

Department of Mental Health Inpatient Study Commission
Public Hearing
The Conference Center at Massasoit Community College, Brockton
June 9, 2009

This was the third of five scheduled hearings of the DMH Inpatient Study Commission. It was held at The Conference Center at Massasoit Community College, 770 Crescent Street, Brockton, MA, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Deaf and hard of hearing interpreters were available if needed.

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

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 70 persons attended the hearing. The following 18 individuals testified before the Commission:

John A. Brennan
Taunton State Hospital
(see submitted written testimony)

Ben Kravitz

Karen Coughlin
Massachusetts Nurses Association
(see submitted written testimony)

Susan Stefan
Center for Public Representation
(see submitted written testimony)

Fanny Zambuto

Sarah Buchman

Jackie Moore
North Suffolk Mental Health

Nancy Buchman

Dr. Michael Murphy
BCCR

Marilyn Zaslau

Phil Shea
Community Care of Bristol County

Karen Talley
Disability Law Center
(see submitted written testimony, post hearing)

Monica A. Briggs
Transformation Center
(see submitted written testimony)

Sue Maginnis
Board Member

Linda McGarry

Don Zambuto

Fred Chapman

Ruthie Poole
(see submitted written testimony)

Commission Co-Chair, Marylou Sudders, and Commission member Jim Durkin informed hearing participants that the rumors of DMH moving ahead to immediately close units or

wards has not been communicated to the Commission and that the Commissioner of Mental Health has stated the rumors are false.