

**Minutes from the Business Meeting
of the Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse
12/13/99**

The business meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. by Chair David Shern, following the conclusion of the second meeting of the full Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

Present at the business meeting were Commissioners David Shern, Patsy Holmes, Diane Steele, Rodney Kang, Jeri Cohen, Laura Schuck, David McCampbell, and Risdon Slate. Absent were Terry Allen, Mary McKinnon, Jeremiah Singleton, Sandra Murman, Bob Williams, Michael Spellman, Irvin Williams, Daniel Lestage, Charles Morris, and John Haines.

Patsy Holmes reported that the Personnel Committee had reviewed applications received for the position of executive director. The field had been narrowed to five candidates, and a decision will be made within the next few weeks. The committee had also discussed the possibility of contracting with the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute for staffing functions, and various options were being considered. The staff hiring process is moving along.

David Shern brought up the issue of setting dates for future Commission meetings. All commissioners had not returned calendars indicating their availability. David will work with those who had not yet submitted calendars. Potential dates between January and August were mentioned. (Following the 12/13 meeting, these dates were established for Commission meetings):

January 31, 2000	Florida State Hospital in south Florida
February 28	Location TBA
March 31	“
April 28	“
May 31	“
June 23	“
July 21	“
August 28	“

David Shern noted that in the packets of materials that commissioners received was a letter sent to members of the commission's advisory group. The commission is likely to form work groups on specific issues and will invite appropriate advisory group members to participate in or speak to these work groups. As we prepare meeting agendas targeting specific issues, we will ask advisory group members for help.

The Commission would like to establish a Web Page and/or computer Bulletin Board so that commission members can communicate with each other while still complying with the Government in the Sunshine Law.

David Shern commented that the format of today's Commission meeting was suggested by Diane Steele, where the first part of the commission's deliberations focused on listening and cataloging issues. He asked those present to consider whether this format works well. Diane suggested that in future meetings we focus the first half of the meeting on the agenda issue of the day, then hear testimony on that particular topic, then hear testimony on other topics. Perhaps in the morning there could be a speaker or expert on the day's issue. David McCampbell noted the importance of categorizing testimony.

David Shern asked if the facilitated discussion about the current system by Eric Eisenberg had been helpful. Eric is willing to come back again if commissioners so desire. David mentioned the possibility of

organizing the next meeting issues around three or four paradigms. Diane Steele would like to have more time on expert testimony and less on facilitated discussion.

David McCampbell suggested that it would be helpful to have a list or flow chart of how different agencies in the state mental health/substance abuse system interact with each other—a spatial representation of the players.

Rodney Kang asked about getting money (?) from the education system and looking into their problems regarding mental health/substance abuse. Jeri Cohen noted the severe shortage of mental health people in the Dade County schools.

David Shern commented that the FMHI epidemiologist will start to catalogue data for the commission's use.

Risdon Slate would like to see “stigma busters” in schools to help teach children about mental illness and reduce stigma. He asked if names of possible presenters should be sent to Chairman Shern. The answer was yes. David Shern mentioned that it would be good to get Howard Goldman, the author of the Surgeon General's report on mental health released today, to speak to the commission.

Patsy Holmes noted the prevalence of “funding stories” heard today. At some point, the commission might look at all the different sources of funding. How flexible are they, and how can we change them? If we are going to have a goal of “full funding,” we need education about what we can do.

David Shern concluded the meeting by saying we would pull together the themes that had emerged today. There being no further business, he adjourned the meeting at 5:25 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Bell, PhD