

**Morris County Mental Health Addictions Services Advisory Board**  
**Public Forum for Consumers and Families**  
***Many Faces of Recovery: Celebrating YOU!!***  
**June 12, 2017**  
**Highlights**

**Attendance**

The 23rd Forum drew over 150 participants, higher than 2016. The majority of participants were consumers, followed by providers, family members and officials. Attendees included representation from NJ Division of Mental Health and Addictions Services, family and consumer advocacy groups, Greystone Hospital, the County Freeholder Board, Sheriff Gannon and the Mental Health Addictions Services Advisory Board members. Agency leadership was well represented and there was good participation at community resource tables.

**Theme:** Celebrating You!

Life Center Stage musicians wrote a song based on consumer input. Celebratory music was part of the evening's agenda.

**Continued Service Priorities:**

Transportation, housing, dental care, wellness programs, employment and education opportunities.

**New service needs/emerging concerns:** Negative impact of providers' transition to Fee For Service cost reimbursement. Implementation of FFS is just beginning; individuals already are reporting a decrease in outpatient and recreation and wellness services.

Written evaluations:

- 100% forum met expectations
- 66% recovery stories the highlight

**Stories of Recovery:** Two speakers who in recovery from mental illness and co-occurring addictions.

**Recognition awards:**

- Terri Belske Consumer Advocate: Valerie Fox
- Family Advocate: Pam Garanger
- Community Leadership: Lou Schwarcz

**Suggestions for 2018:**

- Keep recovery stories, music
- Find a new mic system
- Topics, themes: Mental Wellness and You, Mindfulness, Laughter, Yoga, Caregivers support

**Public speakers:** At least 32

**Written evaluators:** 9

**Public comment:**

**What services and supports are most helpful? Please describe:**

- MHA, Peer line, wellness programs, AA, transportation, and availability of social services.
- Wellness and Recovery Center helped by giving information on different psychiatrists and also gave other resources. They even did a follow up check with her.
- Resource Day – was able to get a companion that helps. In addition, community rides, social clubs, Mental Health Association, and her case manager is very helpful.
- Got driver's license through DMV easily. Health and wellness, community care, Community Hope and Capital Care have all been helpful.
- Got a letter of benefits denial and waiting to get services. Counselor at Mental Health Association is helping.
- NAMI, Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) support groups, NAMI support groups.
- New Bridge has been helpful.

**Question: What services do you need but are hard to find?**

- Have trouble with transportation – it depends where you live.
- Difficulty finding nicotine support groups – none around.
- DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) groups are hard to find.
- Hard to find housing. Those coming out of Greystone usually get housing but if you are coming out of St. Clare's you cannot get housing.
- Need more housing and better quality housing.
- If you have a case manager, they can apply directly to the state for vouchers and that can work.
- Crisis intervention, hotline number for consumers for after hours.
- Respite services for those that don't want to go into the hospital. There is respite in Haledon but many would prefer something closer. Morris will help get you transportation there.
- Increase in literacy programs.
- Credit checks for jobs, bad credit should not matter in trying to get a job.
- There is a crisis center for St. Clare's and a hot line for after hours.
- Employment Options helped him get a job at T.J. Maxx.  
*Comment that St. Clare's has a supported employment program and so does Division of Vocational Rehab.*
- Comment that there are peer-to-peer lines you can call and cards from NAMI where you can text for help and support when in crisis.

**Question: How can services be improved?**

- Need to improve on the 8-12 hour wait for psych emergency evaluations.
- More wellness based programs. Saint Clare's had to cut a lot of services due to **fee for service** changes. I lost my therapist. The Wellness and Recovery

Center tried to help but I am only allowed ten visits. Services are now limited. Need something to help pick up the slack.

- Get rid of **fee for service** and make services free.
- Have better quality food and more activities at hospitals.
- Wish there was a liaison between the mental health folks and the police. Expand this so all first responders have mental health training.

*Response: There is some training out there now. The MC Prosecutors Office is training police officers in de-escalation techniques. St. Clare's is working with them on how to respond, what to do. This training started in May and is going to at least December 2017. This training is mandated for police and first responders.*

- Better choices of food at food pantries.
- More dental hygiene programs, more dental care.
- Transportation to dental care.
- Some folks are turned away for help it is not right.
- Hard to know the ins and outs of insurance. People need help to get health care.
- There was a program that MHA/JBWS had for sexually battered women. It was a great program but the grant ran out. Would like to see this program available again. It was the no wrong door and a coalition of several agencies.

**Question: What would you wish for if you could get assistance?**

- Vacation program so everyone can go on vacation.
- More programs like Dress for Success. Programs that help people feel good. More trips for fun, getting hair done, things like that. MHA has some programs but it would be nice if their programs were expanded.
- Better services for eye care.
- Better services for dental care – maybe some dentists that do pro bono work for those that do not have dental insurance.
- More access to legal services and more pro bono legal work.
- More co-occurring services.
- Comment that the Morris County Library is a wonderful resource and they have computers for the public to use.
- More housing options and more funds for housing.

**Question: How has stigma been a barrier?**

- Sometimes due to self-stigma, people are afraid to get help.
- Utilized mental health professionals. People need to go out and get services and help. Many professionals and friends have shown empathy and kindness.

**Question: How do you overcome stigma?**

- Education.
- Social skills, personal hygiene, training in social skills.
- Facing stigma, confronting it.
- Spreading the word and getting all on board with being stigma free. It is great this is happening in our communities.

- Be nice to people.
- Sharing.
- Ignoring it and moving on. Do not let it get you down. Move ahead.
- One out of four people suffer from mental illness. If one person does not understand, you have to keep trying. You will find the right person to help you.
- There is a lot of fear behind stigma. We need to try to open people's minds so that they see realize those with addictions and mental illness do have an illness.

Mr. Basto thanked all for the great work done here tonight. The Forum will end with some music, song and entertainment. Forum speaking portion over at 7:45 p.m.

### **Written evaluations:**

Most important issue:

- Smoking, it is a battle everywhere in the mental health community to be in a smoke free environment.
- The importance of uniting together to provide services
- Support and hope
- Coordination of all available services
- Recovery speakers
- Stigma
- Gaps created due to fee for service

Biggest gap:

- Personal care and social awareness skills.
- More housing options (2)
- Funding
- Transportation
- Emergency medical care, long waits in ER for evaluation and placement.
- Informing consumers of all the help available to them
- No wellness based programs/advocacy programs

What I wish I would have said:

- Is Alzheimer's part of the agenda?
- There should be more emphasis on mental illness not drugs or addiction.
- This is my tenth year as a mental health worker. This past year has been a little concerning for me. My organization is in the process of switching to Community Support Services (CSS). I understand this situation. I have also received the required training but my concerns are for consumers who I work with daily. Due to CSS we have to cancel a lot of the activities. For example the yearly consumer vacation as well as a yearly cultural dinner we have are cancelled. I have received numerous complaints from consumers and I do my best to explain the whole process to them or direct them to a supervisor. Most recently we had to cancel wellness activity meetings due to CSS regulations.

- My major concern is for consumers' wellness overall. Yes we encourage wellness daily but how can we provide wellness to individuals as a whole when activities are being cancelled? Thank you for your time.
- Offer a county mental health walk or picnic
- Consumers need to network with each other.

Met expectations:

Yes (9)

No (0)

Attended previous forums:

Yes (4)

No (5)

Highlights:

- Explanation of fee for service
- Awards (4)
- Loved the music at the end and awesome inspirational. Great job! (2)
- Public forum and discussion
- Enjoyed consumers in recovery testimony (6)

Suggestions to improve next year's Forum:

- Larger room
- Encourage more consumer activity prior to forum

Suggested Topics

- So many people with SMI are exploited /abused by relatives, financially and socially.
- "Open Dialogue" a western Finnish program
- NAMI connections
- Better PA system, I didn't find the questions that helpful as it gave people the false expectation that the things they wished for they could get.
- Better microphone

Received services from:

- Collaborative Support Programs (CSP), Jewish Family Services, formerly Cornerstone until they cancelled their counseling program.
- Intensive Family Support Services
- Depressive Bi-Polar SA
- Mental Health Association community rides is the only service offered where I am in recovery.

Answered by:

Consumer (4)

Family member (2)  
Provider (2)

**Agencies in attendance included:**

Atlantic Health  
Collaborative Support Programs/Wellness Center  
Community Hope  
Cornerstone  
Family Intervention Services  
Freedom House  
Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital  
Homeless Solutions, Inc.  
Intensive Family Support Programs  
Legal Services of NWJ  
Mental Health Association of Morris County  
Morris County Department of Human Services  
Morris County Prosecutor's Office  
Morris County Sheriff's Office/Hope One  
NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
NAMI  
NewBridge  
NORWESCAP  
Office of Temporary Assistance  
Prime Healthcare/Saint Clare's  
Rest Stop Rejuvenate