



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Authorized by Federal Law (42 U.S.C.A. 10801-10826) to protect and advocate for the rights of individuals with mental illness

PAIMI Advisory Council Annual Meeting Minutes

The PAIMI Advisory Council met for its bi-monthly meeting at 4:15 pm. on February 2, 2015 at the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities.

Present: Marisa Walls, Jill Hall, Kirk Lowry, Tom Behrendt and Deron Drumm

Telephone
Conference Jerilyn Newsom

Excused
Absence: Kathy Flaherty, Daniela Giordano

Guests: Jim McGaughey, Jennifer Henry

Staff: Craig Henrici, Executive Director, Gretchen Knauff, Assistant Director, Nancy Alisberg, Managing Attorney, Bruce Garrison, PAIMI Assistant Program Director, Jessica Rival, PAIMI Advocate

CALL TO ORDER

The PAIMI Advisory Council Meeting was called to order at 4:25 pm by Marisa Walls.

OLD BUSINESS

The minutes from December 7, 2014 were reviewed and corrected to include the correct date. Tom Behrendt moved to accept the minutes with this change. The motion was seconded by Kirk Lowry. The minutes were accepted as amended by the Council.

Jill Hall reviewed the main points of her proposed PAC by-law revisions. Hall's proposal, in its written entirety, will be disseminated to the PAC prior to a special meeting for discussion.

Marisa Walls moved to hold the current membership in place until such time as an individual is replaced or resigns from the PAC. Kirk Lowry seconded the motion which was unanimously passed by the membership in attendance. Discrepancies in the current count of official PAC members was discussed, terms noted, and the statute reviewed. Gretchen Knauff offered to inform the PAC of the required percentage of members needed to represent each mandated category. Gretchen Knauff also offered to research other PACs to obtain and compare their PAC membership numbers to P&A's. Nancy Alisberg suggested that the PAC might be interested in training from NDRN regarding by-law writing, efficiency of the PAC, orientation for PAC members, etc. Nancy A. offered to connect with NDRN to obtain information about what specific trainings NDRN can provide, and present this information to the Council for the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Craig Henrici announced that a new advocate has been hired and would begin with P&A on February 6, 2015. He also gave a brief overview of proposed legislation related to mental health that the office is following and reminded the Council that the bills can be found on the P&A website for review in depth. Any questions should be forwarded to Beth Leslie, the office's legislative liaison.

Managing Attorney's Report

Nancy Alisberg reported that OPA vs. CT is still ongoing. She provided an update on the Amicus brief written on behalf of a client removed from the Whiting Forensic Institute and placed at Northern Correctional Institute. She reports that on January 15, 2015 arguments were held, and she felt the court was more sympathetic. The Justices appeared to disagree with the assertion that there is no Constitutional Right to Treatment and questioned the level of treatment available at Northern. Nancy A. also reviewed the Quinnipiac case decision which led the university to revise its policies, the client to be awarded damages, and has gained national prominence as the "best DOJ settlement on this issue." She reviewed a similar case that had occurred at Yale, and the usefulness of this decision in educating providers on program requirements for accommodating students with disabilities.

Assistant Program Director's Report

Mr. Bruce Garrison provided a summary of last year's Restraint and Seclusion Conference evaluations, which were largely favorable, noting informative speakers, opportunities for networking, data on successful examples of implementation of the 6 Core Strategies, and an impressive Panel presentation.

Mr. Garrison also noted that there has been an increase from last year, in the number of PAIMI clients the office has represented to date. He referred to some internal changes occurring in the unit, including the start of a new advocate for the PAIMI program. Mr. Garrison also shared with the PAC his thoughts following a workshop that he attended, led by Tina Mankowitz. Also referenced was a newspaper article written by Ms. Kathy Flaherty, a PAC member, on the efficacy of forced treatment.

Ms. Marisa Walls disseminated information to the PAC regarding Consent Agendas. The PAC discussed the advantages to receiving an agenda in advance, and the commitment of members to review minutes and reference materials in advance of meetings. The members agreed to review the information, and to discuss the issues at the next PAC meeting.

Ms. Marisa Walls welcomed to the PAC meeting guest, Mr. James McGaughey. Mr. McGaughey was asked to the PAC meeting to discuss the possibility of helping the PAC achieve one of its annual goals to produce an educational paper for policy makers on the PAC/s position on involuntary outpatient commitment and forced treatment. Possible points of exploration included exposing the myths underlying forced treatment to both individuals and society and synthesizing information from other reputable writers on this issue. Mr. McGaughey offered to author a proposal for review by P&A and the UCEDD.

ADJOURNMENT

Jill Hall motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by Marisa Walls at 6:04pm.

The next PAIMI Council Meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce Garrison