PA Advocacy 101

At this time when all mental health community services are at risk, it is the time to get out your pen (computer) and search for the words of why funding for human services are important issues in your life and in being able to continue to live in the community.

In becoming an advocate, the steps are clear:

- Be willing to find your voice and become involved. Legislators want to hear your story in your own words of how their vote will impact your life.
- Register to vote. You will need a photo ID in Pennsylvania.
- Collect the facts and become informed
- Know that the action you take does make a difference

Take action

Note: This article is adapted from information from the Tennessee Disability Coalition and Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumer Association.

From PMHCA: We do know the following proposed budget details:

- The budget will reduce funding for our community mental health system by at least 20%. This catastrophic level of cut is unprecedented in Pennsylvania’s history. It gets even worse—the Governor proposes to put these dollars into a county administered Human Services Development Fund Block Grant (HSDF) with NO requirement that they be spent on mental health services, even though the overwhelming majority of dollars are from the mental health system. The proposed cut for mental health and drug and alcohol services is a loss of one out of every five dollars.

One Step Together

It is exciting when we see our residents do job hunting and find a job. Finding a job is hard these days, Wayne completed his application and made it through the interview process.

Wayne started working at a local grocery store and went from being scheduled one day/week to being scheduled two days/week. Wayne has become a valued employee at the store where his work ethics and personality have enhanced the team he works with at the store.

Wayne continues to be active in a variety of community activities from: Bible Study, Bowling, Basketball, Sunday school, and the New Horizons Drop-In Center.

Lynda Bradley  Allegheny SCR
Getting Involved with Your Legislator

Writing, Faxing, and Emailing Your Legislator

Legislators pay attention to their daily mail whether it's a personal handwritten letter, fax, or email.

**Do your homework** - Know the pros and cons of your issue and be prepared to supply information. If possible, thank the legislator for past support on issues of personal interest.

**Make it personal** - In the first paragraph, state why the issue concerns you and what you think should be done. Then in later paragraphs share your knowledge and experience. Explain how the issue will personally affect you, your family, friends, quality of life, and the community. Provide concrete real life stories and analogies.

**Focus** - Advocate for only one issue per letter, fax, or e-mail. Present your case in a convincing rational way to the legislator. Do not use buzz words or initials that may not be understood.

**Constituents Count** - Be sure to identify yourself as someone who lives or works in the elected official's district, include your address and phone number. You are a part of their constituency and an active registered voter.

**Making the Ask** - End your letter with a request for a response or specific action such as support for a bill that you believe in.

**Follow-up** - If you receive a response, then follow it up with a letter of thanking the legislator for taking the time to hear you out. Even if the legislator doesn’t agree on this particular issue, do not burn your bridge because they might be a great ally on another issue down the road.

“A Cry for Help”

Man is Gone
Feelin’ all alone
Son if that’s for me tell them I’m not home!

Rent is due
Baby needs new shoes
Gotta pay the gas and electric, too!
God I wish my head would stop hurtin’!

Welfare cuts
Hell I know it’s not much
But what ya gonna do when you are down on your luck?
God I wish my head would stop hurtin’!

No don’t tell me to wait
There’s no more I can take!
My mind is gone and my spirit’s is about to break;
And if I don’t get help soon, it might be too late, but then…
Maybe my head would stop hurtin’!

Paula Cole Miller, Harrisburg
Advocacy 101

Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services and Supports cut includes:
20% cut in all funds that currently supports community mental health
These dollars support people who have left the state hospitals (known as CHIPPS) are included in this
20% cut and in the proposed block grant to counties.
As state hospitals were closed or downsized, counties identified the amount of money needed to replace
the institutional beds with community services. The plans and funding included the services and sup-
ports both for individuals moving from the institution and people who would have needed this level of
service in the future.
State hospital beds have been closed but the money supporting people has been cut 20%.
• 20% cut for individuals receiving Behavioral Health Services (BHSI). BHSI services were created for indi-
viduals in need of mental health and/or drug and alcohol treatment services lost their Medical Assis-
tance in the 1990s.
• 20% cut to Act 152 Drug and Alcohol Program.

And still more bad news:
• General Assistance (GA) cash grants will be totally eliminated.
• In order to keep Medicaid health insurance coverage, people receiving General Assistance Medicaid
will have to work 20 hours per week.
• Mental Health and drug and alcohol treatment represent approximately 35% of the GA Medicaid
expenditures.

To understand more about how your personal services would be directly affected, speak with your team
leaders. Our best understanding is that for Keystone these cuts impact our Supportive Living and all of
our residential services which are county funded programs. We are con-
suming to talk to county administrators as each county is addressing
these potential funding cuts in different ways. Decisions are expected to
be made by July 1

Advocacy Matters

Let’s celebrate our local successes:

At Keystone Center Chambersburg we have been doing a lot of talk about voicing our opinions on the budget,
attending the commissioners meetings, and trying to stop the county from foisting MH/ID/EI into non-profit status
by July 1 with NO plan.

We got it stopped! On Monday, we are going to begin an intensive letter writing campaign. We took a stand on
the local issue and it made a difference. People listened!

Keystone Center Chambersburg
The Voice of Recovery in Maryland

Keystone Service Systems - Mental Health Maryland has been in the beginning stages of implementing a leadership council with individuals in our Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program (PRP) in Carroll County which started in January 2012. Following the lead of our Harrisburg programs we have been actively participating in the Faces of Recovery conference calls each month and taking back information to the people we support to encourage and advocate for their own growth and promoting the strength of their recovery here in Maryland.

The response has been both positive and encouraging to see the voices of recovery emerging here in our community. Participants have shared their desire to learn more about mental illness and the effects of their mental health, how they can take a more active role in their medical and mental health and teach others through their experiences. One participant states, “I want the doctor and therapist to listen to me”. Other goals from this group include advocating for the challenges they and others like them experience around transportation and insurance coverage.

Taking their stories and teaching others about the challenges, defacing the stigma that often surrounds them and our community. We have provided active discussions around stigma, both internal and external and will be providing resources for training and advocacy through a partnership with On Our Own of Maryland. Participants have shared their frustrations with the way in which they are viewed by the support centers that are available in our communities and the assumptions that are portrayed when someone has medical assistance versus the patients who have private insurance. Folks are inspired to share their stories and help others to overcome the challenges through their strength and resilience to recovery. We look forward to the continued growth of our Leadership Council in Maryland and to the support gained by our Keystone Family in Pennsylvania.

Carrie Freshour  Maryland

Having Fun with Zentangles

The world of Zentangles [www.zentangle.com](http://www.zentangle.com)

As we did our Wellness Tools for Trauma class we had one member who was a phenomenal doodler designing edges of legal paper for note paper she could latter use to send letters to her son.

The art of Zentangles has been a Wellness tool for many as they design: This piece was done by Gayle Bluebird one of our leaders in Creativity and Recovery. Yours does not need to be so detailed you only need to take a pen and draw a pattern you like. The art is your repetition of the pattern. It is a focusing activity and relaxing.

Knowing anything is possible Create One Stroke at a Time.
Where is Recovery Happening? Out and About

April 4 940 Keystone East Park Drive 10 am-2pm WRAP Wellness Festival Shedding the Old, Welcoming Change Interactive workstations to learn about WRAP Key Concepts. Register with Kathyann kcorl@keystonehumanservices.org

April 12, 19, 26 and May 3 Pro A Family Education program 900 S Arlington St Harrisburg PA 6:00-8:00pm For registration call PRO-A (717) 545-8929

April 16 Recovery Insight 315 W James Street Suite 103A Lancaster WRAP class 8 week evidence base sponsored by Central Region CSP 1pm-3pm Register with Tom tnewman@philhaven.org

April 17 and 19 Christ Lutheran Ch 407 Lafayette Lancaster 9am-3pm Serving on Boards Lancaster residents $5 Others $20 Lunch included Register with Mary Bowen mbowen@rc-pa.org

April 25 The Importance of Diversifying Fundraising and Development The Meeting Place 5885 Robert Oliver Place Columbia MD Register through On Our Own MD

April 26 Keystone 3609 Derry Street 2:00-4:15pm “It’s a WRAP” class 8 wk evidenced based class format Register with Kathyann kcorl@keystonehumanservices.org

May 1 Lights for Life Candlelight Vigil 7pm Trinity UCC 30 W North St Waynesboro 717-264-4301

May 3 “Choices in Recovery” 6pm Sponsored by NAMI Cumberland Perry Fredricksen Library Camp Hill

May 8 Recovery Conference “Making the Pieces Fit” 9am-4pm Harrisburg Holiday Inn New Cumberland Hosted by CSP of Dauphin/Cumberland/Perry counties Registration: kmaldonado@philhaven.org Come and see the Quilt!!!

May 9 How do I connect with Employers? The Front Station Northumberland 9:30-3:30 Contact: registrar@networksfortraining.org Sponsored by Center of Medical Services

May 10 Wellness Conference More info call 717-264-4301

May 18-19-20 Explosion of Expression CSP Art Show Chambersburg Mall

May 31 Blending the Pieces Together 11:30am Carlisle

June 5 Joint Rally at the Capital Meet at the Capital Rotunda Rally sponsored by PCPA, PMHCA, MHA of Pennsylvania and a variety of providers and advocates 12 noon

June 5, 6, 7 PMHCA Conference Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey 4650 Lindle Road Harrisburg PA Recovery Unlimited: Rising above the Challenges register at: www.pmhca.org/conferences. A limited number of scholarships were awarded by regional CSPs.

June 7, 8 On Our Own of MD Annual Conference: The Tao of Possibilities: Dream Believe Achieve Register through http://www.onourownmd.org
Maximizing Wellness Tools to Live with Trauma

Maximizing Wellness Tools to Live with Trauma is a peer designed training building on the tools and exercises introduced in Mary Ellen Copeland’s Healing from the Abuse of Trauma materials.

Leadership Council has been the driving force behind the creation of this training. Leadership Council is a collaboration of people in services from across the agency of Keystone Mental Health Services who partner with Management to create system change in the organization. This training has developed over time after Leadership Council did an organizational evaluation and indicated that they wanted to have trauma education and information available through Keystone.

There was a Training Development team which included Kathyann Corl, Recovery Educator/WRAP Facilitator, Doug Smith, CPS/WRAP Facilitator, and Kim Morrison Peer-Peer Resource person.

The training included an extensive Workbook for individuals to work through which includes a series of Peer Recovery Reflections. These are a few excerpts of the topics that were highlighted:

Week One Facing Adversity: Thought ‘Faith is a time when it feels / As if we are walking win our hip boots through knee deep mud / When the fog is so thick you cannot see a step in front of you, / And yet you know you are being led and you are safe.’ By Jim P (12 step) Reflection by Kim Morrison, Harrisburg

Week Two Finding Motivation: Thought ‘Old beliefs do not lead to new changes, / Adapting to small changes helps you adapt to the bigger changes.’ By Spencer Johnson Reflection by Thomas Sprull, Chambersburg

Week Three Opportunities for Change: Thought ‘Opportunity knocks, but it has never been known to turn the door and walk in.’ Anonymous Reflection by Patti Uhrich, Harrisburg

As the training concluded and we released our colorful helium balloons into the sky we each knew that we were not the same person that we were when the training began. We had each released some of the anger and questioning that was within us and begun to fill it with the fresh spring air of hope. We had each started a journey of soul-searching and healing that would lead us towards our own next steps to wellness.

Next class It’s a WRAP April 26 2:00-4:15 Allfirst Room
Chambersburg

10x10 Wellness Activities

We have been doing wellness sessions here at The Keystone Center on Monday to Friday, as well as exercising from 10:15 to 10:45 with weights, treadmill, walking outside or around the building.

Creativity
Planning a guest artist do to presentation on developing a variety of different types of metallic art designs. Martha is now collecting flip tops of soda cans to help offset costs of arts and crafts materials.

Harrisburg

Reaching out to Community

Kim and Kathyann offered a lively question and answer class at HACC surrounding the initial topic of “The Issue of Insight” by Larry Davidson, MD as part of the Recovery to Practice curriculum.

Kim, Linda and Kathyann were available to sign Recovery books at the 2012 MHA Vision of Hope honoring Dennis Felty for his 40 years of work at Keystone. There was a sponsor who purchased the book for each family unit.

Creative Persons in Recovery
This is an exciting new venture into creativity that is facilitated by Robert Martin (art work above). We have had Kim Maldonado share her expertise in quilt making and Bob his expertise in making pop-up cards. Kathyann has supporting individuals in exploring their writings.

Upcoming Dates:      Tuesday 4/24   Tuesday 5/15   Tuesday 6/19
Leadership Council is an advisory board to the Keystone Mental Health Services Management Team. People in recovery who have affiliations with Keystone Human Services-Mental Health are invited to join. Other stakeholders are invited but asked to realize that some activities may be specific to Keystone. Leadership Council is directly involved in working with the Management Team in the development, implementation, and evaluation of Keystone Services.

Leadership Council Activities are peer driven and geared toward:

- Empowering peers to develop their own voice
- Educating peers about the choices they have in the delivery of service

For the name of your areas local peer leader, please contact Kathyann.

**Teaching ourselves about Stigma: Expectations**

I know all of us are gifted in different ways and we are all taught in different ways. All of us are passive, assertive or aggressive in our thought and actions. Some are molded with a low self esteem and some of us are molded with arrogance. Out of these, which need to be changed? Answer: both.

I can identify with a lot of people’s actions and thoughts by my own development, attitudes and changes. What is a firm and just influence or correction? I believe in question and answers. I have identified with my attitude and adjusted it, but I am often upset that people don’t prosper by adjusting their attitude. The same advice is not heard or heeded by all individuals equally. Many times I am persecuted by the same people that I tried to help.

Labeling someone is developed by attitudes or the environment around. The essence of an enthusiastic spirit can be an ignorant spirit or knowledgeable spirit of truth. Truth is what seems to linger around and not be grasped by all individuals. The need to act aggressive is prevalent in many subjects without objective thinking or bothering to search for the fact of truth in a chaotic environment. Areas that need to be searched and changed in a more positive, less judgmental way are often avoided because people are often afraid of change or the truth of what could be better toward a real peace.

Norman Osterhoudt, Chambersburg