

National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor
Organizations

1300 L Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005

www.ncmhcsso.org

June 7, 2007 Teleconference

Participating: (AK) Ted & Eliza Eller; (MD) Emily Hoffman; (PA) Dave Woledge; (TX) Mike Halligan; (VA) Bobbie Hepner; (WA) Laurie Benton; (WI) Molly Cisco; Dan Fisher, Judene Shelley, and Erin Bolles - National Empowerment Center.

Next teleconference scheduled for Monday July 16th at 3pm EST

Agenda

1. MEMBERSHIP:

Advocacy Initiative of Maine has been accepted for membership. TN, ID, and AL have been talking with us and we're continuing to do outreach to them. Molly talked a consumer group in IL; They are considering applying for membership. The question was brought up, what if you want to join and have no money? Since the membership fee is a percentage they wouldn't owe anything: "the percentage of zero is zero." People in MT are interested. SD, AR, and DE have attended teleconferences.

Issues have been raised in Steering Committee about more than one group joining the Coalition from one state. The Steering Committee decided to wait until there is a board to decide on that issue, that it should be postponed along with the question of whether chairs of subcommittees should be on the Steering Committee. HOPE, Inc. of AZ is the second group from AZ to apply. We don't want to discourage statewide organizing by allowing organizations to enter separately. Molly said it would be a problem for WI because NAMI would want to join as well. Dan said ideally the Coalition should strive to represent as many mental health consumers as possible yet still maintain our philosophy. Dave would prefer it to remain one group per state allowed. The Membership Committee already refers people to statewide groups when they want to join the Coalition. Dave agreed to write a couple of sentences around about his method/flexibility? Mike asked about the criteria for what is considered a statewide group, which is in the application form.

2. FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT:

Fundraising committee: Public welfare grant was turned in. \$50,000 has been requested. It was a more complicated process than they anticipated. The foundation asked for additional information. We haven't heard back from Ittleon or Ben & Jerry's from the Letters of Interest that were sent..

Dan spoke of the importance of preparing a “How To” manual for advocates. Molly Cisco and Mike Halligan offered to help with this. Molly has experience with Empowerment Days in Wisconsin. This is something that a foundation might fund, and then we could market it and raise further money.

Dan mentioned Leah Harris who is an advocate in DC and a member of the “next generation.” She has worked with DC CAN to engage youth and do outreach, and she will be joining the Membership Committee.

Lauren Spiro said that she gets calls from media and would like to have position papers on specific issues. Several offered to help with these papers (see item 5 below).

Dan said it will be important to designate a process the National Coalition should go through to decide who represents the Coalition at events.

3. REPORT FROM THE HILL & DC AREA:

SAMHSA reauthorization: We've gotten the principles and recommendations in now to Congressman Kennedy's office. The office asked for the recommendations this time, an indication that we are getting to be known on the hill.

A discussion followed about Sally Satel's latest article, May 28, 2007 in *The Weekly Standard* and whether it needs to be responded to. Her article was a follow-up to VA Tech. tragedy. Do we want to give her more attention by responding to it directly? Maybe it's better to ignore her, to show people the alternatives rather than putting energy into disproving the Sally Satels of the world.

The HHS/SAMHSA bill is in “mark-up” which means the bill is being created. There is still time to include language that restores funding to the TA Centers and the statewide networks. Lauren reported that Senator Harken's staff person assured her that funding for TAs and statewide groups has been restored in the Senate version of the bill.

Lauren attended a SAMHSA Senate Hearing, May 8, 2007.

Lauren was interviewed for an article in Independence Today, a cross disability national monthly newspaper (www.itodaynews.com).

Fourteen resumes were submitted by the Coalition for the CMHS National Advisory Council for the current 4-5 openings. Sally Satel (thankfully) is now off the Council- her term ended.

4. MEETINGS IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, OCTOBER 2007

A discussion followed about the meetings in St. Louis, Missouri in October 2007 while the Alternatives Conference is going on. Possibly there will be a meeting of the membership as well as a meeting that is open to all who are interested. Or the meetings may be combined. The Steering Committee will try to meet as well. Mike reported that the St. Louis Empowerment Center can be used as a meeting space with 50 chairs; planning on 200 people. We would like a PA system, local musicians, interpreters, sign language, and transcription that would cost significantly. We will ask if anyone has special needs so we can be prepared.

5. WHITE PAPER

Though we didn't have a chance to discuss this topic, we hope to discuss it in a future teleconference. The need arises from the issue of wanting to speak with one voice to major issues. This is particularly important for Lauren who is often consulted by media or other policy makers regarding our coalition's position on certain themes. She needs to be able to answer such questions without having to consult with the coalition each time.

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