

**VERMONT PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND REGIONAL DINNER MEETING  
23 March 2005**

**Butler's Restaurant, New England Culinary Institute, The Inn at Essex, Essex, VT**

**Members Present:** Drs. Keller, Weker, Barton, Eyer, Carson, Lopez, Schultz, Graves, Pierattini, Pelletier, Lasek, Kalibat, Deppe, and Steve Larose of VMS.

**Minutes:** No minutes were reviewed.

**Announcements:**

Dr. Schultz mentioned that he hopes to get the Private Practice Committee going again this spring.

Appreciation was extended to Mr. Larose, who has gotten the listserv fixed and protected from spam. Members may join by emailing him at [slarose@vtmd.org](mailto:slarose@vtmd.org). Those who have not joined, including spammers, will find that their emails bounce.

**Old Business:**

**Legislative Issues**

1. Steve Larose reported that the Mental Health Oversight Committee in the Legislature has been very active. They have endorsed the VSH Futures plan. There may need to be a "conceptual Certificate of Need" process with BISHCA having oversight. Dr. Pierattini stated that the tentative plan is still a main acute facility associated with FAHC, and additional capacity at Brattleboro and Rutland. There would be additional Recovery Rehabilitation facilities (subacute) and some non-inpatient secure facilities. Actuarial studies are to be done, to look at Vermont's need for bed capacity in the future.
2. Any Willing Provider legislation looks like it will be signed into law. This would mean that any mental health professional that is willing to cooperate with the rules of a managed care organization could not be excluded from the network.
3. The other mental health clinician groups got a report done which helps employers understand that good mental health coverage is good for business. VPA signed on.
4. Sex Offender Legislation: Dr. Weker was recognized for terrific work in gathering 95 VPA petition signatures opposing amendments that would have created civil commitment of offenders. The VPA's contribution was crucial in defeating the amendments. The remainder of the bill looks good.

**New Business:**

1. Dr. Lopez heard former Surgeon General David Satcher on VPR, as he gave the George D. Aiken lecture at UVM tonight. He commented on problems with access to mental health care and the importance of parity. Members might want to listen to that lecture, (and Switchboard, the call-in program which followed) on [www.vpr.net](http://www.vpr.net).
2. On the more discouraging side, there was some recent legislation at the federal level (HIMMA?) that may potentially override states' parity bills and authority to regulate insurance companies. Dr. Deppe will send information to the listserv.
3. There was brief discussion of the options for workshops and topics for the spring meeting next month.
4. Possible VPA Consultation Efforts: Dr. Deppe reviewed her recent investigations into what Vermont psychiatrists are doing in consultation to primary care practices. Interest in this project resulted from several concerns:
  - A. Access to psychiatrists is poor. There are not enough of us. The safety net (CMHCs) is being shredded due to funding cuts. The health care funding (non)system, insurance payments, and managed care are barriers.
  - B. Guild Issues: Ongoing threat of psychologist and nurse practitioner prescribing
  - C. Professional responsibility to our medical colleagues, who have generally been quite available when we need them.

Many of our psychiatric peers are doing consultation activities such as:

- A. The Maine Consultation project: Volunteer psychiatrists matched with distant primary care practices. (Much of Maine has few psychiatrists.) There is an ongoing connection between consultant and primary care practice. They found that the consultants are really not called too often---a few times a month.
- B. FAHC Child Psychiatry is doing consultations in person and via telemedicine for pediatricians and working on Web-based educational tools.
- C. FAHC Consultation Service is doing telemedicine consultations to nursing homes and a primary care project.
- D. The VA Primary Care Psychiatry Clinic (reviewed in the December newsletter) offers efficiency, co-location, and collaboration.
- E. Many private practice psychiatrists consult for local primary care and specialty colleagues.

Some potential funding mechanisms are being explored, e.g., Area Health Education Centers, Medicaid Global Commitment, APA, other creative public funding, etc.

Dr. Evan Eyler has done fifteen years of family medicine, then a psychiatry residency. She has a joint appointment in Psychiatry and Family Medicine, and consults for all five FAHC family practice offices. She relayed her understanding of the needs of primary care colleagues. If we are not available, that ecosystem niche is filled with whoever is available. It seems clear that we need to find ways to be more available for our colleagues, not simply provide education. There are attitudinal issues, as well. Lively discussion ensued. We want to discuss among ourselves before engaging with payers, OVHA, etc. Mr. Larose will begin to sound out payers and colleagues. We recognize that many psychiatrists are already giving a lot of free care, and many of us are extremely busy. So it is possible that anything VPA does would be initially a volunteer effort, hopefully followed by more intense funded activity for VPA members who are interested. Both local and remote, face to face, phone and telemedicine connections might be a part of the project. It was decided that further discussion of these issues should be a part of VPA's Spring Meeting.

**If you would like to join the committee working on the consultation project, call Sue Deppe at 802.658.7441 or email her at <deppe@together.net>. Committee membership does not obligate one to do consultations!**

Drs. Weker and Graves (APA Rep and Dep Rep) and Eyler (Area One Early Career Psychiatrist Rep) will be going to APA Component meetings this week. Condolences were extended to two members of our group who will soon travel to Italy for vacations.

The next meeting is VPA's Spring Meeting at the Barnard Inn Restaurant in Woodstock, on Saturday 22 April, 10 to 3. All psychiatrists, members and non-members alike, are cordially invited.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Leigh Deppe, MD, DFAPA  
Backup Auxiliary Secretary