

OPC CFAC Meeting
March 9, 2006

In attendance: Dan Herr, Judy Truitt, Dave Jenny, Michael Bramwell, Megan Jones, Gwyn Edgell, Janet Sowers, Anne Jackson, Shira Belovicz, Ellen Perry, Allen D., Steve Furman, Cheryl Russ, Pam Chevalier, Billie Guthrie, Judy Batten, Virginia Hill, Leslie Matthews, Marcus Matthews, Rhonda Allen, Ken Perry

Dan welcomed everyone and introductions were made. He reminded the group that Judy Truitt and Dave Jenny will present about OPC's financial situation and provide an overall status report. Judy T. explained that OPC is currently experiencing some significant financial issues, primarily cash flow problems. In the past, area programs would receive a monthly 1/12th payment from the state and at the end of the year, a settlement process would take place. If the area program had not provided ample services to justify the amount of money received in the monthly payments, a payback (or settlement) to the state would occur. This procedure changed when Integrated Payment & Reporting System (IPRS) was implemented in the fall of 2003. With IPRS, rather than getting a 1/12th payment every month, area programs had to draw down state money after services were provided. With IPRS, area programs had to provide the service, send a bill and wait for payment. This completely changed the way money flowed. At the start of fiscal year 2004, OPC had \$3.6 million in fund balance (cash to operate) and at the end of the fiscal year OPC had \$164,000 in the fund balance. OPC used the fund balance to continue to pay for services and these monies started being depleted. Historically, OPC's Board has not been comfortable having a large amount of money in the fund balance. Instead, the Board has wanted the money to be in the service system. There were also other issues with this huge systemic shift, including billing errors, denied billing, etc. From May 2004 through October 2005, OPC was required to pay back \$1.7 million in paybacks (Thomas S., regular end of year settlement for 2002, billing issues with Medicaid). There was much discussion about Thomas S. payback, as well as the other paybacks. OPC is currently in a situation where the amount of money owed is greater than the amount of money coming in. OPC is and has been carrying debt throughout the financial years. Judy explained that OPC's ability to stay in the service business is being significantly challenged. The board, as well as the county commissioners have been fully advised and provided all available information regarding the financial situation. OPC has recently gone to Division to ask for financial assistance, to which there has not yet been a final response. The Board is looking at options that are difficult, such as salary and benefit cuts, downsizing programs, etc. OPC's financial issues are concerning but Judy T. is hopeful that it will be resolved. She further informed that OPC is moving toward full divestiture. She is pleased that OPC has finished the RFP process for the CSA's, which have been awarded to Caring Family Network (CFN). CFN has already visited every site and had conversations with staff. Judy reported that OPC is close to divestiture with all clubhouses, all ACT teams and the learning center in Chatham County. The other services that remain are deaf services, which is a regional service and OPC's judicial services about which no final decisions have been made. Megan asked if RANE is at risk of having cuts to their budget. Judy B. answered yes, financial support will likely be cut back. Michael asked how financial problems will impact CFAC? It should not impact CFAC's budget since this funding comes out of county dollars. Ellen asked if OPC would go into bankruptcy? Judy T. answered that if an LME failed, the Division would have the option to take over. However, to date, the Division has not expressed an interest in this. Judy ended by stating that OPC is facing major changes, but that change in and of itself is fairly neutral. It is what we make of change that is either good or bad. She is hopeful about the future. Dan read the letter that

he received from Mike Moseley of the Division, in response to CFAC's recent letter in support of OPC.

The minutes were approved with no changes.

Dan reported that he attended February's LOC meeting, where he was asked to present on the barriers to participation for consumers and how to get more consumers involved in the system. Dan explained to the audience that more consumers could be involved if their basic needs, such as transportation and housing are properly addressed. Dan will send Billie the PowerPoint presentation and talking points, which she will send to CFAC. It was noted that the NAMI Legislative Breakfast will be held May 6th.

Billie informed CFAC that NAMI-OC has requested a CFAC article for their upcoming spring newsletter. NAMI-OC is interested in covering CFAC's activities more frequently in their newsletter. Pam will work on the next article, which should be submitted to Barbara Nettles-Carlson by March 31, 2006.

Judy and Billie updated CFAC about the recent memo from the Division, which included the Medicaid notification and choice templates. The letters, which OPC mailed out this week, are intended to inform consumers of changes that will occur after new service definitions are implemented, as well as to allow consumers choice in their services. Consumers have ten days to return their letter. OPC Customer Service, who has increased their staff coverage to assist consumers, is prepared to address consumer questions and concerns. Dan was concerned about the short turnaround and asked what would happen if a consumer did not respond to their letter. Dan requested that Michael research why the Division required such a short turnaround time for consumers to respond. Michael informed that if a consumer did not respond, the LME's would apply presumptive choice. Judy confirmed this. Dan encouraged members to share all that they've learned about this with their friends, family and colleagues.

Billie explained that OPC is applying for a Mobile Crisis Services grant from the Division, for children and adults. Four CFAC members (Dan, Virginia, Edward and Judi) have agreed to assist OPC with this application, through reading and commenting on the grant application and eventually providing some type of oversight. OPC released a RFI for this project and Freedom House was the only organization to respond.

There was discussion about members' interest in the remaining conferences for this fiscal year. The following persons, through motion, were approved to attend the following conferences: Leslie and Heather will attend the NAMI-NC Conference in April; Pam and Gwyn will attend the Best Practices Conference in April; and Heather will attend the NCMH conference in June. Several others were interested in attending the Addiction-Focus on Women Conference in May in western NC. A final decision on this conference will be made as the date approaches.

Allen reviewed the budget. A final vote on the budget will be made after Allen makes changes to the budget to allow an increase in funding for conferences.

Dan reviewed the OPC Gaps Analysis. Judy B. explained that this document is a work in progress and suggested that CFAC assist with prioritizing gaps and identifying additional gaps in services.

Members of CFAC who have recently finished WRAP training include Rhonda, Anne, Ken, Cheryl and Allen. Anne indicated that the training had went well and Rhonda informed that the training had been interesting and that she thinks that there is a lot of value in the training. Cheryl expressed that there was a good balance of challenging work, heart and advocacy in the trainings. Allen mentioned that PAI still needs to provide a second training session.

Ellen and Michael reported on the state CFAC, who had a retreat today. A hired facilitator assisted the group in learning how to focus and achieve goals during their meetings.

The remainder of the meeting was spent reviewing the already brainstormed goals, as well as coming up with new ideas for potential CFAC goals for the upcoming year. Ken was interested in going further with the NAMI grading system, in which NC earned a D minus. Judy B. informed that the Division sent out a RFP for a consultant to do an evaluation of the state system. This may be a good opportunity for CFAC to be involved. Dan asked Michael to follow up about whether there is an avenue for involving CFAC in the evaluation process. Billie spoke briefly about ways for CFAC to be involved in housing, including hosting a housing forum. Ellen informed that the DD Council has a transportation and housing committee, from which we could potentially get funding or ideas. Pam advised the group to pick only two or three goals to work on each year. Billie inquired if CFAC would benefit from having a facilitator assist with developing an action plan. After discussion of the goals, a vote aimed at prioritizing the goals, was taken and the results were as follows: Helping OPC w/ gaps analysis-7 votes; Provider quality/best practice-11 votes; NC TOPPS-0 votes; Insurance parity-3 votes; Housing and homelessness-3 votes; Transportation-2 votes; Reduce stigma-10 votes; Other successful CFAC initiatives-3 votes; Other OPC consumer support initiatives-4 votes; NAMI report card follow up-0 votes; Getting more money-1 vote.

CFAC will spend the entire next meeting creating an action plan for achieving the top three goals for the upcoming year. The group agreed to invite Maggie McGlynn, who facilitated the retreat with the state CFAC, to help develop goals and action strategies. Billie will follow up.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.