

Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS, Inc.

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Services /Advocacy

September 6, 2007

Minutes

SERVICES

Services Members Present: Bill Fox, Phyllis McElligot, Annie Piazza, Lela Seals, Patricia Terziani, Danielle Wade, Ann Williams.

Excused: Ron Skwieralski.

Staff: Pat Zacharias.

Agency Updates:

- **FLACRA** – has a full time opening for a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. If interested please contact Brenda Hale at Brenda.hale@flacra.org.
- **ABC/AFC** – in collaboration with Catholic Charities is working on a SNAP grant from Kodak. Kodak is giving young people 13-18 years old cameras to take pictures of what is important to them. Retired Kodak executives will be working with the kids to assist them in their picture taking. Each child is required to write a narrative for their pictures. Their projects will be on display during World AIDS Day events in December. If you know of any child infected or affected who would like to participate please contact Casey Cline at Catholic Charities at 339-9800 x249.
- **Westside** – Danielle Wade has assumed the position of HIV Program Manager. They are now looking for someone to fill her former position of Specialty Case Manager. Jasmine Roman has moved to PRYD and her position as Program Assistant is also open.
- **Catholic Charities** – Jane Hallinen has retired and is only working 3 days a week until Tracy Boff returns from medical leave.
- **FLACRA/FLMHCP** – have entered into an agreement to provide FLACRA's clients suboxone.

JOINT MEETING

Medicaid Churning:

Bill spoke of the agreement Marty Teller, Executive Director of FLACRA, had with the Ontario County Commissioner of Social Services. If there was a problem with a client that might result in that client being sanctioned, both sides would have a conversation first to determine if it could be worked out. This eliminated the need for many fair hearings. Unfortunately that person has moved into the Governor's employ and the new commissioner has not agreed to the same process.

For those not at the last meeting, Trilby reviewed what had taken place when she and LJ Fisher met with DSS in May. The DSS counsel was persuaded that it is ridiculous the way people are being sanctioned and the time it takes to get a fair hearing and be reinstated. They discussed setting up a liaison. The next step was for us to send DSS a letter with 2 or 3 cases to illustrate our point. A request was sent out to all case managers but no cases were reported so the letter was never sent. Not following up weakens our stance. Trilby will try contacting some case managers personally for case scenarios.

Lela felt that some good may have come from the meeting alone because she said the last time she had a client sanctioned she left a message with the DSS case manger and received a call back within a couple of hours and received an appointment for a fair hearing shortly after. This is much better service than she has experienced in the past.

Trilby encouraged everyone to look for cases at their agency that can be documented. Empire Justice has hired a new lawyer, Allison Bates, who is interested in working with RATFA on issues like Medicaid Churning.

The comment was made that the Churning form may be too long and thus case managers are discouraged from filling it out. It was suggested that a shorter form be used to screen case, followed by a conversation with a committee member.

Trilby, Catherine, and Cherri will form a sub committee to review the form and contact agencies to make an appointment to attend a staff meeting to educate the case managers on what RATFA is trying to do to help them with DSS. The three will also revise the timeline for this process and present it at the next Services/Advocacy meeting.

Announcements:

- Mike Mule, a lawyer from Empire Justice, will speak on the American Disabilities Act at the RATFA General Membership meeting on October 9.
- The Governor has signed legislation that would allow those incarcerated in jail to keep their Medicaid instated.
- There is a new initiative to identify uninsured children and enroll them in Child Health Plus or Family Health Plus.
- A series on Voter Preparation will be offered at the Mercy Prayer Center beginning on Monday, October 29 and continuing for 3 more Monday nights. Former Mayor Johnson and Wade Norwood will be presenters.
- There is a HIV Case Management Regional Training Forum being offered in Syracuse on October 18. Spaces are filling up fast. For registration information contact Ida Colon at (212) 594-7741 x288.
- It was decided to continue joint meetings of the Services & Advocacy Committees.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy Members Present: Roberto Burgos, Trilby deJung, Cherri Hawkins, Catherine Jones, Gratia L'Esperance, Patty Terziani.

Excused: Debra Khani.

Staff: Pat Zacharias.

Visits with Local Officials:

It is time to start scheduling visit with local officials. Roberto will contact committee members who are interested in visiting specific officials.

Pat will speak to Wade Norwood about doing a short training on Effective Advocacy for PWAs and anyone else interested. Several people have expressed an interest in being a part of this effort but are unsure of what to say and how to say it. The committee would like to have a pool of PWAs to include in visits.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am so that ARI staff could set up for a Board meeting.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 4 at ARI at 8:30 am for Services and 9:00 am for Advocacy & Services, 10:00 am Advocacy.