

RECOVERY AROUND THE SOUND

North Sound Mental Health Administration



November/December 2012



Inside this issue:

- Joe's Corner
- Molina Medical at Compass Health
- Electronic Health Records
- Save the Date

Visit Us:

<http://www.nsmha.org>

Contact Us:

aroundthesound@nsmha.org

**North Sound Mental
Health Administration**
117 N 1st St Ste 8
Mt Vernon, WA 98273

360.416.7013
800.684.3555

Fax: 360-416-7017

Joe's Corner

With all of the talk in the media about the need to strengthen mental health treatment services in the wake of the Newtown tragedy, it's important to point out that there are already concrete efforts underway in the State and in the North Sound Region to strengthen mental health treatment services by improving coordination of treatment with other systems of care. "Fixing" the mental health system by focusing on mental health services alone will fail if we don't recognize that we must address the needs of the whole person. In Native American healing traditions, healing is guided by the image of the "medicine wheel". The use of the Medicine Wheel reminds us that we need to achieve a balance between all aspects of the individual – the mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical. Similarly, one of the key goals of health care reform is to improve the effectiveness of health care by recognizing that we need to address the needs of the whole person [hmm – not such a new idea is it?].

This month's newsletter features two examples of efforts by North Sound Community Mental Health Agencies to do just this. *Molina Healthcare* and *Compass Health* partnered in 2010 to open an on-

site medical clinic at their Cliff Bailey Center in Everett to connect primary medical care with behavioral health services using a "Person-Centered Health Care Home" approach. *Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric Clinic* spearheaded a joint effort between all of the North Sound Community Mental Health Agencies (CMHAs) that successfully responded to a Request for Proposal (RFP) from NSMHA to fund the implementation of an Electronic Health Records (EHR) system. This EHR can serve as the first building block toward a system of "health information exchange" among health organizations that will improve coordination of care across systems.

At the regional level, NSMHA has partnered with its counties, the two Area Agencies on Aging in the North Sound, local county health alliances, and others to develop a *North Sound Regional Health Alliance*. The Regional Health Alliance will be seeking input and participation from a broad group of stakeholders to identify specific projects that can support and possibly expand local county health improvement initiatives as well as launch other projects that can use regional level resources to improve integration between health care, behavioral health and long term care services.

At the state level, the Health Care Authority is releasing RFPs to fund several initia



- Continued from Page 1
tives to improve care coordination to high risk persons on Medicaid, including those that receive both Medicaid and Medicare. Similarly, the DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery has developed a plan for strengthening the Adult Behavioral Health Services system that will expand the use of "Evidence Based Practices" as well as build the capacity of the behavioral health services system to serve the anticipated expansion in the number of persons who can be covered by Medicaid.

All of these efforts represent concrete and powerful strategies to support the treatment and recovery of those suffering from mental illness. We can build on and expand these types of strategies without having to wait

for the recommendations from yet another commission about how to "fix" the mental health system.

However, keeping the public conversation focused on the "system" as the target for change efforts rather than on the persons suffering from mental illness is important. The public ruminations from arm chair diagnosticians who want to over-emphasize the links between mental illness and violence will only further stigmatize and even "criminalize" mental illness. This is alarming. We can instead continue to strengthen the systems of care for those suffering from mental illness by improving integration of care between systems – and many of us are already doing so.

Inevitably, the discussions about strengthening the mental health system need to focus even more on early intervention with children and youth. SAMSHA and the State of Washington have energetically pursued establishment of *Systems of Care* for children and their families. NSMHA has also embraced the principles of System of Care and has co-hosted 3 annual "Systems of Care" institutes. In 2013, we plan to ramp up our efforts to expand intensive children's mental health treatment services based on Systems of Care principles.

More on this next month.

Molina Medical at Compass Health

Tom Sebastian, CEO—Compass Health

Molina Healthcare and Compass Health partnered in 2010 to open an on-site medical clinic at our Cliff Bailey Center location in Everett, WA. The clinic is able to provide patients including North Sound Mental Health Administration consumers with their primary health and behavioral health needs. Bringing to life the concept of a Person-Centered Healthcare Home, this revolutionary new treatment center is focused on integrating primary medical care and behavioral health services.

Employing a distinctive multi-disciplinary approach known as the Person-Centered Healthcare Home, Molina Medical at Compass Health is implementing coordinated care for community members with mental illness, including consumers of the North Sound Mental Health Administration through the co-location of primary care and behavioral health services.

Through this unique Person-Centered Healthcare Home we provide:

- ◆ Increased access to primary care physicians
- ◆ Enhanced quality of care through integration of physical health, mental health and chemical dependency services
- ◆ Coordinated care that links multiple programs for holistic patient care
- ◆ Care management for those with multiple chronic health conditions

This initiative is meeting several of the objectives hoped to be achieved through healthcare reform and the integration of health and behavioral health services and does so through partnership and collaboration. The resources provided by the North Sound Mental Health Administration for mental health services are a critical support for success.

Since 1980, Molina Healthcare has been a leader in providing quality healthcare to those who depend on government assistance. Their com-

mitment to members has made them a national leader in providing affordable healthcare to families and individuals. In 2010, Molina was named the largest Hispanic-owned business in the United States.

Since 1902, Compass Health has been a provider of services to our most vulnerable community members. Compass currently offers a full continuum of behavioral health and social services in Snohomish, Skagit, Island and San Juan counties serving over 13,000 community members each year.

The clinic is open Monday-Friday, 8:30am - 5:00pm.

Main Clinic 425-249-4822

Scheduling 1-866-472-0592

Electronic Health Records a Key to Healthcare Reform

By Dean Wight, CEO—Whatcom Counseling

Community Mental Health Agencies funded by NSMHA got a big boost toward being ready to participate in healthcare reform this year. NSMHA was able to allocate funds to agencies that will allow them to implement Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems. EHR's are computerized versions of clinical charts, which until now have been thick files of paper describing the process of recovery: needs assessments, recovery plans, service notes, medication information and so on. The problem is that every health organization has such a record for each individual and sharing information on behalf of that individual is clumsy and not very timely when it occurs.

The EHR is the first building block toward a system of "health information exchange" among health organizations. The next step will be computer systems that allow each agency to share information between EHR's that an individual gives permission to share. What's the benefit? When a person goes to their primary care doctor, their doctor will know what's being done for them at their mental health center and can support that effort. Conversely, when

a mental health agency sees an individual, information they get from that person's primary care doctor about other medical conditions (diabetes, lung or heart problems for example) can alert them to avoid psychiatric medications that might make those other health problems worse.

Individuals someday will only have to give out basic information once (where they live, birth date, phone number, medical history) rather than repeating it to every medical professional they see. And providers can more easily coordinate care, guided in the best of all worlds by a single care plan that the individual has agreed to for their benefit. Individuals will be able to access their information on-line through "patient portals" (secure, password-protected websites) where they can check on lab reports, remind themselves about appointments, and look up information about how they can better support their health and recovery as an active partner in their care. *That's what "patient-centered" care really means.*

Dignity
+
Respect
=
Inclusion

Take the Pledge!

**Join the Dignity
& Respect
Campaign**

**[www.nsmha.org/
dignity_respect/](http://www.nsmha.org/dignity_respect/)**

©2012 Dignity & Respect Campaign

Save the Date!
**The Thirteenth Annual
Tribal Mental Health Conference**
May 14 & 15 2013
Skagit Resort in Bow, WA

