

**VERMONT PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION**  
**Minutes of the Executive Committee**  
**24 February 2006**

**Present:** Drs. Frank Kalibat, Alice Silverman, Bill McMains, and Sue Deppe, and Mr. Steve Larose from the Vermont Medical Society.

**Minutes:** Previous minutes were not read or approved.

**Legislative Update:**

Civil commitment looks dead for the year. There were two attempts to add it to legislation, and the Democrats opposed it in the House. The committee acknowledged the hours of work put in by Steve Larose and Jonathan Weker (particularly Jonathan) to get petition signatures from 95 psychiatrists opposing civil commitment. Allen Gilbert from the ACLU said the signatures definitely made a difference. The remainder of the legislation that is progressing deals with sentencing for sex offenders, with the State able to keep tabs on some and incarcerate them quickly if there are problems. Although Republicans worried about offenders currently in the system, and pushed for civil commitment, the Democrats maintained that this was a huge violation of civil rights and a misuse of psychiatry.

Health Care Reform: The current bill making its way through the legislature was not discussed. Steve Larose said it may not have congealed yet.

Any Willing Provider (H.404) legislation was passed last year by the House and is in the Senate this year. This legislation, attempted by VPA in 1995 without success, says that if a clinician wants to play by the rules, managed care organizations can't kick him/her off of their panels. Steve will research what happened in the Senate.

**Other Legislative Issues:** Psychologists' request for language changes in some recent legislation involves "mental health" vs "psychiatric" disorders. While we all recognize that psychiatric disorders include anxiety disorders and other issues for which psychologists might do psychotherapy, it was agreed that we could support this language change, as the general public and Legislature may not have as comprehensive an understanding of mental disorders as we do.

**Medicaid payment schedule:** The intent under the State's Global Commitment arrangement was to increase primary care fees. We had pushed for adequate psychiatric reimbursement, as well. Ken Liberto of the Vermont Association for Mental Health reportedly says that the details haven't been clarified yet. VMS is looking at E and M (Evaluation and Management) codes to have more reimbursement. This could be potentially problematic for psychotherapy, but it remains to be seen how it all will shake out.

**Access to Psychiatrists:**

Medicaid as MCO: Dr. Deppe asked about OVHA's new role as a managed care organization under Global Commitment and what effect it would have on our practices. She expressed concern because Medicaid is her largest payer (and now much less hassle than any other insurance) and micromanagement would jeopardize her willingness to continue to do Medicaid. It is not even known how many psychiatrists in private practice actually take Medicaid, and how many will accept new patients. Susan Besio is one of the primary architects of the Global Commitment waiver plan. We should express our views to OVHA/Scott Strenio/Susan Besio at the right time---neither too early nor too late. Several members will review Susan Besio's presentation notes on the planning for Global Commitment (distributed at the November, 2005 VPA Exec meeting). We will pick up on this at the next meeting. Dr. Scott Strenio, the Medical Director of Medicaid, has already been invited to meet with us at the spring VPA meeting, so we can talk with him then.

Scott has heard from the Council of Mental Health Professions (leaders of all the mental health clinician groups), in which Frank Kalibat was involved. Leadership changes in the Agency of Human Services have made things difficult. Dr. McMains pointed out that Joshua Slen would be the best person to contact at the AHS level. Medicaid is not free to be like commercial insurers, as it must serve the public. Cindy Laware (?spelling) is Secretary of AHS; Steve Gold is Deputy Secretary. Mr. Larose will try to find out more about what is happening for psychiatry with respect to Medicaid management. His guess is that it will take a while for changes to happen. Dr. Deppe will query the membership as to who in private practice is taking Medicaid. Are they taking new patients? If not, why not? She will check the Medicaid list on the Web, but recognize that many on the list are not in private

practice. Then she will also ask who else would like to be involved in a discussion with Susan Besio and others about the Medicaid Global Commitment issue.

Consultation/education for primary care clinicians: Sue Deppe is researching what is currently being done by psychiatrists to educate and consult for primary care practices. She will also ask about members' level of interest in informal and more formal consultation to primary care.

The Executive Committee will look at this, and discuss ways we might lend our expertise. There is a huge access issue---there are simply not enough of us. Susan Besio has indicated that there may be funding for primary care psychiatric consultation under the Global Commitment Program. This will be discussed in the March dinner meeting, and we should talk with Susan Besio after that.

Dr. McMains said that some years ago, the child psychiatrists had met with payers and gotten some funding for primary care consultation. Dr. Fassler's group had had a contract for same. This was funded through Medicaid. It would be useful to talk with payers. This was discussed. We will talk among ourselves before inviting anyone else into the process.

**Spring meeting program and venue:** Topics for workshops were discussed. There was enthusiasm for more mutual support and sharing of information about managed care issues in private practice. Members will receive a brief email, surveying them on topics of interest. These may include: private practice update, Medicaid issues, development of DSM-V, health care reform and redesigning mental health (possibly with Senator Jim Leddy, D – Chittenden County, as a guest). This suggestion was met with considerable enthusiasm. We could do half an hour of pure social time, then 90-minute workshops on various topics, and have Senator Leddy as keynote speaker.

Dr. Silverman would like to head up a committee to plan future annual meetings.

**Next meeting:** Dinner in the Burlington area on Thursday 23 March. Dr. Deppe will lead a discussion on access and primary care consultation.

**Spring meeting:** Saturday 22 April, 10 to 3, at the Barnard Inn Restaurant in Woodstock.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Leigh Deppe, MD, DFAPA  
Auxiliary Backup Secretary