

MH/MR Coalition

Working Together Campaign Update

January 2002

Happy New Year!

The MH/MR Coalition wishes you and your family a Happy New Year. The *Working Together Campaign* continues to operate in full swing. After finalizing its Statement of Funding Need, the Coalition forwarded this information immediately onto our four caucus leaders – Senator Tomlinson (Senate Republicans), Senator Kukovich (Senate Democrats), Representative Bunt (House Republicans) and Representative Manderino (House Democrats). The leaders sent a joint letter of support for the Statement of Funding Need to Governor Schweiker urging him to increase funds to address the recruitment and retention crisis. The Coalition sent a similar letter to all members of the General Assembly urging their support for the Statement of Funding Need. Copies of both letters are attached to this Update - feel free to use these letters as guides for your own important grassroots contacts.

In addition to these support letters, the MH/MR Coalition recently increased our communication with the legislature via a new Legislative Edition of the *Working Together Campaign Update*. The Legislative Edition is written specifically for our friends and supporters in the Pennsylvania General Assembly to keep them updated and informed on issues related to the recruitment and retention of direct support staff in community mental health and mental retardation services and supports in Pennsylvania. Legislators received their first copy by email this month.

Update on County Recruitment and Retention Plans

The MH/MR Coalition continues to communicate with Jim Lyne, Special Assistant to Secretary of Public Welfare Feather Houstoun. Mr. Lyne has informed the Coalition that the local plans for how to use the funds allocated in the FY2001-2002 State Budget for the *Direct Service Worker Initiative* have been reviewed by the necessary departments and acceptance letters should be out to counties shortly. All approved plans will be accessible online through the Department of Public Welfare's website at <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/general/program.asp>

Workforce Development

In addition to continuing to advocate for the most critical component of addressing the recruitment and retention crisis - increased state MH/MR funding - the MH/MR Coalition has also been meeting with representatives from the Departments of Labor and Industry, Education and Public Welfare to discuss opportunities to improve workforce development in community mental health and mental retardation programs. In addition, the Coalition is exploring partnerships with community colleges and participating in the planning stages of a consortium-sponsored state-wide apprenticeship program for direct support specialists.*

*The U.S. Department of Labor has just declared "Direct Support Specialist" (also known as direct care worker, direct support professional, and direct care staff) as an "apprenticeable" occupation.

Action Steps

- 1. Contact Governor Schweiker – Ask him to recognize the MH/MR Coalition's Statement of Funding Need for this upcoming fiscal year. Urge him to continue to fund the initiative to address the recruitment and retention crisis in community MH/MR services and supports begun by the Ridge Administration this year. Let him know how your community is working together to address recruitment and retention, but without increased funding to meet those needs, the crisis will worsen. Send copies of your letter to Secretary of Public Welfare Feather Houstoun; and Deputy Secretaries of the Office of Mental Retardation and Mental Health, Nancy Thaler and Jerry Radke. *****

The MH/MR Coalition includes all of the major associations that represent mental health and/or mental retardation provider agencies and counties in Pennsylvania: The Arc-PA (717.234.2621), Mental Health Association in PA (717.236.8110), MH/MR Program Administrators of PA (717.232.7554), PA Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (717.657.7608), PA Association of Resources for People with Mental Retardation (717.236.2374), PA Community Providers Association (717.657.7078), and United Cerebral Palsy of PA (717.761.6129). For additional information, contact any of the organizations listed.

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2. **Write to your legislators** – thank them for their support last year; ask them to recognize the Coalition's statement of funding need and to contact Governor Schweiker and let him know of their support for the Working Together Campaign. Send copies of your letter to Secretary of Public Welfare Feather Houstoun; and Deputy Secretaries of the Office of Mental Retardation and Mental Health, Nancy Thaler and Jerry Radke.*****
3. **Visit or call your legislators – inform your legislators about who you are and what the Working Together Campaign means to you, your family, your employees. Your personal stories are very important to this campaign. Let them know how your community is working together to address recruitment and retention, but without increased funding to meet those needs, the crisis will worsen.**
4. **Continue collecting petition signatures in support of the Working Together Campaign Principles – Ask your legislators to sign the petition!**
5. **Distribute the Working Together Campaign Update to everyone who is interested and urge them to help.**

Governor Schweiker can be reached by email: governor@state.pa.us phone 717-787-2500 and fax 717-787-8614.

** Senators' mail can be sent to Senate Box 2030** [** add Senate District number.] Representatives' mail can be sent to House Box 202020. All representatives have the same box number for mail purposes.

The Honorable xxxx
[Senate or House] Box xxxxxx
Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

***Copies of letters can be sent to DPW, OMR and OMH using the following addresses:

The Honorable Feather O. Houstoun
Secretary of Public Welfare
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105

Ms. Nancy Thaler
Deputy Secretary of the
Office of Mental Retardation
Department of Public Welfare
Commonwealth of PA
P. O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Mr. Jerry Radke
Deputy Secretary of the Office of
Mental Health
Department of Public Welfare
Commonwealth of PA
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105

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MH/MR Coalition

December 18, 2001

Members of the General Assembly
Main Capital
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Legislator:

The MH/MR Coalition presents its Statement of Funding Need for FY 2002-2003, copy enclosed, as we initiate the next step of our *Working Together Campaign*. We request your active support for additional funding and alternative solutions to address the continuing severe direct service professional recruitment and retention crisis facing Pennsylvania's community-based mental health and mental retardation systems.

The MH/MR Coalition continues its advocacy efforts seeking funding support for the direct service professional recruitment and retention crisis facing the community-based mental health and mental retardation systems – a total increase of \$100 million dollars additional state funding in a multi-year effort. The Coalition appreciates the support demonstrated by the entire General Assembly during the FY 2001-2002 state budget process. Again, we need your support during the upcoming fiscal year's budget process.

The MH/MR Coalition continues to be very active. Since passage of the FY 2001-02 state budget, representatives of the Coalition participated in a 3-day meeting convened by the Department of Public Welfare to discuss the Local Planning Process, intended to be the mechanism for the distribution of the additional \$17.5 million state dollars included in the FY 2001-2002 state budget to address the crisis. On October 30th, the Coalition hosted its second annual Summit with excellent statewide participation representing association members of the MH/MR Coalition, MH/MR county joiners and community providers. During the Summit, the Coalition recognized members of the General Assembly and displayed over 18,000 unduplicated signatures gathered for our petition supporting the *Working Together Campaign* Principles. Coalition associations communicate regularly to tens of thousands of individuals about legislative activity that supports the recruitment and retention initiative.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the following organizations:

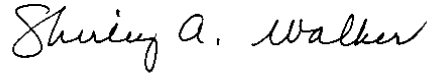
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MH/MR Coalition

Sincerely,



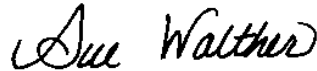
Michael D. Chambers
Executive Director
MH/MR Program Administrators Association
of Pennsylvania



Shirley A. Walker
President and CEO
Pennsylvania Association of
Resources for People with Mental Retardation



Eugene Bianco
President and CEO
Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation
Facilities



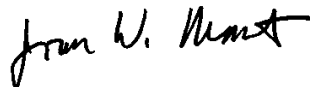
Sue Walther
Executive Director
Mental Health Associations in
Pennsylvania



George J. Kimes
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Community
Providers Association



Linda Drummond
Executive Director
The Arc of Pennsylvania



Joan Martin
Executive Director
United Cerebral Palsy of Pennsylvania

Enclosures (2): MH/MR Coalition Statement of Need
List of Coalition associations

The MH/MR Coalition includes all of the major associations that represent mental health and/or mental retardation provider agencies and counties in Pennsylvania: The Arc-PA (717.234.2621), Mental Health Association in PA (717.236.8110), MH/MR Program Administrators of PA (717.232.7554), PA Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (717.657.7608), PA Association of Resources for People with Mental Retardation (717.236.2374), PA Community Providers Association (717.657.7078), and United Cerebral Palsy of PA (717.761.6129). For additional information, contact any of the organizations listed.

Association Members of the MH/MR Coalition Working Together Campaign

The County MH/MR Program Administrators Association of PA (MH/MR PAAP) represents the county mental health and mental retardation administrators in the Commonwealth's 46 counties and county jointers, and is an affiliate of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) which represents the locally elected county officials responsible for these programs.
17 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101-1634.
717.232.7554.

The goal of the Mental Health Association of Pennsylvania (MHAP) is to create a stronger, more unified statewide voice for people with mental illnesses and to encourage cooperation and collaboration among its local chapters. With its 16 chapters, MHAP has an active presence in 34 counties in the Commonwealth. MHAP is an affiliate of the National Mental Health Association.
1414 North Cameron Street, Suite C, Harrisburg, PA 17103.
717.236.8110.

The Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (PARF) represents organizations providing medical rehabilitation, community supports and employment services to people with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth.
2400 Park Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110.
717.657.7608.

The Pennsylvania Association of Resources for People with Mental Retardation (PAR) represents organizations who provide an estimated \$1 Billion of staff-intensive services and supports to individuals with mental retardation and their families. Residential services are in 2200 locations. The full range of non-residential and in-home supports are provided in the community. The continuous improvement of services is the association's mission.
1007 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102.
717.236.2374.

The Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA) represents over 200 community-based agencies that provide mental health, mental retardation, substance abuse, children's, and other human services. The association's members cover all 67 counties in the Commonwealth, and it is estimated that they serve almost 1 million Pennsylvanians each year.
2400 Park Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110.
717.657.7078.

The Arc of PA (The Arc) works toward Service, Advocacy, Quality and Leadership for persons with mental retardation. The Arc-Pennsylvania has as its purpose the fostering, protection and nurturing of the rights of people with mental retardation. The Arc of PA has 46 chapters and is a state chapter of The National Arc.
Building #2, Suite 221, 2001 Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102.
717.234.2621.

United Cerebral Palsy of PA (UCP of PA) provides education and advocacy services on disability issues in order to fulfill its mission of advocating for the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. The UCP affiliates in PA are multi-service providers for people with disabilities and their families.
1902 Market Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011.
717.761.6129.

MH/MR Coalition

MH/MR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

FISCAL YEAR 2002-2003 FUNDING NEEDS

- ❖ *A Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for line-item appropriations addressing community mental health and mental retardation services that equals the projected rate of inflation.*
- ❖ *Continuation of the multi-year commitment begun in FY2001-2002 by the Ridge Administration to address the recruitment and retention crisis with additional state funding.*
- ❖ *Additional state funding of \$82.5 million to meet the need identified in 1999 of \$100 million of additional funding.*
- ❖ *Workforce development and generation of an economic stimulus during the current global economic crisis by approving additional state funding for recruitment and retention.*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION SUPPORTING THESE FUNDING NEEDS

1. Pennsylvania has historically been a national leader in providing services and opportunities for individuals with mental retardation and individuals with mental illness in the community. The recent Olmstead decision by the United States Supreme Court and the implementation of the Court's Order by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), particularly in Olmstead Updates No. 4 and No. 5 issued in January, 2001, further clarify the Commonwealth's responsibility in providing necessary services and in stating the entitlement that accrues to individuals with these disabilities. Update No. 5 identifies the issue of recruitment and retention as an example of how federal grant monies can be utilized in meeting the Olmstead mandates. Likewise, recommendation #5 of the recent Federal CMS review of PA's home and community-based waiver services found that "The level of funding for waiver services is less than required to provide quality services," and told the Commonwealth, "Reimbursement levels for waiver services must be set so they are sufficient to attract qualified and competent staff."
2. The Mental Health/Mental Retardation Coalition (Coalition) is a stakeholder group of county, provider and advocacy associations supported by consumers, families and direct care professionals advocating additional state funding for the recruitment and retention crisis.
3. In 1999 the Coalition identified an initial funding need of \$100 million state dollars required to begin addressing the recruitment and retention crisis resulting from years of underfunding existing services. The \$100 million two-year request was based upon several factors inherent in the MH/MR community services system. The system is funded almost entirely by state and federal sources with limited or nonexistent private pay or other third-party reimbursement revenues. This dependency upon government funding requires regular and adequate cost of living adjustments to base funding allocations in order to assure that program quality and service goals and objectives are achieved.
4. The FY 2001-2002 state budget proposed by Governor Ridge and approved by the General Assembly included a multi-year special initiative of a 2% funding increase, equaling \$17.5 million in additional state funds for this purpose, together with a general 2% cost of living adjustment to various MH/MR line-item appropriations. Bipartisan support for this initiative was overwhelming. The Coalition continues advocating the need for \$82.5 million in additional state funding to meet the need of \$100 million additional state dollars identified in 1999 for this initiative.

The MH/MR Coalition includes all of the major associations that represent mental health and/or mental retardation provider agencies and counties in Pennsylvania: Mental Health Associations in PA, MH/MR Program Administrators Association of PA, PA Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, PA Association of Resources for People with Mental Retardation, PA Community Providers Association, The Arc of PA, and United Cerebral Palsy of PA.

ROBERT M. TOMLINSON
5TH DISTRICT

SENATE BOX 209000
ROOM 187, MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3006
(717) 787-3072
FAX: (717) 778-8881

2212 BRISTOL PIKE
BETHLEHEM, PA 19060
(610) 608-1777
FAX: (610) 638-7613

7787 NEW FALLS ROAD
LEVITTOWN, PA 19053
(610) 943-7208
FAX: (610) 943-8730
rtomlin@psah.gov
tomlinro@psahweb.com



Senate of Pennsylvania
December 12, 2001

COMM. 17E43

MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, CHAIRMAN
APPROPRIATIONS, VICE CHAIRMAN
AGING AND YOUTH
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
TRANSPORTATION

CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND BOARD
JOINT CONSERVATION COUNCIL
PENNSYLVANIA FIREFIGHTERS AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS
PHEAA BOARD

The Honorable Mark S. Schweiker
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Room 225, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Schweiker:

We are writing to express our support for the continuing efforts of the Mental Health/Mental Retardation Coalition in seeking additional funds to address the severe direct care professional recruitment and retention crisis facing Pennsylvania's community-based mental health and mental retardation systems. The Coalition is a broad-based, statewide group of stakeholders representing counties, providers and advocates with allied support from direct care professionals and individuals and families receiving services.

Throughout the development of the FY 2001-2002 state budget, we worked diligently with other members of our caucuses - in addition to thousands of consumers, family members, providers, counties and other advocates - to advocate for additional state funds to begin addressing the recruitment and retention crisis.

We have been, and continue to be, concerned about the capacity of this system to provide additional services to individuals on waiting lists and the quality of existing services due to the poverty-level wages and benefits paid to the more than 40,000 direct care professionals working in Pennsylvania's community mental retardation and mental health system. Despite repeated and ongoing efforts to maximize resources, the primary problem remains a lack of adequate government funding - the principal funding source for these services.

Enclosed is a copy of the MH/MR Coalition's Statement of Funding Need for FY 2002-2003. When reviewing this document, please remember that more than a quarter of a million consumers with mental illness or mental retardation are relying upon us. In addition, 40,000 direct care professionals, suppliers of services and materials and other service professionals comprise a vast economic service network generating jobs and revenues that help to fuel Pennsylvania's economy.

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We urge you to support the MH/MR Coalition's Statement of Funding Need and to increase the funds appropriated for the recruitment and retention of direct care professionals to the best of your ability.

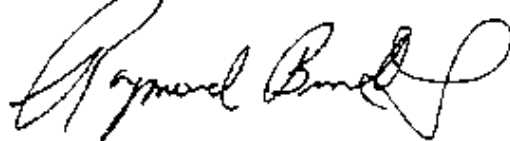
Sincerely,



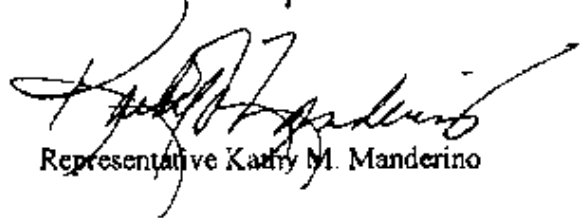
Senator Robert M. Tomlinson



Senator Allen G. Kukovich



Representative Raymond Bunt, Jr.



Representative Kathy M. Manderino

cc: Secretary Feather O. Houstoun
Secretary Robert A. Bittenbender
All Members of the General Assembly