

New Mexico Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative

Collaboration for Recovery, Resiliency and Empowerment



Aging and Long-Term Services Department

Administrative Office of the Courts

Children, Youth and Families Department

New Mexico Corrections Department

Department of Finance and Administration

Department of Health

Department of Labor

Department of Transportation

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Governor's Commission on Disability

Governor's Health Policy Advisor

Health Policy Commission

Human Services Department

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Public Education Department

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For Immediate Release

Behavioral Health Collaborative to Hold a Discussion of Mandated Community Treatment and New Mexico's Behavioral Health Needs

National Experts to Present Research

Santa Fe, August 16, 2006 – The New Mexico Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (Collaborative) is conducting its August meeting in Albuquerque to discuss the controversial issue of mandated community treatment and New Mexico's behavioral health needs. The all-day meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 31 in the YDI Wool Warehouse at 516 First St. NW, 2nd floor.

The question of how we should deal with people in our communities who suffer from severe mental illness, but do not adhere to the treatment offered to them, is being asked across the state. Mandated community treatment can include a number of approaches in developing effective policy and practice on whether, and how, to require certain people with mental disorders to adhere to treatment in the community.

The meeting agenda includes opportunities for a panel to discuss their case for mandated community treatment as well as a panel who will discuss their case against such treatment. Another panel will talk about the behavioral health service needs in New Mexico. Two other panels will include national experts who conducted research who discuss what is known about mandated community treatment, its effectiveness for treatment compliance and its ability to reduce violence. There will also be an opportunity for public input on these issues.

"The Collaborative recognized that this has become a hot topic and felt it was important to hear from both sides of this issue," said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department Secretary and co-chair of the Collaborative. "The opportunity to hear directly from the national experts who are being quoted by both those for and against mandated community treatment will be educational for the community," said Hyde.

The national experts include John Monahan, Ph.D., Doherty Professor of Law, University of Virginia; Marvin Swartz, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Sciences, Head Division of Social and Community Psychiatry, Duke University Medical Center; Jeff Swanson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Duke University School of Medicine; and Stephanie LeMelle, M.D., Clinical Director, New York State Psychiatric Institute.

The meeting is timely, as recent legislation has been proposed both in the state legislature and the Albuquerque City Council on a type of mandated community treatment called "Kendra's Law".

U.S. Senator Pete Domenici, State Representative Joni Gutierrez, a representative of the National Bazelon Center, consumer leaders and family leaders are all expected to participate in the panels.

The complete agenda for the August 31 meeting can be found on the Collaborative website at <http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/bhdwg/calendar.htm>.

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