

Mental Health

2008 Issues Briefing

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Summer 2007 MH activity: Two MH committee meetings were convened for Local League representatives and advocates. In July a general discussion and sharing of information on MH issues and activities at the local, regional/county, and statewide level took place at the State League office. The committee decided there was no need to continue to study, research, or collect additional data. Unfortunately, after examining the 1988 study conclusions, most of the items were determined to be currently unchanged. The group decided that the most important conclusion was:

Planning is inadequate. Communication and cooperation between state agencies and local providers are erratic and often non-existent. State statutes which require planning are poorly implemented. Coordination of planning among state agencies and between state and local authorities for provision of service is inadequate. Networking between local agencies needs substantial improvement.

Committee member Evan Freund (LWV Chicago) suggested that a League representative attend the Illinois Mental Health Planning & Advisory Council and offered to investigate.

The idea to create a template for MH forums which other Leagues could use was mentioned. (Bakk reported that Kane County leagues were completing a study in the fall and would be willing to share its project with other interested Leagues. The complete consensus is at http://www.lwvgenstc.org/MHDD_study.html.

A second meeting was held at the State League office with advocates discussing housing for persons with mental illness.

Update on recent Mental Health legislation for 2007- in brief

Public Act 95-0022: 8/3/07—Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship Training Act

Public Act 95-0037: 8/10/07—Requires DHFS to create demonstration project for home and community based alternatives to institutional care.

Public Act 95-0016: 7/18/07—Permits tele-psychiatry to be reimbursed under Medicaid

Public Act 95-0469: 1/1/08—Postpartum Mood Disorders Prevention Act

Public Act 95-0602: Effective 6/1/08—Lowers commitment standard

Public Act 95-0427: Effective 1/1/08—Requires DHS to use surveillance and surprise inspections to insure safety of patients in state mh facilities

For more info, please see <http://www.ilga.gov/>.

The League continues its representation at the Mental Health Summit. Typical monthly agenda items consist of:

- **Community Mental Health Issues**—Department of Human Services (DHS) continuing implementation of the Fee for Service system. ValueOptions (the Illinois contractor) is presently working on the coordination of this project. More info at: http://www.illinoismentalhealthcollaborative.com/provider/forums/Provider_Orientation_Training_Final.pdf
- **Special Projects and Events:** Annual MH Rally is scheduled for May 14th in Springfield. Metropolitan Group is working on a DHS-funded state-wide anti-stigma campaign.
- **Criminal Justice and Mental Illness:** Issue specialist Eileen Subak is also a summit participant. See Eileen's report for more information: [IB_CriminalJustice.pdf](#)
- **Housing:** Non-profit organizations who work on creating housing for persons with mental illness participate with updates of new supportive housing initiatives and requests for legislative action when needed.
- **Other Issues Followed/Monitored:** Reduction of beds at Tinley Park Mental Health Center; lengthy waiting times experienced by emergency departments seeking to transfer persons with MI to state-operated facilities. Failure to have sufficient beds in private hospital settings.

Please contact Darlene Bakk if you need advice on how your League can take action or become more involved with your community regarding our mental health position. Comments are also always welcomed.