

LWVBC Health Care Committee Summary of Activities and Resources

Meetings in 2014

August 21 – Gwen Wharton, Frieda Holley, Marion Read, Mary Anna Dunn.

Initial meeting at Gwen's home to reconnect and decide how to follow up on the LWVCO task force overview report on behavioral health, which all had reviewed. There is much to learn and much to do! Gwen shared information about the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and NAMI Boulder County, which can be good sources of information and of opportunities for action. Committee members concluded that updating our LWVBC position statement on health care would not be our immediate focus. Where can we make a difference? Handouts: NAMI flyer and other information.

September 2 – Gwen, Frieda, Marion, Mary Anna, Barbara Hancock. (Virginia Stringi) Barbara Hancock joined us at Gwen's and gave an introduction to Oregon's Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA = "ee-sah") program. This statewide program, which Barbara's daughter works in, is a pioneer in the US though the approach has been used successfully in Australia and Scandinavian countries. The highly individualized program has had great success in young people's lives, intervening before situations are acute. Barbara also shared a blog from SAMHSA/NIMH about early intervention efforts sponsored by the federal government. The trend seems hopeful—may offer an opportunity for advocacy as well as education. Handouts: EASA and SAMHSA material, draft of committee website revision, Mental Health Partners campaign overview, list of NAMI accomplishments 2013-14.

September 19 – Gwen, Frieda, Marion, Barbara, Virginia, Nancy Herzog, Paula McKey. Nancy Herzog and Virginia Stringi joined us for a briefing at Gwen's by Paula McKey about behavioral health resources in Boulder County. She talked about the merger of county public health programs and Mental Health Partners, a private nonprofit, and alerted us to a related article that would shortly appear in the Boulder *Camera*. The merger took a great deal of planning and involved some controversy. Integrated care—such as is already in place at Clinica Campesina—will be positive for clients. Paula also told about the state's planned "crisis stabilization units," which are being set up by the company (Cactus) that made the winning bid to the state RFP. The nearest to Boulder County will be in Adams County at 84th and Federal. Committee members decided that preparing to make educational presentations in fall 2015 would be our goal, details to be worked out as we proceed. The group also noted that "behavioral health" is a misleading term, in that it seems to imply choices in actions. Questions arose about the definition of "evidence-based" practice.

September 30 – Gwen, Frieda, Nancy, Mary Anna, Barbara, Virginia. (Marion) Gathered at Frieda's to view the 60 Minute segment about a family's tragic experience in seeking help for their son. Frieda and MA shared the handout from the League Day presentation by Barbara Mattison about the statewide task force report. Noted: "behavioral health" replaced by "brain disorder." Brainstormed questions that Marion might ask in her meeting at Clinica Campesina. Discussed plans for further research and action—talking

with care givers, educational opportunities for sharing experiences and “normalizing psychosis” with people of different backgrounds. Question to ponder: Is there now less stigmatizing about mental health among younger people? Handouts: LWVBC Health Care Position (2013), Powerpoint from League Day, web page on Evidence-Based Practice; from Barbara, blog about EASA and email re: EASA & NAMI.

October 9 – Mary Anna

Attended open house at 1000 Alpine, the new Mental Health Partners Wellness Center facility; saw Paula, met Barbara Ryan (executive director), and talked with Leanne W. (board member and client), Dickie Lee Hullinghorst (state representative), and Ryan ____ (Emergency Psychosis Service counselor).

November 18 – Barbara, Nancy, Frieda, Gwen, Mary Anna (Virginia, Marion unavailable); guest, Nicky Marone, executive director of FOCUS Reentry.

Met at Mary Anna’s for a briefing by Kristen Jernigan, head of mental health services, Adams County. She is a specialist in clinical supervision and covers Larimer and Weld counties. Kristen shared an overview of Community Crisis Connection (CCC) programs, including a one-sheet reference guide, as well as hand-outs on “Aligning Incentives in Medicaid” and “Understanding the Realities of Mental Disorders.” She talked about Colorado Access, Regional Care Collaborative Organizations, funding methods, goals for improving care, and using funding effectively. Some elements within Colorado remain siloed and competitive rather than collaborative, but progress is underway. She commented that mental illness is nonpartisan, “democratic.” NAMI is able to work with all political stripes. CCC is new as of December 1, including a statewide 24/7 hotline covered by master’s level clinicians, who do follow-up as needed.

December 8, 11:00 am – Rescheduled from October. Frieda Holley attended the tour for state legislators at the Addiction Recovery Center (ARC). For her report, see February 17, 2015 meeting summary.