

April 11, 2007 Teleconference Notes

Next teleconference meeting will be: May 4, 2007 at 1 p.m. EST

Gold prize winning quote from our last meeting: **"You call them delusions of grandeur, we call them the plan."**

Participating: AK (Ted Eller), MA (Chris Busby), MD (Mike Finkle), NC (Jeff McCloud), NY (Peter Ashenden), PA (Mary Kohut), TN (Anthony Fox), TX (Mike Halligan), VA (Ann Benner), VT (Linda Corey), WA (Jill San Jule), WI (Molly Cisco), MH Self-Help Clearinghouse-Joseph Rogers, Staff-Lauren Spiro, National Empowerment Center-Dan Fisher, Judene Shelley and Erin Bolles.

1. Mental Health Parity

When Dan and Lauren met with Congressman Patrick Kennedy's policy advisor, it was clear that he would work with us if we supported the House Parity Bill. He has asked us to support Parity by signing-up as Citizen Co-Sponsors. For more information and to sign-up go to www.equitycampaign.net. Dan said that some activists are concerned that the parity bill would lead to more hospitalizations, but in actuality that hasn't happened. It offers more opportunity for community involvement.

2. Fundraising

Lauren said the NC would put out an announcement for people to be interviewed (consumers/survivors) for the "Voices of Hope and Recovery" CD series. Dan and Lauren emphasized the desire to interview a diverse group of people. The plan is to sell these CDs to raise funds. Some interviews have already been done.

Molly Cisco, Chair of the Fundraising Committee, said that most grants are to fund specific projects rather than operating expenses. Molly reported that **the Fundraising Committee needs more members**, and invited anyone who is interested to join the next call on Monday, April 16th at 8 a.m. EST.

Molly suggested that a staff person working directly under Lauren would be ideal, perhaps a Member Outreach person. Two foundations have been contacted so far, Ben & Jerry's for \$15,000 and the Ford Foundation for a possible \$150,000 (a letter of inquiry has been sent). Lauren met with the fundraiser at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law to get leads for additional foundations. Joseph mentioned that the organization, Resources for Human Development, has given funding in the past and might be a source to pursue.

Voting is a hot foundation topic, there is money for it. It's crucial that the number of consumers/survivors who vote increases.

3. Branding/logo for Coalition

A request was made to the group for ideas for a logo, graphics and a possible slogan to help put the Coalition on the level of similar groups on the Hill with catchy phrases, T shirts, etc. Individuals are invited to submit their suggestions. Some suggested sending the message to local artists and this idea was welcomed.

4. Membership update

Peter said applications have been received from Oklahoma Mental Health Consumer Council and Advocacy Initiative Network of Maine. Chris Busby from M-POWER in Massachusetts and Anthony Fox from Tennessee Mental Health Consumer's Association were both participating on the call and said their organizations are considering applying for membership soon. Consumer Networks in Indiana, Kansas, and Alabama have been contacted.

Molly & Dan are going to Iowa to help them organize a state-wide group. Lauren has been in contact with Idaho who is beginning to organize state-wide.

5. Hill update

CONSUMER STATEWIDE NETWORK FUNDING: Lauren is trying to get something in writing to commit that there will be 19 statewide network grants as of October 2007 (FY08)-- the same number as are currently funded. It appears that only 9 will be funded in this next cycle. The amount of money for family and consumer networking grants is still at the same level of funding, yet it appears there will be far less money for consumer statewide networking grants. The Coalition is requesting an increase to 25 states to be funded instead of the possible decrease.

TAC AND ALTERNATIVES CONFERENCE FUNDING: The Coalition is also supporting the continued funding of 5 TA Centers: 3 consumer-run and 2 consumer-supporter. This is also the source of the funding for the annual Alternatives Conference. All of these were slashed to zero in the President's proposed budget.

Lauren and Dan met with the appropriations person for Senator Harkin (Chair of Labor, Health and Human Service subcommittee). Lauren has meetings on the Hill in the next few days and would like updates from NH and Hawaii. Senator Herb Cole (WI) has weekly constituent breakfasts that anyone can go to and Mary Beth Stanton is his staff person.

Lauren is also working with the Campaign for Mental Health Reform and with the committee that is working on SAMHSA's reauthorization. She is advocating for language that increases the role, visibility & input of consumers.

BLOCK GRANT MONIES: Molly suggested that part of the block grants go toward the consumer networks. Lauren has been advocating in Washington that an increase in block grant money go towards consumer-run programs/organizations. The Campaign for MH

Reform is considering asking for 5% of block grant money to go to consumer-run programs and 5% to family-run programs and they are also considering asking for a doubling of the block grants as a whole.

Dan asked how many of the organizations on the teleconference get a substantial amount of Block Grant money: 6% goes to consumers in WI; VT gets significant block grant money; WA, MD, NY & PA get none; NC's organization is funded entirely by block grant funds; TX group gets 1.1 million in block grant funding (3%) out of 32 million but they are losing some in future

MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES IN DC: Eliza Eller is flying in from Alaska to work with NASMHPD on a Smoking Cessation Toolkit and has also set up meetings on the Hill. Lauren asked that if anyone is coming to DC to let her know and they can set up meetings with their representatives. Lauren asked that people call her (703) 862-6512 or email her laurenspiro1@gmail.com to let her know they are coming.

6. SAMHSA/CMHS

Dan mentioned that Dr. Kenneth Thompson from Pittsburgh is the new Medical Director at CMHS (the federal Center for Mental Health Services). The budget is not under his control but he has been very supportive of the recovery model, goals of consumer groups, etc.

The Transformation Grants, SIGs, are slated for a 30% cut. SAMHSA needs more consumers on its councils. The consumer presence has been described as the "kids' table" which indicates the abysmal level of their actual authority.

CMHS is doing a listening session in Chicago for the region. Molly said they were going to speak up that they would like to see 20% of the Block grant go to consumer networks. They are building consensus around the issues that are important to them. Lauren asked Molly to share the list of issues that they come up with. Molly is willing to share the list; she also asked if anyone had suggestions of issues that are important to give them to her.

7. NC meetings planned around the same time as Alternatives 2007, October 10-14, 2007 in St. Louis, Missouri: www.alternatives2007.org

The National Coalition is making plans for several gatherings in St. Louis at the same time as the Alternatives Conference.

An open meeting may be held Thursday, October 11, 2007 from 6-9 p.m.; we are looking for a separate space that is close to the Hotel where Alternatives is being held. And a members meeting and possible all-day training may be held on Wednesday, October 10, 2007 if there is not a SAMHSA sponsored day for the statewide networks. Mike Halligan volunteered to coordinate a committee to plan these events: Peter Ashenden, Molly Cisco and Lauren also agreed to work on the committee.

Mike Halligan said that Texas is one of the transformation workgroup states and the state is funding a statewide consumer conference in Austin in August. He would like to bring in some national people to speak. A. Kathryn Power is also speaking at the conference.

7. Other

WEBSITE: NCMHCSO has a new and improved website. Potential funders will check our web site. Please send resources (with web addresses) that you think would be helpful.

WEBSITES FOR EACH STATE: It could be good to have at least the mission statements and a profile of each member organization. It would be good to have links so when you click on a state, you go directly to the organization's website. Please make sure we have your current website listed on the member list.

VOTER REGISTRATION: Registering people to vote is one of the most important things we can do to increase our influence and have our voice heard. Dan asked that if anyone has a voting project, please email him information about it at: daniefisher@gmail.com. We want to gather information about what is being done. NICL and AAPD do a lot on voting.

Last but not least, on a lighter note we have

HUMOR & INSPIRATION: The meeting ended with someone asking how we pronounce our acronym. Lauren responded 'nkms0'. Someone said sounds like 'Make it so'. The discussion proceeded to ... Make our delusion a reality. You call them delusions of grandeur, we call them the plan. Power in numbers. The more we grow the more power we will have.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Friday, May 4 at 1 p.m. EST

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies:
(110th Congress)

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