

LWVBC Health Care Team Meeting Summaries – Spring 2017

June 27, 2017 – Eight of us met at Frieda’s home. We welcomed two new participants and spent time on introductions. Sarah and Eunice both bring valuable experience and insights from their personal and professional backgrounds—as do ongoing members! Discussion centered primarily on ways to advocate for positive outcomes in the current national wrangling over health care. Our interest focuses on universal access to medical services and particularly on maintaining behavioral health services. Mary Anna brought materials from the LetsTalkCO anti-stigma campaign: flyers, postcards, Powerpoint slides, newsletter articles and posters. Boulder Public Health provided 10 posters each in English and in Spanish, which the League can use at various public gatherings. We discussed what sort of program we might offer for next year’s LWVBC program schedule. That topic will be continued as we find out how the political situation evolves. We shared recommendations on books of interest, useful websites and other resources such as Facebook Live and podcasts. Our next meeting will be on July 25.

May 23, 2017 – Six of us met at Mary Anna’s home. General business included Barbara’s comments on the May 7 INMI event, mention of the *Camera* article about Longmont’s OUR Center, review of health related legislative outcomes, commendations on Kennedy’s *A Common Struggle*, and sharing of ways to access relevant films (mentioned last month). Geneva noted that East Boulder Indivisible is building a coalition to advocate for effective health care reform and is asking if we will join. MA shared the US and Colorado League positions and noted that our involvement needs to be consistent with those positions and nonpartisan. Geneva will check with their group leader, who is a League member. One of their activities so far was meeting with Senator Gardner’s staff. A number of other organizations have already joined the coalition, such as the Colorado Hospital Foundation, Susan Komen Foundation and Boulder County AIDS Project. We look forward to confirming a link and learning how to collaborate in advocacy. MA shared the AARP report “Why Drugs Cost So Much” as another area for understanding and advocacy. She also shared her over-supply of postcard stock and stands by to distribute more. We looked at the Boulder County Public Health “Let’s Talk Colorado” campaign website (letstalkCO.org) and decided to order some of their materials for display and distribution at LWVBC gatherings. Our next meeting will be June 27, 10-11:30 at Frieda’s home.

April 25, 2017 – Six of us met at Nancy’s home. We were pleased to welcome Geneva Fisher and Claudia Johnson as first-time attendees. The group reviewed recent and upcoming news and events, such as LWVCO’s selection of Andrew Romanoff as honoree at the June Leader of Democracy event and British royals going public about mental illness, health care parity and the bane of stigma. Other anti-stigma opportunities include the INMI Let’s Not Keep Quiet event on May 7 and a film stirring interest in Lafayette: “Angst: Breaking the Stigma Around Anxiety.” We noted resources that some have found useful and others of us may want to look into: books—Patrick Kennedy, *A Common Struggle*; Mark Vonnegut, *The Eden Express*; Wendell Potter, *Deadly Spin* (the latter two authors have other titles of possible interest too) and films—“The Health Care Movie” and “Now Is the Time.” (Mary Anna will bring the films to our next meeting.) For new members, Barbara shared information about Oregon’s Early Assessment and Support Alliance; she’ll bring

handouts next time. Geneva will share information from Indivisible about ideas for improving the Affordable Care Act. As we are able to update our team's web page, we will add more links to services and reference materials—an ongoing project. KGNU commentary has been rescheduled for May. Regarding advocacy, Nancy is actively using postcards to share thoughts with elected representatives, following methods recommended by Indivisible. Onward! Next meeting: Tuesday, May 23, 10-11:30. We intend to schedule monthly on fourth Tuesdays.

March 28, 2017 – Five of us met at Jo's home. We were glad to welcome Judy White for her first meeting with us. In addition to discussing recent national developments in health care, the group listened to and offered refinements for the KGNU commentary. Mary Anna will prepare for an April airing. Jo alerted us to the Make It OK movement. She encouraged us all to visit the website: makeitok.org. Jo also reviewed the LWV Legislative Action newsletter list of bills relating to behavioral health. League is supporting a number of them. Jo informed us about the Colorado Health Access Fund, which was funded via a \$40 million anonymous gift to the Denver Foundation. The program works to expand behavioral health services in areas of Colorado with high health care needs. Efforts include expanding the number of providers, implementing tele-psychiatry, establishing substance use disorder services in school-based clinics, and integrating behavioral health services with primary care. The Colorado Health Institute, a nonpartisan nonprofit, is conducting an annual review to assess accomplishment of goals. The plan is for the Health Access Fund to provide \$5 million per year throughout Colorado through 2022.

In considering our team's ongoing focus, we agreed that behavioral health remains a centerpiece and that access to health care in general is an ongoing concern—as expressed in League positions. We set ourselves a homework assignment: to understand how the Affordable Care Act, aka Obamacare, needs to be—and could be-- “fixed.” We'll be looking for creditable viewpoints to share and for advocacy opportunities. Because we did not have time during the meeting to study the Larimer County League website, doing so is another homework assignment: lww-larimercounty.org. It's a few clicks to get to the Health Care page. Their team's page offers links to much good information, a practice we'd like to emulate. Among ideas so far, we'd like to add links to Mental Health Partners, Make It OK, Mental Health Colorado and Mental Health First Aid. The link to Colorado Crisis Services, as well as the hot/warm line phone number, has already been added. NOTE: The Interfaith Network on Mental Illness will hold a program on May 7 about overcoming stigma: 3:00-5:30, Atonement Lutheran, Boulder. Our next meeting will be April 25, 10-11:30 am.

February 21, 2017 – The team met at Mary Anna's home and welcomed Elizabeth Schmidt as a first-time attendee. A few others have also expressed interest, and we'll be hoping to find meeting times that work for all. The main program was the short version of *Now Is the Time*, a 35-minute video promoting single-payer health care. We agreed that it was effective, but in light of many other pressing issues, we also agreed that it is not timely to suggest showings for current LWVBC programs. Jo reported on the Boulder County Public Health Improvement Process, which is enlisting multiple organizations in common efforts toward behavioral health services and understandings. Stand by for ongoing updates. Jo

also shared information from the bi-weekly LWVCO Legislative Letter about health related bills being considered in Colorado's Senate and House. Mary Anna mentioned subscribing to the one of the Sutherland Center's seminar programs about bi-polar disorder; she'll share more another time. She also looked into opportunities for partnering with other Colorado Leagues. Most impressive is Larimer County's health care webpage, which includes many useful links. Time ran out to look at details—worth discussing next time: lww-larimercounty.org. Our four-minute KGNU commentary will likely be scheduled this spring. The start of a draft focusing on depression got general approval – more work to be done. All agreed we need a single focus to be effective. So far, the point seems to be the need to recognize and seek help for mental health challenges, which are common. The scope of our committee's focus will be another topic for further discussion. LWV-Colorado's focus on behavioral health mobilized us 2-3 years ago, and it remains a passion. We were charged with promoting ColoradoCare last year. Now, health care in general is at risk for many Americans. How can we best focus our efforts? To be continued! Our next meeting will be in March, tentatively the 28th.

January 10, 2017 – The full team met at Virginia's home to catch up on developments and form plans for education and advocacy in the new year. Our primary focus continues to be on behavioral health, although tracking the changes in healthcare overall will also engage us. Two or three individuals have expressed interest in joining the team. Since November, Jo and Gwen attended a Boulder Valley Community Action Network meeting. Jo and Barbara are members of the policy committee of the Boulder Public Health effort, with Barbara representing NAMI. On Feb. 9 NAMI will have Boulder police and sheriff's staff present a program about the de-escalation training they do for their officers (7:15-8:30, Mt. View Methodist). Coming up on Jan. 30 is the LWVCO Legislative Conference, featuring Andrew Romanoff of Mental Health Colorado (MHC) as first speaker. MHC's Colorado Mental Wellness Network is sponsoring grassroots advocacy trainings in Denver. This is part of their Brain Wave movement. We will look into collaborating with other organizations to schedule such a training in Boulder County. Mary Anna told about the PBS film *Hidden Pictures*, which focuses on the stigma of mental illness around the world and advocates for speaking out and empathy training. She also announced that the condensed version of *Now Is the Time*, the film advocating single-payer healthcare, is now available. At our next meeting we will view the 35-minute version. (We also own the 71-minute DVD.) Regarding advocacy and action, we brainstormed ideas for four-minute commentaries on KGNU and for letters to editors. MHC offers help on writing and placement, and various organizations—MHC, NAMI, LWV, ACLU and others--provide links to write to or call our senators and representatives on issues and legislation of interest. For radio spots we are seeking stories, with possible focus on counteracting stigma, behavioral health services in schools, and navigating to find help in general. We will also work on contacting other LWV healthcare teams around the state. Our next meeting is planned for Tuesday, February 21 (with possible back-up on Feb. 26.)