

Mental Health Ombuds Services of King County

Ombuds Service Semi-Annual Report
April 2006 through September 2006

Submitted by:

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Introduction

The Mental Health Ombuds Service of King County is provided by Interchange Northwest, LLC through a contract with the King County Mental Health Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division (MHCADSD).

We provide support for people who are having difficulties with their mental health services or are having difficulty getting mental health services. We also provide information and referral services to all people in King County.

This is the report of Mental Health Ombuds Service activities from April through September 2006. This report provides information about program management, advocacy, outreach and education, other activities, and next steps.

Program Management

Staffing

The four ombuds staff provided a total of 1,675 hours of service, or an average of about 279 hours per month (1.75 FTE positions), during this reporting period.

Month	Hours of Service
April	202
May	272
June	346
July	289
August	291
September	275
Total	1,675

Policies and Procedures

During this period, we formalized our policies and procedures that govern ombuds office procedures and intake and case management practice. We revised our Consent to Authorize the Release of Information and procedures to authenticate identification in accordance Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements.

Information Systems

During this reporting period the ombuds office implemented information systems to track incoming phone calls and response, contact information for people who have had an intake interview with ombuds staff and have requested a consent to authorize the release of information, and information on active and closed cases. We implemented a system of documenting follow-up interviews with people whose case has been closed over a month to see if they were satisfied with the outcome, had not experienced retaliation, and to get their feedback on ombuds services. We implemented a new tool to track, analyze and report complaints, grievances, and fair

hearings that was developed by the statewide ombuds coalition and the Washington Institute of Mental Illness Research and Training (WIMIRT).

Advocacy

850 people contacted the ombuds office during this report period. The following summarizes hours of service and number of contacts by month. Contacts include people requesting information about accessing mental health and other community services, allied providers, and other individuals and groups who are interested in community mental health services. Many of these people are satisfied with the information and ask for no additional support.

Month	Contacts
April	178
May	154
June	112
July	114
August	132
September	160
Total	850

We received a signed release of information to support 29 people during this reporting period. The following summarizes the cases by type.

Cases Opened	Number	Percentage
Quality/Appropriateness	10	34.6%
Access	5	17.2
Consumer Rights	5	17.2
Housing	5	17.2
Dignity & Respect	2	6.9
Phone Calls Not Returned	2	6.9
Total	29	100.0%

Cases Closed	Number	Percentage
Mediation/Conciliation	11	44.0%
Information/Referral	9	36.0
Not Pursued	5	20.0
Total	25	100.0%

Access by Special Populations

The following summarizes data regarding access to special populations during this reporting period.

MH/DD
MH/AD

Consumer Feedback On Satisfaction with Ombuds Services

During this reporting period we contacted twenty-six people about thirty days after their situation had been resolved to determine whether they were still satisfied with the outcome, to rule out retaliation and ask them about their satisfaction with ombuds services. We were not able to contact fifteen of those twenty-six people. Of the remaining eleven people, ten people or over ninety percent, were satisfied with the outcome and the support they received from the Mental Health Ombuds Services staff.

Outreach and Education

Advocates

Ombuds services staff met with parents from the Valley City Family Support group and discussed ombuds services and family issues.

We met twice with staff and volunteers with NAMI-Greater Seattle. We provided information on ombuds services and talk about shared issues and coordinating our services.

We met twice with Antioch students and participants in the monthly meeting of the women's homeless project and presented information on accessing services, advocacy and mental health ombuds services.

Community Mental Health Providers

We met with Community Psychiatric Center staff at the clinic in Wallingford, checked for posted rights and distributed brochures.

We attended the opening of the Community Psychiatric Clinic clubhouse.

We visited the Downtown Emergency Services Center clinic and shelter. We distributed brochures and talked with staff and people receiving services about advocacy, client rights and ombuds services.

Allied Providers

We met with DSHS/Aging and Disabilities Services Administration staff and King County Long Term Care Ombudsman staff to discuss our approaches to advocacy and shared issues.

We met with DSHS/Aging and Disabilities Services Administration staff to discuss mental health ombuds services. We have a follow-up meeting scheduled in August to meet with King County Long Term Care Ombudsman staff.

We visited Child Study and Treatment Center staff and toured the facility.

Other Activities

Staff Training

All ombuds staff attended the one-hour training on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Two Associate Ombuds attended the mandatory ombuds training provided by the Washington Institute for Mental Illness Research and Training (WIMIRT).

Two Associate Ombuds attended the three-day Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) training provided by the Washington Institute.

An Associate Ombuds attended interview training from WIMIRT for the Mental Health Transformation Grant. The Associate is applying this training to interview people who are homeless as part of the transformation grant. This will be an ongoing project.

Two Associate Ombuds staff attended the seminar on government benefits and work sponsored by NAMI-Greater Seattle.

RSN Meetings

We attend the regular monthly partners meeting and meeting of clinical directors. We attend a regular meeting with Client Services staff about policies and procedures and role clarification.

Statewide Ombuds Activities

Representatives from the ombuds office attended the two Quarterly Ombuds/QRT meetings sponsored by DSHS/Mental Health Division and the WIMIRT and attended the Behavioral Health Conference.

We attended the DSHS Community Transformation Partnership recovery awareness workshop in Tri-cities.

Transformation Work Group Activities

We participated in a conference call, coordinated by the Washington Institute, with ombuds from other RSNs to discuss ombuds services and the transformation process.

We attended an adult consumer subcommittee of the Transformation Work Group to discuss proposed changes to state-wide ombuds services.

We met with staff from WPAS to discuss proposed changes to state-wide ombuds services.

We participated in the monthly meeting of the Community Transformation Partnership (CTP) which is a subcommittee of the state Transformational Work

Group. We provided information about ombuds services as part of the subcommittee recommendations for initiatives to be included in the state transformation plan.

Next Steps

We will continue to meet with community mental health provider staff and develop working relationships with them to enable us to best support people who are having difficulties with their mental health services.

We will continue to meet with allied providers to promote the values of the community mental health system and help make sure that people receiving mental health services are well supported in other aspects of their lives, such as housing, education, and community activities.

We will continue to participate in training and education so that ombuds staff have access to best practices in community mental health and advocacy services.

We will support King County to participate in the state Mental Health Transformation Grant process and help ensure that the interests of all people of King County are well served.