



Clark County Commission on Aging  
1300 Franklin Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Vancouver, Washington

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## Meeting Notes

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Bill Ritchie, Bob Holdridge, Lisa Rasmussen, Karin Woll, John Correa, Marjorie Ledell, Patti Gray,

Absent: Scott Perlman, Chuck Frayer

Staff: Colete Anderson, Jacqui Kamp, Mary Beth O'Donnell

### Welcome and Call to Order

- Bill Ritchie called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from October. Motion carried, minutes unanimously approved as submitted.
- Patti Gray motioned to add the election of a treasurer to the agenda. Motion carried and approved. Patti nominated John Correa as treasurer, seconded by Lisa. Unanimously approved.

### Presentation: by Patti Gray, RN, mental health issues in Clark County

- Patti has been a nurse for over 30 years and is board certified in gerontology. Though mental health is not her specialty, she encounters it in her practice daily. A mental health committee comprised of some CoA and community members has been formed they've met twice to date. There's been good response to an article that appeared in the newspapers from people interested in joining the committee.
- Patti described characteristics of mental health and mental illness categories. We may take mental health for granted, just as we do with physical health, until it is compromised or lost.
- There is societal stigma attached to mental illness in spite of data showing these illnesses are caused by biological factors, injury, brain chemistry, genetics or traumatic experiences.
- 2011 statistics reported one in five American adults experienced a mental health issue and only 38% received treatment. One in ten young people experience a period of major depression with 20% treated.
- Treatment is highly effective. But resources are severely underfunded. The Parity Act of 2013 and Affordable Care Act require benefits for mental health to be no more restrictive than for physical health.

- Need to start benchmarking now to determine when we've made progress. Presently, there is no known benchmark.
- Predicted outcome without intervention is homelessness, injury to others, and death. With services, a person can hopefully be independent and stay out of the criminal justice system. Mental illness has put strains on law enforcement, families and community, healthcare system, government agencies, non-profits and employers.
- Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the USA, more than double the number of homicides. It is a growing cause of death for boomers and elders. It has the highest rate among 45–59 year olds and the second highest rate in those 75 or older (2011 data). Over the age of 65, white males are at highest risk and that risk increases in males over 85. Female rate declines after age 60. One of the leading causes is depression that goes undiagnosed or untreated. The NW region has the second highest rate of suicide in the nation and in Clark County, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death (2008 report).
- Specific goals of the mental health committee:
  - Engage county, city, law enforcement, citizen and mental/medical health providers to improve access, cost-effectiveness, and services to those in need.
  - Increase psychiatric resources, responsiveness and number of available inpatient beds.
  - Increase contributions of healthcare providers to mental health services.
  - Reduce reliance on the county jail and hospital emergency rooms as mental health service providers.
  - Develop local prevention strategy with actionable steps.
- Email Patti: [pattigray@atyourplaceseniorcare.com](mailto:pattigray@atyourplaceseniorcare.com)
- Peggy McCarthy, executive director of NAMI SW Washington, (National Alliance of Mental Illness) [www.namiiswwa.org](http://www.namiiswwa.org) and [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org), commented the organization is working with Vancouver Housing Authority and the public schools on a program to start next fall. Three schools that have the highest rate of absenteeism have been targeted. Absenteeism is usually an indicator of poverty, trauma and mental illness in the home or the child themselves. It's also an indicator of who will graduate from high school. NAMI is doing family to family and basics classes in apartment buildings where these kids live or in the school. They've received funding for a new program in resiliency training for parents, teaching skills to help them and the kids deal with problems. They hope to get funding for the second half of the program which is resiliency training for small children to better protect them and give them skills to cope with a life that's filled with trauma.
- Chris DeRosier from SW WA Behavioral Health commented on the state of mental health care locally and nationwide. Information on their services can be found at <http://www.swbh.org>

### Old Business

- Bob Holdridge entered a motion to approve the revised CoA work plan. Motion carried and unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.