

**PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR INDIVIDUALS  
WITH MENTAL ILLNESS (PAIMI)  
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING  
Final Minutes  
November 14, 2007**

- Members Present:** Jacquelin Brown, Michael Newcomb, Lisa Ritchie (Acting Chair), CW Tillman (Secretary)
- Members Absent:** None
- Guests Present:** Patrick Cruden, Mary Grace Garner-Atkins, Kathy Harkey, Ali Parker, Liz Schell
- Staff Present:** Colleen Miller (Executive Director), Kim Mendella (Executive Assistant)
- Call to Order/  
Welcome/Introductions:** Lisa Ritchie, Acting Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:15. Colleen Miller asked that Council members, guests, and staff introduce themselves.
- Public Comment:** Ali Parker brought up a common situation that upon admittance to hospitals that often medications are denied until the admitting doctors obtain approvals from the primary physician. This may take days and even weeks in extreme cases. Problems occur even when the patient's name appears on the medication containers. This includes non-psychiatric and psychiatric medications.
- Liz Schell is an attorney with 25 years experience and 15 years in health care law. She believes that the [mental health] system is very disrespectful. She has seen both sides of mental health issues, often what patients say can be disregarded but as an attorney representing them, you can obtain action. She believes that mental illness can be described being like leprosy. There are no supports and there is a lot of shame.
- Mary Grace Garner-Atkins wants to get further information to help her step-granddaughter receive the services she deserves. She believes that this young woman is very capable but requires motivational enhancement. She wants suggestions

where her granddaughter can move to find work and appropriate services.

Kathy Harkey explained why she is at the meeting. She fights very hard for services for people with mental illness and doesn't agree with the closing of facilities when it can be a 2-year waiting list to get into a Community Service Board (CSB). Ms. Harkey mentioned that since her son was over the age of 18, she could not help him obtain treatment as his mother. She believes that there is so much stigma surrounding mental illness that often people do not 'step-up' so policy makers do not see accurate numbers. She is giving a voice to those who do not 'step-up'.

**February, June and August 2007 Minutes:**

Lisa Ritchie asked the Council members to review the minutes from the February, June and August 2007 meetings.

CW Tillman made a MOTION to accept the February minutes and Jacquelin Brown SECONDED the MOTION.

Ms. Brown made a MOTION to accept the June minutes and Ms. Ritchie SECONDED the MOTION.

Ms. Ritchie referred to pages 2 and 3 to suggest changes to the August minutes. Patrick Cruden made a MOTION to accept the August minutes as amended and Ms. Brown SECONDED the MOTION.

**Executive Director Update:**

Colleen Miller referred to the Progress on Objectives report in the PAIMI Advisory Council packet. This report contains all of the work VOPA completed in the last fiscal year and it includes all of the grants VOPA works under. Ms. Miller brought attention to the Council areas specific to people with mental illness. Ms. Miller highlighted several cases from the Litigation Report that VOPA worked on in the past year.

**Work Session - Council's Annual Report**

Ms. Miller directed the Council members' attention to the draft copy of the PAIMI PPR FY07 to discuss and comment on VOPA's work over the past fiscal year. This report will be used as a guideline for the

PAIMI Advisory Council's report.

Specific comments include the following:

- Concern that VOPA cannot investigate all suspected cases of abuse and neglect
- Concern that not all cases of abuse and neglect are reported to VOPA
- Council thinks that the investigative work that VOPA does on abuse and neglect is important and there is a need to look at juvenile facilities
- Council appreciates VOPA's work on gaining and maintaining access to [mental health] facilities
- VOPA's work around consumer direction is good, however, there is a need for further educating of policy makers
- VOPA needs to push power of attorney even if there maybe resistance to it
- There is a need to strengthen the WRAP process and to encourage stronger supports to PACT and stronger supports for people in crisis
- VOPA's work with children getting good and accurate assessments early in life is important. However, children maybe misdiagnosed and there is a problem with children earning modified diplomas
- Council believes that VOPA's work in the communities is important, there is a need for continued support for housing, transportation and the need to bring attention for psychiatric support animals
- Council thinks there should be more follow-up after discharge from facilities and CSBs to ensure positive adjustment to the community and increased ability to serve people with restricted incomes

**Governing Board  
Reports:**

Waja Grimm, Governing Board Member, addressed the council by telephone. Ms. Grimm announced that the FY08 Goals, Objectives and Focus Areas were passed during the last meeting with unanimous support. She thanked the Council of the feedback surrounding the goals and objectives as it has been a tremendous help to the Board.

The Board is currently rewriting the policy on

Critical Incident Reports that will be presented to the Board at the January 27, 2008 meeting. The board is also working on a new policy on state and community reporting of incidents.

Ms. Grimm mentioned the possibility of a retreat in April and the possible invitation to the PAIMI and DAC members. The retreat will address VOPA's outreach efforts and Council membership issues. She views the councils as a training process for future new Board members.

#### Governing Board Committee Reports

##### Finance Committee

Ms. Ritchie attended her first meeting on the committee in September. She suggested that there is a need for more orientation to the committee.

No other reports

#### Other Business

##### Membership

Ms. Ritchie asked the Council for suggestions to increase Council membership. She mentioned that the goal of having the PAIMI Advisory Council meeting hosted at different sites around the state was one method of getting more interest and outreach. Suggestions included putting notices into community newsletters, VOCAL newsletter, and free public service announcements on local community cable television channels. A subcommittee was established to look at membership with Lisa Ritchie and CW Tillman and to be staffed by Kim Mendella.

##### Election of Officers

Council members discussed officer positions with the knowledge that Ms. Ritchie's term will expire after the next meeting in February 2008 and new elections will be held. The following decision was made:

Lisa Ritchie to become Chair  
Jackie Brown to become Vice-Chair  
CW Tillman to remain as Secretary

Mike Newcomb made a MOTION to agree to the above officer selection. Mr. Tillman SECONDED the MOTION.

Meeting Dates

Mr. Tillman made a MOTION to change the meeting dates to be on a Thursday instead of Wednesday. Ms. Brown SECONDED the MOTION.

2008 meeting dates are as follows:

February 14

May 8

August 14

November 13

Meeting Locations

Ms. Brown suggested that meetings should be held at state facilities. Ali Parker suggested that Petersburg's Central State Hospital may be a good location for the next meeting in May. Mr. Newcomb suggested the second choice should be located in the southwest portion of the state, Catawba Hospital, which is close to Roanoke.

There being no further business, Lisa Ritchie asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Tillman made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Brown SECONDED the MOTION. The meeting was adjourned with unanimous approval at 2:35 p.m.

*FINAL MINUTES*

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2/14/2008

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Date