

VERMONT PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
16 February 2007

**Present:** Drs. Barton, Coghlan, Deppe, Graves, Silverman, Simpatico, Pierattini, and Mr. Steve Larose.

**1. Legislative Update:** See attached materials. H.137 passed the House. It creates a separate Department of Mental Health and Commissioner of Mental Health. Steve reports that he showed the principles VPA had developed to the House Government Operations Committee. The General Assembly intends that the two departments coordinate. A report is called for. When this crosses over to Senate Government Operations, we hope to amend it to a report every two years.

H.198 was introduced by Rep. Anne Donahue and goes more to the principles we had agreed on; this may be the place to invest our efforts. Anne Donahue, Ann Pugh, and Rep. Sweeney, chair of Government Operations, have our principles. H.198 is not high on House Human Services' priorities. Their top priority is Death with Dignity. Crossover (the date by which legislation must have crossed to the other chamber to be considered) is 16 March. We should have some input.

In H.198, there is an interesting point (#7) on page one. We should all review this.

**Plan:** Members are encouraged to review the legislation attached and send comments to Steve Larose at [slarose@vtmd.org](mailto:slarose@vtmd.org)

**2. Legislative Mental Health Advocacy Day** is being organized by NAMI and held in late March, possibly the 28th. It was moved, seconded, and passed that VPA would support NAMI in this and contribute \$125.00. Some members, including Drs. Coghlan and Deppe, may be interested in attending. Dr. Coghlan also mentioned his efforts to sponsor some anti-stigma legislation. He might do a public affairs paper for the media, as well.

**3. VPA Spring Meeting** is planned for Saturday 14 April, at Quechee Inn at Marshland Farms. Members will be receiving detailed information soon. The tentative schedule is:

9:30: Continental breakfast and social time.

10:00: Discussion of pharmaceutical company gifts.

11:00: Breakout discussion groups on three topics.

12:00: Lunch business meeting.

1:00: Risk Management Seminar by PRMS. New Hampshire Psychiatric Society will be invited for the afternoon.

5:00: Adjourn.

The list of topics for the afternoon seminar was briefly considered and approved.

**4. Selection of APA Distinguished Fellows:** It was decided that we should confer on nominations by email. Steve will send around APA's list of who is eligible.

**5. Next VPA meeting is a membership dinner** on 22 March 2007, at 6:00 pm, at Pauline's Restaurant on Shelburne Road in South Burlington. Members will be receiving more information and directions soon. All psychiatrists are invited, whether VPA members or not.

**6. Discussion with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont and Magellan Health Services:**

Guests: John Bond, Director of Provider Relations, BCBSVT; Jim Huckins-Noss, Provider Relations consultant, BCBSVT; Laurie McGovern, Senior Account Executive, Magellan Health Services (formerly in John's position at BCBSVT); Todd Mandell, MD, new Medical Director of Magellan for Vermont.

Steve Larose explained the background behind this meeting. VPA had written to BCBSVT last year, encouraging them to end the Magellan carve-out. Mr. Don George had replied that they were not interested in doing that. But problems such as difficulty getting preauthorizations and long phone times had triggered us to ask for the meeting. It was noted that we appreciate having this meeting, despite the fact that most of our members were unable to attend. We hope that we can also set a future evening or weekend meeting so more members can come.

Dr. Deppe pointed out that she is in the process of dropping out of BCBSVT, and has not been in Magellan for a long time. When Jim Huckens-Noss encouraged getting together to talk about her concerns about BCBSVT, she agreed, provided that other psychiatrists could attend. So this meeting was scheduled.

Laurie introduced Todd Mandell. John Bond indicated he wanted to put names and faces together and have further contact. Members present introduced themselves to the guests. Many issues were discussed. They are enclosed in the mailing to all members, along with contact information.

**Action: Members who did not attend this meeting are STRONGLY URGED to call our guests and relay all concerns about Blue Cross Blue Shield and Magellan.** As VPA cannot threaten any group action or negotiate fees because of antitrust rules, any concerns in those areas must come from individual members. Members should call Laurie with patient names and administrative/contracting problems, e.g., mistakes on processing precerts. Call Todd with clinical issues. Call John or your Blue Cross Provider rep with issues involving Blue Cross Blue Shield. They can't help fix problems if they do not know about them.

We will arrange another meeting in 3-4 months.

#### **7. Possible VPA Support for Vermont Catholic Charities:**

Present by speakerphone were Mary McNamara of VCC, and Gary Keller, MD. Present in person were Allen Gilbert, Executive Director of Vermont ACLU, and Lucia Schaefer, Staff Attorney, Vermont ACLU.

An attorney representing plaintiffs in past sexual abuse cases has obtained an order from a Vermont District Court judge for records, including those of patients who are not involved in the cases. VCC has grave concerns about privacy. Mary is hoping for support from VPA, possibly an amicus curiae brief.

Discussion ensued. It is clear that we need more specific information. Dr. Keller will check with Dr. Fassler and APA. It was decided that VMS's attorney, Madeleine Mongan, would talk with VCC's attorney, review the documents, and summarize the case for us. Meanwhile, Catholic Charities has appealed to the judge. If he denies their appeal, it could go to the Vermont Supreme Court, where VPA could get involved if we feel it is justified.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Leigh Deppe, MD, DFAPA  
Backup Auxiliary Secretary

**Next meeting** is Thursday, 22 March, at Pauline's, 1834 Shelburne Road in South Burlington, at 6 pm. All psychiatrists are welcome to attend the free dinner. NOTE: There will be no Executive Committee meeting at the VMS in March.

**Dr. Gail Barton's Art Exhibition** is at the Historic Windsor House until late March.

**Editor's Note: IMPORTANT: Get your NPI (National Provider Identifier) NOW! You must have it well before 23 May** to bill most insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid. You can find a link to the application website at: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov> or you may call VT Medicaid or Blue Cross Blue Shield for help. It takes about fifteen minutes to do the application on line, and currently the turnaround is very fast.