

Macon County Mental Health Task Force  
April 15, 2011

Members present – Sarah Altman, Ronnie Beale, Jim Bottomley, Jim Bruckner, Robert Holland, Jane Kimsey, Paula Ledford, Kathy McGaha, Mike Neidig, Andy Shields, Martin Wadewitz and Brian Welch

Approval of Minutes – Mike Neidig made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Jane Kimsey 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, with a unanimous vote for approval.

Action Items:

Ronnie Beale welcomed everyone to today's meeting and announced that Rhonda Cox could not be at today's meeting.

Andy Shields updated the task force members on involuntary commitment numbers for 2011. Mr. Shields stated that there had been 34 commitments this year; this is up 36%. He also explained that the number of officers needed to accomplish the transport has increased 305% and the total hours per process have increased 291%.

Robby Holland said he was very appreciative of the great working relationship that the Sheriff's Office has with Angel Medical Center. Mr. Holland stated that this mutual relationship is beneficial for the residents of Macon County.

Ronnie Beale asked Dr. Adan with Angel Medical Center, his opinion about how this process was working in the Emergency Room. Dr. Adan said he thought the overall process is better and he was appreciative of the effort from the Sheriff's Department on how well they both work together.

Robby Holland said the CIT training has been very beneficial to his officers and Macon County has put more officers through this training than any other county locally. Mr. Holland stated that he would also like to see magistrates take the CIT training. Mr. Holland stated that this training would be a benefit to the magistrates.

Ronnie Beale expressed concern over the state budget cuts and their effects on our local LME. Mr. Beale said one proposal was to make the LME's bigger by grouping more counties together. Mr. Beale said hopefully he will have more information on this issue by the next meeting.

Ronnie Beale said it would also be helpful to have the numbers from the recent census on the 15 western counties. Mr. Beale stated that he would ask Derek Roland for this information and have it available at the next meeting.

Paula Ledford informed the task force members that a meeting had been set for May 3<sup>rd</sup> with Jackson Psychological Services. Ms. Ledford said the meeting will be held at Macon County School's Central Office at 10:00 AM.

Paula Ledford stated that there is still a problem with school children who have no paying source and are not covered by Medicaid or private insurance.

Mike Neidig explained that there is a need locally for an adolescent substance abuse program. Mr. Neidig stated there is currently no funding source to start one. Mr. Holland thanked Mr. Neidig for his concern on this issue.

Mike Neidig stated that the jail program is back up and running. Mr. Welch explained that local defense attorney's are bringing this program up in court cases as an available option.

Ronnie Beale expressed a concern about the high rate of suicides among our military veteran's. Mr. Beale explained that as a group the members of the National Guard have the highest suicidal rate of all the different branches. Mr. Beale wanted to make the task force members aware of this information.

Kathy McGaha explained to the task force members that Healthy Carolinians is in the process of changing. Ms. McGaha stated that on July 1<sup>st</sup>, she would be taking a new position at Macon County Public Health. Ms. McGaha explained that Rhonda Blanton would remain with Healthy Carolinians. Ms. McGaha stated that a HCMC Retreat had been scheduled for May 24<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM in Meeting Rooms A/B at the Health and Human Services Building.

Marty Wadewitz stated that he wanted to give a special thanks to Healthy Carolinians; as well as, Ms. McGaha and Ms. Blanton. He stated that Healthy Carolinians had accomplished a lot for Macon County and especially was helpful in bringing so many different entities together to discuss many issues effecting residents of Macon County.

Debbie Roberts said she had recently attended a CIT Conference in Raleigh and had thoroughly enjoyed it and learned a lot of helpful information. Ms. Roberts gave a brief update on the local NAMI programs and wanted to thank the task members force members for their support of NAMI. She also wanted to thank them for their concern of mental health issues locally.

Jane Kimsey explained that with the current state budget problems, it was hard to know how to make any future plans for her department. Ms. Kimsey said her department's budget for next year could greatly be affected by the proposed state budget cuts.

Ronnie Beale briefly discussed the proposed North Carolina Senate Bill 433. Mr. Beale explained that this bill gives authority to Boards of Commissioners in certain counties over commissions, boards, agencies, etc. in their county. Mr. Beale stated that this can apply to the board of health, the social services board, area mental health, etc.

Jim Bruckner also updated the task force members on the proposed North Carolina Senate Bill 551. Mr. Bruckner briefly explained that this bill would allow the development of regional public health authorities. Mr. Bruckner stated that Macon County would fall under the regional public health authority based in Asheville and would be composed of 23 counties.

Minutes recorded by Rhonda Blanton