

The ReSource

September 6, 2006

FOR PERSPECTIVE
AND ANALYSIS

The Source of information for providers of community-based services for people with differing abilities.
A member service of NYSRA.

THE POWER OF NYSRA - CELEBRATE IT EVERY DAY

By Jeff Wise, NYSRA President & CEO

Sometimes in the midst of day-to-day operations, we at NYSRA can lose ourselves in the project of the moment. It happens to everyone, and it sometimes means we can lose sight of the big picture.

At NYSRA, the big picture is a truly unique one. And even when we do get absorbed in some specific task or project, it isn't long before something reminds me of an important part that picture - one that is brought home to me by a well-known (but apparently anonymous) quote:



"Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day."

It's not just a quote that lends itself to bumper stickers. It's a very valid observation. That's particularly true when it comes to NYSRA, for, while trade associations often by their nature can be pretty single-minded organizations, NYSRA is anything but.

Our mosaic of providers of services to people with myriad disabilities makes us a distinctive - and distinguished - association.

We are reminded of that here in Albany as we work to plan and conduct the annual Leadership Training Summit, which will be held September 18-20 at the Desmond.

We are reminded of it as we confer with our various division members and their co-chairs as we prepare our association's Policy and Legislation Agenda for 2007.

We are reminded of it daily when our staff works to reply to requests from members that may be dealing with challenges in the developmental disabilities arena, or have a mental health program question, or find themselves dealing with barriers to employment that implicate physical disabilities.

But it still isn't a bad idea to take a minute and think about it. The diversity of NYSRA's membership roster - not only within the provider sector but also among our

other affiliates such as regional and parent groups - doesn't divide our organization. It does, in very real terms, make us stronger. It is a major reason that NYSRA is truly a voice for people with disabilities across New York State. We have large and small members. We have urban and rural members. We have members who serve very diverse populations in critically important ways.

This composes a mosaic that is very compelling on many levels. As few others can, NYSRA can synthesize responses to issues universal across the spectrum of provider challenges. Yet, we also respond to specific problems within separate disciplines.

It is the diversity of our organization that ensures our work here is never boring. And it's that same diversity that makes our association's work - like that of our members - all that much more important.

So, as the quote suggests - Celebrate It!

TASKFORCE TO PRESERVE ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Because of its concern that the recommendations of the NYS [Commission on Health Care Facilities for the 21st Century](#) could inadvertently result in the loss of essential mental health and substance abuse services, The Center for Policy and Advocacy of the Mental Health Associations of NYC and Westchester has convened a Taskforce to insure that critical services are protected. The taskforce consists of over 29 umbrella organizations representing providers, professionals, families, consumers, and counties.

In 2005, the Governor, with the support of the New York State Legislature, established the Commission. The Governor has characterized its goal as "rightsizing" the hospital and nursing home systems.

General hospitals provide inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services to tens of thousands of New Yorkers each year and run close to full capacity. Hospital closures that may make sense from the standpoint of the underutilization of medical services could result in a disastrous loss of psychiatric services if the Commission neglects to develop plans for preserving them.

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The new Taskforce is funded with a grant from the New York Community Trust. Its goal is to educate the public and the Commission on the importance of general hospitals to the public mental health system and advocate for the State to develop plans to preserve essential behavioral health services or institute viable alternatives.

Its goal is not to oppose all proposed hospital closures. Nor is it to preserve current hospital-based resources unchanged. The goal is to assure that needed behavioral health services are not lost as the Commission decides which hospitals and nursing homes will be closed.

The taskforce is chaired by Michael Friedman, Director of the Center for Policy and Advocacy. This project is directed by Gary Weiskopf, former Director of the New York State Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors. NYSRA represented by Jeff Wise, President & CEO, joins the following list of taskforce members. More information on this project is available at www.mhawestchester.org/advocates/bhstaskforce.asp. You can reach Michael Friedman at (212) 614-5753 or center@mhaofnyc.org and Gary Weiskopf at (518) 339-6990 or gweiskopf@verizon.net.

Taskforce Members & Organizations

Peter Ashenden, Mental Health Empowerment Project
 Marcela Bonafina-Caracciol, Association of Hispanic MH Professionals
 Wendy Brennan, NAMI-NYC
 Reinaldo Cardona, NASW-NYS
 Lauri Cole, NYS Council For Community Behavioral Health Care
 John Cole, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers of NYS
 Marcia Feuer, MHA of Nassua County
 Michael Friedman, MHA of NYC and Westchester
 Richard Gallo, NYS Psychiatric Association
 Glenn Gravino, Coordinated Care Services Inc (CCSI)
 Art Johnson, NYS Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors
 Joshua Koerner, CHOICE
 Toni Lasicki, Association for Community Living
 Cindy Levernois, Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS)
 Geoff Lieberman, Coalition for the Institutionalized Aged and Disabled
 Glenn Liebman, MHANYS
 Steve Miccio, People Inc.
 Gayle Nayowith, Citizens' Committee for Children
 Shelly Nortz, Coalition for the Homeless
 Paige Pierce, Families Together
 Harvey Rosenthal, NYAPRS
 Phillip Saperia, Coalition of Voluntary MH Agencies
 Jennifer Schaffer, Westchester County Department of Mental Health
 Karen Schimke, SCAA
 David Seay, NAMI-NYS
 Ron Soloway, UJA Federation
 Jill Stevens, The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
 Joyce Wale, NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation



NYSRA SALUTES ITS 2006 AWARD WINNERS!

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NYS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT/VESID**

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STATE DIRECTORS ASK HHS TO WITHDRAW PROPOSAL TO SHIFT COSTS TO STATES

Courtesy of ANCOR

State Medicaid program directors are asking the Bush administration to withdraw proposals in its fiscal year 2007 budget plan to reduce Medicaid spending via several regulatory actions, saying it would result in an “inappropriate and unsustainable shift in costs to states.”

In an Aug. 15 letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Michael O. Leavitt, the National Association of State Medicaid Directors (NASMD) and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) said the regulatory changes would “constitute a noteworthy cost shift to states at a time when states are striving to implement the many reform opportunities contained in the [Deficit Reduction Act] and to exercise new options to deliver innovative, appropriate, high quality, cost effective care.”

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 contains several Medicaid savings provisions, such as drug payment changes and tougher proof-of-citizenship requirements.

NASMD is an affiliate of APHSA. The letter is the latest in a series by stakeholder groups and by Republicans and Democrats in Congress urging the administration to refrain from implementing the regulatory changes, which the administration outlined in its fiscal 2007 budget proposal. HHS is expected to publish the rules detailing the Medicaid changes soon.

HHS has defended the proposals, saying they will help alleviate significant tax burdens on health care providers for obligations to the Medicaid program that otherwise are the responsibility of the states.

Spending Curbs

Bush in his fiscal 2007 budget plan proposed reducing Medicaid spending \$12.2 million over five years via such actions as limiting payments to public providers to cost of services, reducing the allowable provider tax rate from 6 percent to 3 percent (thus limiting states’ use of taxes for Medicaid purposes), and placing additional curbs on Medicaid financing mechanisms.

In their Aug. 15 letter to HHS, the NASMD and APHSA groups said the proposals “would overturn current reimbursement systems.” Regarding reducing the allowable provider tax rate from 6 percent to 3 percent, the groups said the proposal conflicts with previous law and policy upon which states have based their existing statute and regulatory policy.

“Congress amended the federal Medicaid statute to include detailed criteria for when a state could use provider tax revenues to count towards the state share of Medicaid dollars,” the letter said. In addition, it said, current regulations “already regulate and limit states’ ability to implement provider taxes.”

Five House Republicans sent a letter to Leavitt Aug. 11 objecting to his intent to implement regulation to reduce allowable provider tax rates and other limitations on Medicaid financing mechanisms.

The administration also is proposing to cap payments to government-owned providers to no more than the cost of providing services to Medicaid enrollees, the groups stated.

This proposal “threatens the ability of states to pay their share of Medicaid costs,” and while it may lower the federal share of program spending in the near term, “it does little to address the underlying cost drivers in the overall Medicaid program,” the letter said.

Medicaid administrators are concerned about an administration plan to limit the scope of reimbursable services under the Medicaid rehabilitation services option. “Limiting these services and the funding available to support them could have profoundly detrimental effects on the access, quality, and delivery of necessary services for Medicaid beneficiaries with complex mental and behavioral health needs,” the letter stated.

The groups also asked HHS to work with them to ensure that any reform of school-based administration or transportation services does not prohibit appropriate reimbursement to states for health care services provided in educational settings.

US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

The US Department of Labor recently published a draft strategic planning document outlining their plans for fiscal years 2006-2011. NYSRA received from Charles Harles, Co-Chair of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD)’s, their comment in conjunction with I-NABIR on the US DOL’s plan.

CCD and I-NABIR’s comments to the plan are as follows:

While we applaud the Department for its continued commitment to ensuring the competitiveness of our nation’s workforce today and in the future, we must express sincere disappointment with the draft’s noticeable omission of meaningful, performance driven strategies and goals addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

We agree that greater participation of people with disabilities would cause the workforce to grow (p. 3) and are happy to support the Department in its efforts to achieve this end. Whereas DOL provides strategic, measurable goals and subsequent accountability for labor force participation for a number of highlighted populations, it outlines no such goals for persons with disabilities. Nor does the draft recognize that individuals with disabilities will comprise a significant percentage of several groups identified for strategic engagement: at-risk and out-of-school youth or the offender population.

Over 20 million Americans between the ages of 21 and 64 report having a disability, nearly 15% of our country's available workforce. DOL's omission of any strategic activity to increase this group's workforce engagement, as measured by workforce participation rates, is unacceptable for an agency which aspires to "make sure that no group is left behind".

We strongly encourage the Department to reconsider this draft and revise it to include meaningful strategies, measured in terms of workforce participation, for meeting the workforce preparation, attachment and advancement needs of Americans with disabilities. Such strategies should include, but not be limited to:

- the improvement of outcomes for job seekers with disabilities who receive One-Stop employment and workforce information services;
- the monitoring, assessment and action taken to ensure physical and programmatic accessibility to the One-Stop Career Center System;
- the inclusion and active participation of the Office of Disability Employment Policy in supporting the strategic goal for a prepared workforce;
- the expansion of strategies designed for at-risk and out-of-school youth to include youth with disabilities in this group;
- the expansion of strategies designed for ex-offenders to re-enter the workforce to include individuals with disabilities; and,
- the hiring and advancement of individuals with disabilities within the Department to meet the agency's future workforce needs.

FLAME IS HOT WITH A NEW CD



Not long ago we at NYSRA were fortunate enough to receive an advanced copy of a new CD. It bears mentioning here, since the recording is the latest project of FLAME, the amazingly talented musical group based at Lexington Center, Fulton County ARC.



Many NYSRA friends and members know FLAME. In addition to performing at NYSRA's Leadership Training Summit a year ago (keeping people moving well into the evening), the group has toured many functions and parties.

Wherever they go, the accolades follow.

"All For A Reason" is the band's CD, which is just on the verge of release. Even those who have not seen and heard

FLAME in person will find the inspirational energy of these 11 musicians, as recorded on disk, to be undeniable. Michelle King's lead vocals are distinctive and excellent. There is distinction and excellence on this disk from everyone in the band, in fact. That the band's members happen to have developmental disabilities is merely incidental. They do terrific things.

The CD is, as they say, "in rotation" in my car these days. For those who may wish to have their own copy, they can be easily ordered by visiting the band's web site at <http://www.flamesoftrock.com>. The band also will be at this year's Leadership Training Summit after NYSRA's Annual Awards' Dinner on Tuesday, September 19, at the Desmond in Albany. CDs will be for sale there, as well.

It's a good investment of \$15.

GARDEN TO DELIGHT THE SENSES

Anderson School's students have been engaged in a project that assists them with sensory experience. The school and its "arts garden" were the subject of recent story in the Poughkeepsie Journal by John Davis:

All 134 students at Anderson School have helped create their own sensory arts garden where they can experience nature and art while improving their math, language and science skills.

What makes the one-acre project unique is it's geared to stimulate the five senses — whether walking on a pebble trail, identifying the colors of the many flowers or using a balance to weigh pine cones, seeds and stones.

"Persons with autism are often challenged by sensory experience," said Nancy Osborn, school director of clinical and support services.

Anderson School serves adults and children with autism and related developmental disabilities.

Dedication is held

A ribbon cutting for the "Outdoor Sensory Arts Garden" took place Wednesday morning. About 30 attended.

Two students used a mammoth pair of scissors to cut the ribbon.

"We wanted to develop it as a stunning entrance to Anderson School," school Executive Director Neil Pollack said.

In attendance were those responsible for providing the \$35,000 in funding to create the garden — Hudson River Valley Greenway, The Gap Fishkill Distribution Office and New York state with the help of Assemblyman Joel Miller, R-Poughkeepsie.

"This is an incredible project," Miller said. "Everyone will benefit from this."

The garden near the Route 9 school entrance will eventually connect with Greenway trails that will run from Albany to New York City, both along the highway and the Hudson River. This means not only Anderson students but hikers will be able to enjoy and experience the garden.

"They've created a truly unique outdoor educational experience," said Jessica Deslauriers, Greenway trails coordinator.

Arts center contributed

Instrumental in designing the garden and involving the students in the creation of it was the Mill Street Loft, an arts education center based in the City of Poughkeepsie.

"The children are part of the creation of this garden, which makes it very meaningful for them," center Executive Director Carole Wolf said.

Judy Signunick, a teaching artist at the center, worked directly with the students in transferring their drawings onto a garden bench and transforming their cardboard designs of a bear, walrus and elephant into concrete sculptures. "The kids are actually creating their own classroom," she said.

The garden is a work in progress with room for expansion and ideas brewing to include permanent signs, kiosks and the stimulating sound of chimes.

"We have a ways to go," Osborn said. "We're looking for additional funding."

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Mental Health Administrator

Seeking licensed mental health professional to act as leader of NYS Office of Mental Health licensed outpatient clinics and day services in Chautauqua County. Must have strong background in management of mental health programs, ability to work well with a variety of staff and consumers.

Responsible for budget development and monitoring, policy development, management of quality assurance programs, incident management programs and general program development. Should be a proven leader who is detail oriented. Familiarity with NYSOMH regulations a plus. Growth potential. Submit resumes to: The Resource Center, 880 East Second Street, Jamestown, NY 14701 Or e-mail: TRCCAREERS@ALLTEL.NET. EOE M/F/V/H

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Quality Assurance Coordinator: - FT. BA w/2 years experience working in the OMRDD field; 6 month experience doing QA preferred. EOE. Resume to Phoenix Frontier - SH, 100 Ave., Buffalo, NY 14214

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Livingston-Wyoming ARC is seeking an Executive Director to join our progressive and expanding organization in the beautiful Finger Lakes area. Our non-profit, family-based organization provides a broad range of services to children and adults. Programs include Head Start & Pre-School for Children, Residential & Vocational Services for Adults and Day Habilitation Programs for Seniors. Candidates should possess the following qualifications:

- Master's degree in public or business administration or related field with a minimum of 10 years experience in the human services field, 5 of which must be in a leadership capacity.
- Strong background in financial, operations and human resources management, fundraising and marketing.
- Strong leadership experience with a proven track record of establishing strategic vision, implementing vision and getting results.
- Excellent organization and communications skills.
- Experience working with people with OMRDD.
- Experience working with a volunteer board of interested and concerned parents.

Please send resume and salary requirements by September 1, 2006 to: LWARC, Search Committee, C/O Brent Lefler, 18 Main Street, Mount Morris, NY 14510 or blefler@lwarc.org. EOE


Safety Administration Manager

If you have been searching for the "Career of a Lifetime" you would most likely find it at Lexington. Located in upstate New York, we are a true human services career experience. Lexington is a thriving, half-century-old, non-profit organization that has been built on the honored commitment that "people come first." With programs located throughout historic Fulton County, in the foothills of the Adirondacks, our mission is to serve adults and children with disabilities, and our dedication to providing the highest quality services ranks second-to-none. We are 1300 employees and \$60 million dollars strong, and are preparing for a major expansion of services over the next three years. In preparation, we are searching for the best and the brightest individuals to add to our **Management Team** to help shape our future.

Because Safety is a Top Priority at Lexington, we are developing a Safety Administration Manager position designed to provide leadership and guidance across the organization. This important position will promote a standard of excellence in all areas of safety administration including OSHA compliance, worksite evaluation, best practice and policy development, and the assurance of a safe workplace. This position will report to the Director of Human Resources and work collaboratively to implement/improve safety practices in concert with Lexington's Mission.

QUALIFICATIONS: The successful candidate will have a strong foundation in safety administration, experience managing Worker's Compensation programs; ability to efficiently problem-solve and drive new initiatives; and demonstrate a proven ethical and professional work approach. Candidate must have exceptional listening, verbal and written communication skills, as well as organizational and analytical skills. Must be able to effectively interface with management and staff at all levels. Bachelor's Degree in a relevant field and at least two years management experience is required.

Lexington offers a competitive salary and generous benefits plan along with an opportunity to work in a nurturing, team-centered environment. To be considered please submit cover letter and resume to:

Lexington Center
Human Resources Department
127 East State Street, Gloversville, NY 12078
(518) 773-7931 Fax: (518) 775-1333
Email: hr@lexcenter.org
www.lexingtoncenter.org



~ *ART IN MOTION* ~

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DURING NYSRA'S LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING SUMMIT
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2006
2:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.
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