

**GMHSPC SUBCOMITTEE ON AGING
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 25, 2005**

Present: Nancy Trout, Valerie Merrow, Mary Carman, Bryce Miller, Jayme Collins, Annettee Graham, Sheli Sweeney, Rosemary Mohr (via conference call)

SRS Staff: Leslie Huss, Cornelia Jeffery

As part of the committee's efforts to develop tasks and refine goals with measurable steps, several priorities were discussed including the need to show progressive increase in mental health services for the aging population, provide education, and promote wellness. Some other ideas about how centers can expand and provide services to the aging population were offered:

County \$\$ that go to CMHCs can be utilized for the community education/outreach;

Centers should pursue grants;

Use peer support groups/individuals;

Explore use of groups to focus on wellness in aging;

Use pilot projects.

Nancy T. indicated that mental health centers will need to identify what services are needed before they begin a program. In her experience, the Aging Specialist was defined as 1/2 time client focused and 1/2 time community outreach. While the outreach is not billable, it will result in bringing clients to the center for services that are billable.

Sheli S. related that the Association is supportive and recognizes the need to provide for the mental health needs of the aging population and that it will be "center by center director" approach to coming on board with serving the population. One issue is that Medicare rates are so low.

Rosemary shared that she thinks the center directors will be willing to serve the older population as they will be visible in their communities, similar to their willingness to serve children.

It was suggested that tele-psychiatry could be utilized to expand services to the aging population.

Another point was that aging people tend to make it to their medical doctor appointments and it would be more comfortable for some seniors if mental health staff could be located in doctor's offices. Prairie View has 2 LSCSWs and a PHD going to physicians offices.

Another task identified is the need to define the role of the aging specialist.

A request was made to Sheli to explore the feasibility of the Association adding an Aging Committee. Sheli related that the request could be made at the next Executive Board meeting in March. Sheli also indicated she would be willing to poll the centers to see what services they are currently providing to the aging population and the staff they have dedicated to do it.

The next subcommittee meeting will be April 1, 2005, at the Topeka/Shawnee County Public Library, Menninger Room, 2:30.

Reminder: The Mental Health and Aging Summit will be held May 3, 2005 in Topeka at the Expo-Centre. If you need a registration form please contact Diana Marsh at 785-296-3325 or e-mail dlzm@srskansas.org

The Topeka/Shawnee Public Library has been very accommodating to the group. If you would like to make a donation to the library as a token of appreciation, please make checks payable to Topeka/Shawnee Public Library and send to Bryce Miller, P. O. Box 4335, Topeka, KS 66604-0335.