

Community Mental Health Coalition Newsletter

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Mental Health Coalition Update— How the state budget impacts local services

Carolyn Price - MH Liaison for Lewis County Public Health and Social Services



The Washington State Budget, at the time of this writing, has experienced a \$760 million shortfall for November. The last legislative session attempted to close the \$9 billion shortfall with \$3.3 billion in cuts/efficiencies to current programs, such as: K-12 class size increases, reduced higher education employees/increased tuition, increased premiums/reduced enrollment and Basic Health Plan, (low-income health insurance) and reduced Corrections programs. (Office of Financial Management, 2009). The Governor’s Supplemental Budget (12-09-09) intended to close a \$2.6 billion shortfall, has eliminated Basic Health Plan, GA-U, Hospice care, and services for folks with development disabilities, to name a few. However, in January a new budget will come out to address these cuts.

Mental wellness programs range from prevention to treatment across the life span, and include primary medical care. Prevention programs are historically under-funded, although recognized as the most effective way to improve community health. Locally, on the treatment end, community mental health services for Medicare recipients have been cut drastically in the past year. Further reductions to mental health care capacity will highly impact, not only our community members having difficulty in accessing appropriate and timely services, but law and justice systems, housing programs, and other supportive social services. With this bleak forecast, we must rely on local support and collaboration, as well as identify any service duplication. Action on the local level may include developing Memorandums of Agreement/Understanding to share tasks and information between systems. The Mental Health Coalition is dedicated to improving the mental wellness of Lewis County, but is only effective when strengthened with participants’ strengths, skills and experience. **Please consider actively participating in the Lewis County Mental Health Coalition as we take action to address the needs of our community.**

 The Lewis County Mental Health Coalition has membership in several workgroups attempting to address on-going and new challenges to our community, as well as maintains the Lewis County Mental Health Strategic Plan.

Current projects and workgroups are: High Utilization of Jail and Court Programs, GA-U Mental Health Expansion Project, NW Seeds of Change Social Networking, Action agenda for Lewis County MH Strategic Plan.

Coalition meetings occur on the first Thursday of the month, from 8-9:30 am, at 156 NW Chehalis Ave, Chehalis, next to the Public Health building. These meetings are open and everyone is welcome to attend!

- In this issue:**
- Mental Health Coalition Update
 - NW Seeds of Change
 - Homeless Count
 - New NAMI-Lewis Connections Group

NW Seeds Of Change Social Network

Carolyn Price, MH Liaison, LCPHSS

Sue Allen, Director of Capital Clubhouse in Thurston County, spoke to the MH Coalition in December about a social network opportunity for Lewis County residents.

Mason, in addition to Thurston County.



NW Seeds of Change (www.nwseedsofchange.org), an on-line social networking tool, is paid for through a Regional Organizing Initiative (ROI) of the Wa. State Mental Health Transformation Project. Due to the rural nature of several western Wa. Counties, Sue wrote a grant to capture Lewis, Grays Harbor, and

NW Seeds of Change not only provides a way for local community members to exchange information, set up meet/greets, blog, but it also provides an opportunity to list local community resources and events.

Sue and her team will be setting up presentations within Lewis County to share this information with community groups starting early next year. At this time, she is requesting community providers send services information to her.

If you are interested in having Sue present the *NW Seeds of Change* and/or have information about programs or events, you may contact her at opportunities@capitalclubhouse.org or contact Carolyn Price and she will forward the information.

Coalition Contact Information

If you are interested in any of the projects mentioned, please feel free to email or call Carolyn Price at 360-740-1430, Carolyn.Price@lewiscountywa.gov

Homeless Count in Lewis County on January 28th

Michelle Sorlie, Housing Coordinator, LCPHSS

Each January counties across Washington State, as well as all across America, are conducting one night homeless counts. On January 28, 2010 Lewis County will participate in this count. Volunteers will help to distribute and gather the forms.

ering homeless people all in one place to fill out count forms, as well as participate in this event where homeless and people who are living in doubled up situations can come to Yard Birds Mall for services.

Having an accurate count of our homeless community is essential in determining the effectiveness of our homeless services. It helps service providers and funders to find a direction to take in the efforts to end homelessness.

Last year on the same day as the homeless count there was an event called *Project Homeless Connect*. This was a great help in gath-

On Jan. 28th, many local service providers will all be in this one location to offer services. Haircuts, vaccines, ID's, help applying for food stamps as well as lunch and information on local services.



National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Lewis

Judy Baskett, NAMI Lewis

NAMI Lewis has a new group!

On every Tuesday, the *NAMI Connection* support group meets for 90 minutes. This is a peer-run group designed to provide support to adults who have mental illness in a respectful, understanding, and

hopeful environment. All group meetings are confidential and no registration is necessary. Just come when you need to talk. The NAMI Connection support group meets Tuesday evening from 6:00-7:30 pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1209 N. Scheuber Rd., Centralia.

For more info. contact Ellalou at 623-5619. Regular NAMI Lewis meetings are at the Vernetta Smith Chehalis Library on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, from 5:15-7:30 pm.

