

PAS Newsletter

Parents of Adult Schizophrenics
of San Mateo County

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NOTE CHANGE OF PLACE
AND DATE

JANUARY 1982

Meeting Schedule

Hrs 1-4 pm, Mon-Wed-Fri

JANUARY MEETING

Date: January 27, 1982
Time: 7:30 pm

Place: San Carlos City Hall
666 Elm, San Carlos

Speaker: Barbara Bateman
Field Representative for the
Social Security Administration - provides
information to the public for the entire
county of San Mateo. Serves on several
committees with the Area Agency on Aging.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF PLACE AND DATE OF OUR MEETINGS:

Our meeting place will be San Carlos City
Hall, 666 Elm Street, San Carlos. The date
will be the 4th Wednesday of each month.
We were unable to arrange for Bay View
Community Room this year.

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MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING 1/6/82

In attendance at this meeting besides regular
board members was Mr. Jay Gellert, new San
Mateo County Public Health Director; and in
the audience was the San Mateo County Grand
Jury foreman.

A letter was read by the Chair from Mr. Gellert
promising to maintain the present composition
and purpose of the Cordilleras Liaison Com-
mittee in all future contracts for the facility.

Report from the new ad hoc committee on Fiscal
Restraints: The committee recommends that the
Mental Health Department attempt to get laid-
off personnel into other county positions
whenever possible.

Mental Health Directors report: Terry De Luca
said that Dr. Jim Barter will be the Acting
Director of the State Mental Health Dept.
until Feb. 1, when it is expected a permanent
director will be announced.

State Hospital days negotiations have been
completed for 1982-83. The base figure has
been raised from 24,260 days to 27,260. The
target Ms. De Luca sought was 30,000, so she
will continue to work for this goal in the
future.

The state has made available 15 beds at Canyon
Manor in Marin County at no cost to our county,
to alleviate state hospital overrun days.

(Editorial question: Why, in the face of Napa
overrun days, does Cordilleras continue to
house 12 San Francisco Patients, thus causing
12 San Mateo County patients to be sent to
Marin County? The logic of this is difficult
to fathom.)

★ The County will pay to remodel the emergency
room to include a psychiatric observation area
which is a safety measure long needed.

The Cordilleras Short/Doyle patch will continue
to be funded for 1982-83.

There will be no increase in state funding for
'82-'83. The county will have to absorb the
3.8 million dollar cut. This means no cost
of living increase. Administration dept.
cuts will be the largest - 30%, Acute and
chronic patients remain the priorities; so
cuts will be concentrated in outpatient
services.

Disability Cutbacks

According to THRESHOLD, Dec. 1981, newsletter
for AMI Maryland, the Social Security Adminis-
tration plans to cut the federal SSI rolls
by about 500,000 people over the next couple
of years, as reported by the Mental Health
Law Project and other sources.

Come to the meeting to hear about California's
policies regarding disability, and bring up
any questions you may have.

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Other Mental Health Meetings:

1st Wed. Mental Health Advisory Bd
Every Month 12:00-2:00 pm Multipurpose
Rm Hlth & Wlfr Bldg, 37th S.M.

3rd Sunday Assn for Mentally Ill Napa
Every Month State Hospital, Music Rm
11:00 to 1:00 pm

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Our thanks to all our members who brought
Xmas gifts for Choep 2N and Napa State
Hospital. They were much appreciated.

Thanks also, to George Louzensky who provi-
ded accompaniment and song sheets for our
sing-along. It was a pleasant evening.

Letters of thanks for the gifts were re-
ceived from Choep 2-N and Napa.

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AFFECTIVE DISORDER DAY: Thanks to Pat
Williams, Founder, January 22nd is now
being observed as Affective Disorder Day
by parent and family organizations, and
by our National AMI, in an effort to edu-
cate the public about this serious mental
illness; and to note that treatment is
available and often successful.

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CAFMD WINTER CONFERENCE will be hosted by
Families and Friends of Mentally Ill of
Ventura, CA, on February 19 and 20. If
you are interested in attending, call
345-2745 for info and forms.

MHAB mtg continued:

Ward 1-A (penal code psychiatric facilities at Choche) is still holding up state approval of the county plan. This matter is being negotiated. Tony Hoffman noted that penal code admissions to state hospitals have increased 45% the past 3 years.

(Editorial comment: It is a fact that more and more mentally ill people are clogging the already overtaxed jail system, because community mental health programs continue to be ineffective in meeting the needs of many chronic mental patients who roam the streets and eventually come to the attention of the police. This raises the perennial question: Are communities capable of caring for this patient population? To date it does not appear so. The state hospital still remains the refuge of last resort, and must be preserved as the one stable element in an otherwise unstable and ever-changing mental health system.)

Mrs. Jane Kennelly, conservatorship investigator for our county, was scheduled to discuss her work today; but time ran out, and she will return next month.

Sue Miller

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CORDILLERAS CENTER LIAISON COMMITTEE 12/10/81

Patient Representative: Marty reported that there is now less tension among the patients, though some are still bumming cigarettes, etc. There is a bigger turnout at the Patient Forum, which is from 6:30 to 7:15 pm on weekdays. Following that there are various group meetings, meds and relaxation time and snacks at 9:00 pm.

The taxi service is now better; Sam Trans Redi-Wheels takes people to El Camino, where they can transfer to regular buses.

Administrator's Report: Tom Mesa reported that the census was 88 on December 9, of which about 12 are San Francisco patients. There have been a lot of discharges; also some patients from Choche have had trouble with adjusting to a more demanding routine. Mental Health Management is now very cautious about tolerating "decompensating behavior".

Questions were asked about discharge for breaking Individual Contracts (made by some patients). Tom Mesa explained that contract breaking will result in discharge (return to Choche) in case of violence, but not for refusal to attend groups.

Is Cordilleras Center an Alternative to Napa? Paul Jensen, Conservator, took the negative on this question. Tony Hoffman, attending as a guest of the Committee, reminded the Committee that Cordilleras Center, opened after a long struggle by many, including PAS, was planned as a community hospital which would be able to handle all categories of mental patients, from the mildest to the most severe.

Requests for Proposal: There is no decision yet on the contents of the RFPs (for a new

contract for Cordilleras Center). Studies will take place in the next month, and a copy of the RFP will be available later.

Construction, Etc.: Seclusion rooms are being improved. Shower rooms are being changed to remove support struts. Curtain rods are being removed and high door stops are being lowered. A dividing door is being installed in the 1st floor corridor, and access to the backyard has been restricted. A patient call system is in place, and there are electronic doors which open automatically in case of fire.

Reported by Dorothy Texier

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL HEARING 1/15/82

Many representatives of Families Organizations testified at a hearing in Oakland on the State Mental Health Plan. The tone was set with testimony from a resident of the San Francisco south of Market Tenderloin area, which he referred to as the "Napa Annex". He told of the neglect, abuse and miserable conditions that mentally ill endure in that section of the City. He felt that the psychiatrists and decision makers should come down to that area to see what is really happening.

Parent representatives vented their displeasure with the organized mental health system, as follows:

1. Community mental health is not responsive to the mentally ill, services are going to the "worried well".
2. Too much emphasis is on treatment, when food, clothing and shelter must be available before treatment is relevant.
3. Traditional mental health treatment generally is not effective, especially for chronic patients.
4. The "moving on" theory is not working, people are pushed over the cliff and go back to square one.
5. Innovative programs such as the Continuum of Care in Yolo County was praised. Note: A good deal of credit for this program must go to the parent support group from Yolo, Families for Mental Recovery.
6. Emphasis was placed on non-structured social support programs.
7. State hospitals will be needed indefinitely.
8. As always, the Orthomolecular treatment concept, and the program at Napa State Hospital received much praise and generated discussion.
9. Alternative treatment modalities were recommended.

Paul Gorman and Bob Ledbetter, represented the State Dept. of Mental Health and were present to answer questions. They held up very well under fire as the parents took the Mental Health System to task.

I was proud of the presentation by the parents, they were very eloquent in their testimony, gave a lot of constructive criticism and made good suggestions.

Tony Hoffman

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In a letter to PAS, Supervisor Jackie Speier said she took our suggestion to spend a Friday evening at the emergency room at Choche. She now vigorously supports the construction of a separate psych emergency room. (See Sue Miller's MHAB report).