

**Minutes from the Business Meeting of the  
Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse  
1/31/00**

Chair David Shern called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Present were:

Terry Allen	Laura Schuck
Charles Clary	Jerry Singleton
Jeri Cohen	Bob Sharpe
John Haines	Risdon Slate
Patsy Holmes	Phyllis Sloyer
David McCampbell	Michael Spellman
Mary McKinnon	Diane Steele
Sallie Parks	Bob Williams
Daniel Lestage	Irvin Williams

Absent were:

Rodney Kang  
Charlie Morris  
Sandra Murman

A quorum was present.

David Shern introduced Senator Charlie Clary, who will be participating in the Commission's activities. He also reminded those in the audience who wish to testify to sign in at the registration desk and give any written materials to those at the desk so that they can be catalogued for the Commission's permanent record. David Shern thanked the meeting hosts, South Florida State Hospital and Atlantic Shores Healthcare, Inc.

Minutes and Content Notes from the 12/13 Commission meeting were approved with the following corrections:

- 1) Martha Lenderman, an invited presenter, conducted a study for the Pinellas County Commission on mental health, not mental health and substance abuse, as stated.
- 2) Judy Turnbaugh presented open testimony in the afternoon in place of Delores Castaldo, whose name was stated.

David Shern reviewed the agenda for today's meeting, which was approved.

Committee Reports

David Shern asked Co-chair Laura Schuck to call for Committee Reports.

- 1) Personnel Committee: Patsy Holmes reported that members of the Personnel Committee had spent a great deal of time on staffing issues. She thanked Ken DeCerchio, DCF Assistant Secretary for Substance Abuse, for participating. She reported that the

Committee recommended 1) that the Commission contract with the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute to staff the Commission and 2) that after a statewide search, and interviewing and screening the top three applicants, Dr. Nancy Bell be hired as the Commission's executive director. The Commission then passed a motion to approve the contract with FMHI and the hiring of Dr. Bell.

2) Lonnie Mann of DCF reported on the Advisory Committee. He noted that the law requires that all state agencies that provide mental health services be invited to participate. Accordingly, all state agencies plus some others (a total of 42) were invited by letter and 15 responded. The Advisory Committee members' role will be to 1) provide information relevant to their organizations to the Commission and 2) provide a panel of MHSAs experts to call upon to testify and/or participate in Commission activities and projects.

David Shern stated that we will re-mail letters of invitations to non-responders. He explained that we had tried to cast a broad net initially to potential members in order to build a framework for change. We will be calling on Advisory Committee members as appropriate.

Daniel Lestage asked for a list of those invitees who had not responded so that Commissioners familiar with these people or organizations can encourage them to participate.

Diane Steele suggested the formation of a second advisory group consisting of consumers and family members to be sure their interests are represented. Daniel Lestage suggested that the two groups be combined, and David Shern expressed concern that this approach might limit consumers' response and participation. Sallie Parks stated that providers are more likely to step forward than clients of mental health/substance abuse services. It was recommended that the motion made to form a second advisory group be tabled until the next meeting to see what response we get from a second letter to non-responders. This will also give us time to more fully develop the Advisory Committee's structure and purpose. The motion was tabled.

David Shern introduced the Commission's new Website. Its goal is to actively represent the Commission's work and make it accessible to all Floridians. The address is <http://cmhsa.fmhi.usf.edu>. The Website makes it possible for anyone statewide with computer access to see and hear all the Commission's testimony and deliberations. He encouraged all Commissioners to visit and become familiar with the Website. He noted that concerns had been raised regarding compliance with the Government in the Sunshine Law, although he believes that the Website's structure is completely consistent with the spirit of the law (which did not anticipate the Internet). Lonnie Mann has asked for a legal opinion on compliance.

One use of the Website may be to scan correspondence received by the Commission for viewing by Commissioners and others. Diane Steele mentioned that many public clients

don't have access to the Internet. David Shern said that perhaps the Commission could facilitate public access in some way.

Dan Lestage noted that e-mail messages are often misunderstood and misinterpreted; therefore any controversial correspondence should be brought before the Commission.

Laura Schuck recommended that correspondence and responses be presented at each Commission meeting. She also asked how the Website would be publicized. David Shern responded that one way will be by linking up with advisory committee members' sites.

David McCampbell expressed concern that the Website might result in a "chat room" and hundreds of e-mails coming to Commissioners' own mailboxes. David Shern responded that one has to log on to the site in order to communicate.

David Shern next introduced Ken DeCerchio, who explained a letter he had written to the Commission requesting coordination between Commission meetings and the Governor's drug control strategy. Stakeholders in the latter would be informed about Commission meetings and could participate. This would involve integration of mental health issues and would not require the Commission to do anything differently. The Commission approved this plan.

David Shern then presented a draft outline of potential topics for future meetings and asked Commissioners to comment and help plan within the next few weeks. Dates have been set through August. The goal in choosing locations is to have at least one Commission meeting within two hours drive of every Floridian. The next meeting will be in Jacksonville on February 28. He reminded Commissioners to be mindful of the State Legislature's schedule. He also mentioned past discussion of having some meetings begin with public testimony the afternoon or evening before the meeting and possibly touring facilities and talking to clients. Commissioners are asked to share their ideas and preferences with either David Shern or Nancy Bell.

There being no Old Business, no New Business, and no further business, Chair David Shern adjourned the business meeting at 9:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Bell, PhD