

Legislative Happenings

Volume I, Issue I

April 16, 2007

The Wisconsin Coalition for Marriage/Family Therapists, Professional Counselors, and Social Workers met on Friday, April 13, 2007 to discuss HFS 35 (Outpatient Clinic Rules). We were all in hopes that the new rule would be drafted, approved and ready for enactment by January 2007 but that has not happened.

There have been personnel changes in the department and we now must work with some new individuals but it is not going to be a bad thing, just more time will elapse before the Rule is in place.

The Governor did not feel that the Rule needed to be killed, rather some revisions needed to be in place before it could be law.

Gary Yeast, Chair of the Coalition, will schedule a meeting with Linda McCant who will be replacing Dan Zimmerman, the previous representative from the Department of Health/Family Services.

NASW, under the direction of Mark Herstand, seems to feel that the Rule is dead and they are forging ahead with their own legislation for Vendorship. We will definitely keep informed on the status of their efforts. We want to work with NASW but know that we have to go more slowly than some people wish.

A few key issues for HFS 35 include: one person clinics and non licensed professionals. We are all in hopes that the language in the Rule can be less political and more clinician friendly.

Those of us on the Coalition will be very involved in the rewriting of the Rule. I will keep you informed.

While some may feel that we are moving too slowly, I would like to reassure you that we all want to be able to reap all of the benefits that are available to clinicians.

If one wants to work with the Medicaid and Medicare population there is the need to be in a certified outpatient clinic.

Vendorship is something that we also want to explore. We need to rule out any Risks.

To help with all of the Legislative work, a new Lobbyist has come on board. Ann Jablonski will be picking up where Dimis Becker left off. Ann is a UW-Madison graduate and brings close to 20 years of experience to aid her as she keeps on top of the bills, rules, and key legislators. A sample of her clients includes: Wisconsin Clerks of Circuit Court Association, Wis-

consin Towns Association, Wausau Insurance, Humana Inc. City of Racine , City of Waukesha , and Wisconsin Academy of Trial Lawyers.

Ann can be reached at annjablonski1@charter.net

Ann was at the Coalition meeting and brought a few things to our attention. Be prepared for an increase in your renewal fee for your License. Currently the fee for most professionals is \$53.00 and the renewal fees vary from \$53.00 to \$343.00.

There is talk of an increase in reimbursement rates for Medicaid. No figures have been thrown out yet but I will keep you informed.

FYI - information has surfaced that the reason for the Medicare bill to fail last session was due to NASW getting a key legislator to pull the bill.

This bill has been reintroduced and according to The Advocate, the bill has passed the House and is now before the Senate. Check with AMHCA for current status.

If you have questions or comments please contact me, Deborah Lau Schingen at jschingen@wi.rr.com or (414)276-3856.

This is an exciting time as well as a busy time with regard to legislative issues. We need all of you to get involved and help WMHCA get strong and prosper