
Al Teague
Michelle Little
Everlena Lance

The S.C. Mental Health Commission met at the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health on Thursday, October 4, 2012. Alison Y. Evans, PsyD, Chair, called the center presentation to order at 9:00 a.m. Dr. Evans turned the center presentation over to Murry Chesson, Executive Director of the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health.

Mr. Chesson welcomed the Commission to Waccamaw and said that some of his staff would be highlighting some of the center's special programs. Mr. Norman Deas, Board Member of Waccamaw Center, delivered a brief invocation prior to the presentation.

Mr. Chesson explained that Waccamaw Center serves three counties: Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg, of which Horry County is the largest. In all the counties served, the emphasis is on children. One of the reasons the center has been so successful is the School-based Services Program. Mr. Chesson believes Waccamaw Center has the best School-based Services Program and Housing Program in the state.

Mr. Chesson introduced Lori Chappelle, Director of Children's Services. Ms. Chappelle said she has been the Children/Adolescents and Families (CAF) Director at Waccamaw since 2003. She explained that one in five children has a mental illness diagnosis, two-thirds of which do not get the services they need.

Ms. Chappelle said that from 2008 to 2012, number of youth served, dropped from 2,732 to 1,375; schools offering School-based services fell from 71 to 39; and the number of staff delivering the services fell from 55 to 30. At the present time, Williamsburg is the only county in the catchment area that donates money for School-based Services. Horry County went from giving \$250,000 to School-based Services, to zero. Also of note is that the population in need of these services has not changed; only the capacity to serve the population has changed.

School-based Services was recognized as a Best Practice in 1999 by the U.S. Surgeon General since it increases accessibility, decreases stigma, and allows for early intervention. When mental health issues intervene, children cannot learn. The center's commitment is to serve more children better. Approx. four years ago, the center worked on an RO1 grant with the University of South Carolina, titled "Strengthening the Quality of School Mental Health Services." This grant addressed the research to

practices gap, added to the limited research base on implementing evidence-based practice in the real world setting of schools, and will help lead other children's mental health programs to advance effective clinical practice. Because of its School-based Program, Waccamaw Center has been recognized as a Center of Excellence.

Mr. Chesson feels that the reason the program has continued to exist, even though county funding has been decimated, is because it is a good program and has good outcomes. Many of the schools have started their own School-based program. Schools have seen that this program works; therefore, they are trying to keep it at the local school. The school system is training its own staff to deliver School-based services. The center works alongside the school to deliver the services to the students. The goal is to keep the child in the classroom and let them learn.

Samantha Paggeot, School-based Services Coordinator, related a typical day as a School-based Counselor in the schools. Eryn Bergeron, School-based Services Supervisor, was also present at today's presentation/meeting.

Mr. Chesson next introduced Jackie Brown, Director of the Housing and Homeless Program at Waccamaw. Ms. Brown said the center relies heavily upon established community relationships. In Horry County, the center developed a private, non-profit corporation, Waccamaw Housing Inc. Currently, three projects have been developed through this relationship. The first was an agreement with a local developer to provide 14 one-bedroom units of housing in three phases of Swansgate Apartments in Myrtle Beach. The second project, through a Shelter Plus Care Grant, provides rental assistance vouchers to individuals and families who are homeless in Horry, Williamsburg and Georgetown counties. The third project is the development of Porter Place Apartments in Williamsburg County, which provides 20 one-bedroom affordable apartments for homeless individuals.

In cooperation with the city of Myrtle Beach and federal grants, Ms. Brown said that Alliance Inn was built. It opened in 2004 and provides 54 one, two and three bedroom units. An average of 66 children live at this complex.

The Mental Health of America Chapter in Georgetown County built 12 one-bedroom free standing units. This complex is called Meadowlands and is located in Andrews, SC for homeless individuals. Waccamaw Center, in partnership with Home Alliance Inc. developed Balsam Street apartments. Balsam Street consists of 25 single room units designed to accommodate the chronically homeless and disabled males.

Clients in all the units receive frequent and often daily contact with Waccamaw Center staff. Many of the clients placed in these housing programs are also involved with the Waccamaw Center employment program and are currently working or learning work skills.

Ms. Brown mentioned that one of the organizations the center collaborates with is the Eastern Carolina Homeless Organization (ECHO). This group maintains a continuum of care for individuals who are homeless. There are over 60 members representing over 50 agencies in ECHO that provide services to the homeless. They also provide shelter to homeless veterans coming into the county.

Mr. Al Teague, Outreach Services Coordinator of Palmetto Partnership for Homeless Assistance, said that according to the homeless management information system, there has been a big increase in the number of homeless children. Mr. Teague said that the Palmetto Partnership is comprised of the members of the media, press, social service agencies, government, the faith community, foundations and private individuals. Development of such an organization requires those individuals who can influence and raise funds for the homeless.

Mr. Teague mentioned that six percent of Americans are severely mentally ill and 20-25 percent of that number are homeless. It was mentioned that the homeless count in Horry County is done every two years. It is a point-in-time count and is done in January, and is very difficult to get a real number of homeless individuals.

Mr. Chesson then introduced several staff members, as well as staff of both Charleston Mental Health Center and Berkeley Mental Health Center.

Dr. Evans concluded the center presentation by awarding Murry Chesson a Resolution from the Commission in honor of his retirement. This Resolution reads as follows:

Whereas: The members of the South Carolina Mental Health Commission express our deep appreciation to Murry G. Chesson for serving as Executive Director of the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health since 2002; as well as the Interim Executive Director for Tri-County Mental Health Center since January, 2009; and

Whereas: Mr. Chesson's extensive knowledge of the Department, which he acquired since beginning his career with the agency on October 8, 1979, contributed enormously to the effective management of the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health during his tenure as Executive Director; and

Whereas: Mr. Chesson's able leadership and exemplary administrative skills added enormously to both centers' ability to continue to provide quality, client-oriented mental health services to the citizens of our state;

Now therefore: We express our profound appreciation to Mr. Chesson for his remarkable service to the mentally ill, and for the invaluable services to the Commission and to the Department of Mental Health throughout his 33 years of service; we offer him our sincere gratitude and best wishes for a happy retirement; and order that a copy of this Resolution be made a part of the Commission's permanent records.

October 4, 2012

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

Alison Y. Evans, PsyD, Chair
SC Mental Health Commission

Connie Mancari, Recording Secretary
SC Mental Health Commission