

Department of Mental Health Inpatient Study Commission
Public Hearing
Division of Health Care Finance and Policy, Boston
June 3, 2009

This was the first of five scheduled hearings of the DMH Inpatient Study Commission. It was held at the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy, China Trade Center, Two Boylston Street, Boston, MA, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Commission members attending included: Marylou Sudders and James Brett, Co-chairs, John Bove, Philip Hadley, Cathy Levin, Nathaniel Baez-Shirley, Vicker DiGravio, Robert Gittens, Paul Barreira and Jim Durkin.

Ms. Sudders called the meeting to order, introduced members of the Commission, and articulated the Commission's goals. The current economic downturn and resulting fiscal realities has created a set of challenges for the Department that include:

- an immediate structural deficit of \$24M;
- an already significant reduction to DMH community services; and
- more than 200 of 788 adult patients are ready for community services.

Ms. Sudders posed four questions to public hearing participants:

1. How should the Department balance its vision of Community First (defined as supporting persons with mental illness so that they can live independently in the community) with the need for adult inpatient capacity?
2. Given current budget challenges, should the Department increase community based resources by reducing its adult inpatient capacity?
3. In evaluating the Department's adult inpatient system, how should inpatient resources be prioritized?
4. How can the Department best serve individuals transition from its adult inpatient system to less restrictive, more independent living in the community?

Approximately 30 persons attended the hearing. The following 11 individuals testified before the Commission:

Rhonda Bourne
Citizen (see submitted written testimony)

Jonathan Dosick
Consumer Advocate (see submitted written testimony)

Ken Sklar
Partners Psychiatry and Mental Health
(see submitted written testimony)

Blair Mergel
M-Power (see submitted written testimony)

Renee LaPlume
Boston Center Psychiatric Rehab/Vinfen (see submitted written testimony, post hearing)

Evelyn Kaufman
M-Power

Gail Shamon
Transformation Center (see submitted written testimony)

Ruthie Poole
M-Power (see submitted written testimony, post hearing)

Cindy Grimes
M-Power Volunteer

Robert J. Welch, MD
Hallmark Health
Former Medical Director, Tewksbury State Hospital (see submitted written testimony, post hearing)

Jonathan Delman
CQI (see submitted written testimony, post hearing)

This marked the end of formal comments to Commission members. During an informal conversation between participants and Commission members, the following comments were stated:

Commission Co-Chair Marylou Sudders informed hearing participants that the Commission composition will not be expanded to include additional consumers or other individuals with relevant inpatient care experience.

The Commission instructed staff to re-publicize the public hearings and to reach out to the Clubhouse Coalition and patient advisory councils at the state hospitals.