



SOUTHWEST COLORADO MENTAL HEALTH CENTER (SWCMHC)

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COMMUNITY UPDATE

June 2008

Notes From Bern

I hope that this and previous newsletters are proving both interesting and useful to you. Feedback is most welcome. Please contact either Karen Spungen (kspungen@swcmhc.org) or me (bheath@swcmhc.org) with any suggestions or to unsubscribe.

Archuleta County & Communities

Comings & Goings:

At our Pagosa Springs office, **Karen Negri** has left to help her daughter who is expecting twins. **Stewart Bellina** has also announced that she will be leaving our office at the end of July, but the good news is that she is not going far ... moving to the position of her dreams with the Pagosa Springs School District and will remain in close touch with the Center. We will be a bit short-staffed, so please be patient with us.

Facts & Figures:

Program Services: For the first half of 2008, 243 Archuleta County residents were provided with services through the Center. We have provided 23 emergency assessments so far this year with 4 resulting in ATU stays (averaging 3.5 days per stay) and 8 psychiatric hospital stays (averaging 27 days per stay). Archuleta ATU admissions accounted for just over 3% of all ATU admits.

Program/Service News:

Relocation: With the Grand Opening on January 5, Archuleta County now has a new critical access hospital, the Pagosa Mountain Hospital. In an effort to help the Hospital with its emergency services and to reduce the stigma of mental health and substance abuse issues, we have been talking to the Hospital Board and administration about the possibility of moving our offices and co-locating on the Pagosa Mountain Hospital campus. We will keep everyone updated as these discussions mature.

La Plata/San Juan Counties & Communities

Comings & Goings:

After 7 years with the Center, including services at both the Bodo and Cortez offices, **Jackie McNeill** moved on from the Center in January to enter private practice. On the Emergency Services side, families have taken a toll on our staff. **Lance Martin** left in March to move out of state in pursuit of his wife's Masters Degree. He was replaced by **Penny Parker**. **Maura Doherty** was lured away to Honduras by her husband and **Mary Katherine** was promoted to her position of Team Leader. **Caryn Nigliazzo** left in May to move to Albuquerque with her family and **Jennifer Walter** assumed her position. **Allison Wizer** left the Crossroads receptionist position to pursue her education and **Becca Gilmore** took her position in June. Allison's colleague, **Catherine Cunningham**, left to spend a year in New Zealand. **Cindy Whitney** was promoted to Catherine's Administrative Assistant position and **Amanda Campbell** took Cindy's position. After almost no management changes in the last four years, **Ellis Miller** left in March to return to a housing career with **Mark White** moving into that position on July 7. **Patti Ellisor** has retired and **Jackie Rakes**, our Customer Relations Manager, left for family reasons, with **Erin Harris** filling her position.

Other changes of note include the promotion of **Bob Medearis** to Vice President of Residential Services and the promotion of **Tom Bonde** to Vice President of Outpatient Services. In February, we welcomed the addition of psychiatrists **Doug Balke** and **Steve Kitson**, along with RN Carla Nelson, to the Medical Staff at the ATU. **Clint Wiese** joined our accounting staff in a new position in February.

Facts & Figures:

Program Services: For the first half of 2008, 1,422 La Plata County residents (including Southern Ute Tribal Members) were provided with services through the Center. We have provided 309 emergency assessments so far this year, with 84 resulting in ATU stays (averaging 5.9 days per stay) and 27 psychiatric hospital stays (averaging 25 days per stay). La Plata ATU admissions accounted for just over 67% of all ATU admits.

Montezuma/Dolores Counties & Communities

Comings & Goings:

At our Cortez office the big staffing news is the planned move of **Lillian Ramey**, promoted to Outpatient Clinical Director, to Durango. Her role in the Rural Health Clinic will be taken by **Laney Gibbes**, LCSW. We hope to have a new Cortez Director very soon and Lillian Ramey will remain in that position until we do.

Facts & Figures:

Program Services: For the first half of 2008, 565 Montezuma residents were provided with services through the Center. We have provided 100 emergency assessments so far this year with 21 resulting in ATU stays (averaging 4.4 days per stay) and 11 psychiatric hospital stays (averaging just over 28 days per stay). Montezuma ATU admissions accounted for almost 17% of all ATU admits.

For the first half of 2008, 40 Dolores County residents were provided with services through the Center. We have provided 21 emergency assessments so far this year with 4 resulting in ATU stays (averaging 3.75 days per stay) and no psychiatric hospital admissions. Dolores County ATU admissions accounted for just over 3% of all ATU admits.

Program/Service News:

Early Childhood Services. Several years ago we received State funding for an Early Childhood Specialist position. This has proved extremely valuable. The position was originally filled by Sarah Watkin and is now split between Casie LaMunyon in Cortez and Mary Borgeson in Durango. For more information contact Casie at clamunyon@swcmhc.org or Mary at mborgeson@swcmhc.org.

Integrated Care: In response to a five FTE primary care provider shortage, Southwest Memorial Hospital established a provider based (hospital run) clinic. On November 1, 2007 we began a model of integrated behavioral health/primary care at the clinic with the addition of a Center staff person for 20 hours a week. The clinic received Rural Health Clinic designation in March of this year. This clinic provides a cutting edge model of integrated primary health care in our region. For more information, contact Pam Wise Romero at pwise@swcmhc.org.

Dove Creek: The Center continues to provide services one day a week at the **Dove Creek Health Center**. For more information on our Dove Creek services and availability, please contact the Cortez office at 565-7946.

For the first half of 2008, 45 San Juan County residents were provided with services through the Center. We have provided 25 emergency assessments so far this year with 4 resulting in ATU stays (averaging 4.75 days per stay) and 1 psychiatric hospital stay of 5 days. San Juan ATU admissions accounted for just over 3% of all ATU admits.

Program/Service News:

Vocational Services: We were disappointed to learn that the VESTED program funded by the **La Plata County Department of Human Services** and run by us for many years is going to be shifted to another provider. We have a broad, strong and valued relationship with the Department of Human Services that is time tested over many years and is not diminished by this decision. The Department will graciously provide a little more than a month's transition so that there should be no disruption of services as the delivery relationship changes. If you have any questions about this, please contact Bob Medearis at bmedearis@swcmhc.org.

School Based Health Services. On October 1, 2007, the first school based health center in La Plata County opened its doors. Located in Durango High School, this resource has an advisory group made up of **Durango High School**, **San Juan Basin Health Department**, **Pediatric Partners** and our Center. **Amie Podolsky** staffs the Health Center from our agency. Thanks to a 9-R grant, Amie's time will increase from 20 hours a week to 32 hours a week next year. The advisory group will also begin a year-long planning process to establish a satellite operation in **Florida Mesa Elementary School**. For more information, contact Pam Wise Romero at pwise@swcmhc.org.

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Integrated Care: Following the departure of Valley-Wide's primary care operation in March 2007, the Center has actively participated in the plans for a solution to the resulting La Plata County primary care crisis. This has involved membership and participation on the Citizens Health Advisory Council (CHAC), the Primary Health Care Community Coalition and the new Health Services Steering Committee. At this point the outcome from these groups is unclear.

In the interim, the Center continues to provide a significant staff presence and integrated care leadership in the Health Services Clinic operated by **Mercy Regional Medical Center**. We are coordinating with Mercy in the expansion of the clinic into a true primary care resource for the community.

Center-Wide Bits and Pieces

Web Site: Our web site has been remodeled. The remodel was undertaken to more evenly reflect our services to our entire area, to make it more user friendly, and to provide easier access to information. The web site includes a listing of staff e-mail addresses as well as currently open positions. If you have not visited it recently, please take a look and tell us what you think: www.swcmhc.org.

Management Information System (MIS): The Center employs a management information system that includes an electronic clinical record (ECR). This system has served us well over the past four years but lacks database flexibility and capacity to be modified. As a consequence, the Center will be partnering with **Colorado West Regional Mental Health Center** and with **Midwestern Mental Health Center** (our two partners serving the West Slope) in purchasing the next generation of ECR through Qualifacts Systems. The implementation process will begin around November of this year with "go live" in the late summer or fall of 2009.

Medicaid Managed Care: The Center, in partnership with Colorado West Regional Mental Health Center, Midwestern Mental Health Center, **Pikes Peak Mental Health Center, San Luis Valley Mental Health Center, Spanish Peaks Mental Health Center, West Central Mental Health Center, Southeast Mental Health Center** and **Value Options** holds the State contract for mental health, managed care for Medicaid enrollees in our collective region. It is the largest Medicaid, managed care region in the State. This contract and all the Medicaid, mental health, managed care contracts in the State are going out for re-bid this year. Right now the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance (HCPF) has issued a draft RFP and is soliciting community input. If you are interested in providing input on the RFP, it can be found on HCPF's web site along with a schedule of public hearings.

Internal Organizational Changes: The Center's commitment and plan to evolve into a more integrated care model of service is not confined to the integration plans with primary care. We are also engaging in a number of changes to integrate existing program services and operational procedures.

In order to offer more rapid access to services, we have begun a major initiative to transform our intake process. We are providing far too many hours of assessment at the front end, delaying treatment and compromising clients' commitment to that treatment. Consequently, we are developing a universal intake process that will serve as an assessment and intake for all behavioral programs – eliminating separate intake appointments and forms for each program. This process will provide the structure for a broader look at the needs of clients and serve as the foundation for an integrated record and service plan.

Led by **Linda Lute**, we have also shifted our service delivery model to multidisciplinary care teams in our outpatient behavioral health settings. These care teams bring broader expertise to bear for clients with multiple needs. They also provide more continuity in staff relationships and allow us to wrap services around clients rather than asking clients to wrap their lives around the Center. For more information, please contact Linda at llute@swcmhc.org.

Coming Attractions

In future newsletters look for updates on the Center's involvement and evolving role in addressing our primary care crisis. Please let me know (bheath@swcmhc.org) if you have any other topics you would like addressed.