



**Consumer Action
Network**

PROMOTING RECOVERY
AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Editors Note:

This is CAN's sixth year in operation. Over the years, we have conducted the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, Community Service Reviews, Focus groups, and Rights and Recovery Trainings among a host of other activities geared toward ensuring everyone hears the consumer's voice. Our goals continue to include ensuring the direct voices of consumers are integral to service delivery and system change, to help create a mental health treatment culture that embraces recovery principles of empowerment, best practice, accountability, responsibility, and choice. We aim to ensure that consumers have every opportunity to recover in their mental health treatment. We want to thank all of our supporters for participating with us, responding to us, and advocating because of us. We take this space to extend a special thanks to Weil, Gotshal & Manges, the Kathryn W. Davis Foundation, Keepers Employment Agency, the Mayor's Strengthening Partner's Initiative, American University Law Clinic, American College of Mental Health Administration and Richard A. Hall, P.C. for their professional involvement and commitment to excellence.

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-E. Smith, Executive Director



GRADS WRAP

CAN is pleased to announce its first Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) graduation. The WRAP course is part of the on-going relationship CAN has with St. Elizabeth's Hospital – a welcomed extension to the collaboration with the Treatment Mall since CAN's beginning. Michael Sterling, CAN advocate and Copeland Center-trained facilitator taught the twelve-week course. The WRAP course was both exciting and challenging for him to teach. Many of the first class participants were from both the civil and forensic sections of the hospital. "The Advance Directive segment was totally new to them," said Michael. When laying the foundation for the advance directive Michael said the participants were "engaged and asked lots of questions." CAN considers this first class session a major success. The class time management was precise and the attrition was low. In the final weeks, the participants would often ask if "[we] are going to have a graduation?" In response, CAN presented certificates of completion at the last class along with a ceremony.

Many attended the September 9 graduation held at St. Elizabeth's. Invited guests included DMH Director Steve Baron, Dr. Patrick Canavan (CEO), Anthony Kahaly (Director of Consumer Affairs), Joan Bartlett (Clinical Program Manager), Paul Davis (photographer), nursing Interns from PG Community College, Treatment Mall Administrative Staff, and CAN's entire staff.

At the ceremony, graduates presented deeply heart-felt oral testimonials of what the class did for them to advance their recovery and make positive life changes. Photographer Paul Davis took terrific group photos!



RRP **Reliable Representative Payee**

Representative Payees have become a necessary element within the host of services DMH offers to consumers. When the Social Security Administration, psychiatrist, treatment team or the consumer determines that individual is incapable of handling their funds, the consumer is sometimes mandated to use a representative payee service. This service has helped many begin to understand budgeting principles and applied concepts. Many consumers who use rep payee services have their rent and other debts paid in a regular, timely manner. The additional bonus is that this can lead to credit repair. Additional debts (or special requests) are paid as they arise and deemed necessary and possible after a discussion with case managers. More than once, case managers have stated that they “went back and forth on the pros and cons” of a Special Request. From this interaction consumers learn to review their decisions before implementing which is a skill that strengthens the consumer’s money management skills. Rep payee services provide monthly account statements so you can track disbursements and balances. Another feature is the pre-scheduled disbursement of spending money. This “allowance” encourages consumers to monitor their impulse spending habits. Consumers also learn spending discipline, as monies do not become available before the next disbursement. As a convenience, some core service agencies offer rep payee services to their clients. In addition, Bread for the City provides the service at two locations in DC – in Southeast and Northwest.

Welcome a **CONSUMER** to A New Core Service Agency

With the advent of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) closing DC-CSA, many consumers are reluctant to start anew with a different CSA. To the consumer, this is a new experience with the feel of starting from ‘scratch.’ From the consumer’s point-of-view, opening yourself up to a new case manager with your personal history is difficult. Meanwhile, letting go of an established relationship with a former case manager is equally difficult. CAN would like to present a few tips for welcoming a consumer to their new core service agency. Consider these:

Start with a presentation of resources. Consumers like to feel as though they are associated with a CSA that has a wealth of resources. A physical plant that is extensive, brightly colored, and well lit is very eye-catching. If your agency has in-house therapy, education components, job placement services, family counseling, or a peer representative, then display these to the consumer. Do not forget that scheduled groups that address troublesome issues, current events, and recreational topics are also attractive to consumers transferring to your agency. Lastly, CAN supports providing business initiative training, as many consumers expressed interest in self-employment. *(continued on page 6)*



A New *Beginning* at “New Beginnings”

On Friday, September 25, 2009, Consumer Action Network visited the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services Administration’s newly designed facility to administer the 2009 annual Satisfaction Survey. During this visit, 24 youths who had been connected to mental health services in the community before being detained, participated in our Survey. We are thankful to those youths and their willingness to provide feedback about the quality of services they had experienced. The building aptly named “New Beginnings” is a physical representation of the Administration’s vision for youth to create new lives in a positive direction. The Deputy Superintendent, Mr. Sean Hamilton gave CAN a tour of the state-of-the-art facility. Resembling a college-style campus, the facility houses an auditorium that can seat up to a 120 people, a cafeteria, a gymnasium, and a football field for recreation. In addition to those beautiful features, we visited the classrooms that are equipped with computers and other modern technology such as SmartBoards™. “The Maya Angelou Public Charter School is providing the educational component of New Beginnings. Since the changeover, 99% of the youths attend school. They enjoy it and are very participatory in their education,” stated Hamilton. CAN also toured the residential quarters. The sleeping area consists of 60 beds, separated into 10-bed sections called “pods.” They also have chalkboard walls for the youths to compose their thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

CAN staff was pleased and would like to congratulate the DC Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services Administration for the dedication, progress and culture change, which is being demonstrated to provide quality and therapeutic services for the youth of the District of Columbia. Dr. Carol Zahm, Director of Behavioral Health, provided valuable insight on the program’s core values. Dr. Andrea Weissman, Chief of Health Services, presides over both New Beginnings and DYRS (in DC) facilities and is pleased with the accomplishments. “The facility is the most modern in the country,” stated Weissman.

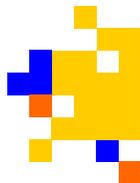
(continued from page 4 –New CSA)

List on-site and off-site staff. When a consumer realizes that the CSA has invested in qualified staff for them, the consumer’s anxiety may lessen. Encourage the consumer to identify staff they may have worked with before. When they ‘open up’ about prior relationships, putting together a treatment team becomes easier. Consumers feel empowered when they know and understand the organizational structure. Equally important to recovery are the people who directly influence their lives such as the case manager, psychiatrist, therapist, housing liaison, and money management instructor.



List peer supports. If the CSA has peers representatives available for training, education, or support, present the list to the consumer. Once s/he sees the people available “just to talk things over,” their comfort level increases. As always, list the Consumer Action Network (CAN) as one of their professional peer advocates. Lastly,

Review Crisis planning. Many consumers may delay transitioning to a new and different CSA. Unfortunately, they may wait until they ‘run out’ of something they need. To be on the safe side, gently discuss with the consumer how to identify when they are in crisis and what to do (and not do) when the situation arises.



CONGRATULATIONS To....

- Consumer Choice Nominee **Michael Sterling**
- Winners of the **Voice Awards** sponsored by SAMHSA
- CAN's 6-year Anniversary September 3

Upcoming events

Date:	Oct 28 – Nov 1	Alternatives Conference
Theme:		Uniting Our Movement For Change
Location:	Omaha, NE	http://alternatives2009.org/
Date:	November 5	The Forensic Council
Location:	St. Elizabeth's Hospital	Third Annual Anniversary Celebration
Time:	JHP Auditorium 1:30 PM to 3 PM	
Date:	November 18	Online Workshop: Positive Behavioral
Time:	12 noon to 1 pm	Intervention Services
Contact:		MD Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health callenza@mdcoalition.org
Date:	November 18	Small Business Brief Advice Legal
Time:	5 PM to 7:30 PM	Clinic
Location:		2000 14th St., NW, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Date:	November 25	"Feast of Sharing" Thanksgiving Meal,
Time:	9:30AM to 2:30PM	Health Screenings, Job Fair
Location:		DC Convention Center
Contact:	F. Wms 2/422-8968	801 Mt. Vernon Place, NW



ON THE WAY TO WORK TODAY...

A Vignette by Frances Tielman

I thought I mention that today on my walk into work a man shouted, "Oh, we have a rainy day today, don't we," as he saw me crossing the street. I interpreted it as someone who was just trying to strike up a conversation and to be acknowledged by someone. I just said, "Yes, a bit of fall is approaching." He replied, "Don't worry Miss, the sun will be out at 1pm today." Sure enough right at 1pm I looked out of my office window and there was the sun!

It made me think that the event was a nice metaphor. A little acknowledgement of my mere reply gave this man a feeling of dignity by exchanging a simple nicety. What he gave me back was a brighter message of sunshine coming into my life, and it did. Maybe he didn't have magical powers of prediction but he did cause me to notice something beautiful that I might have missed.

All too often, people will shun or ignore someone like this gentleman, dismissing him as mentally ill, yet the same people will have empathy for someone who has a physical ailment by offering a consoling word.. The message I got out of this experience is, don't lose out on the opportunity to receive goodness in your life, by judging rather than by extending a kind word. Your kindness sends healing and brings it back to you.





Schizophrenia QI

CAN staff attended the Schizophrenia Quality Improvement Program (SQIP) Training held on September 29 at Gallaudet's Kellogg Conference Hotel. The theme was "Effective Comprehensive Treatment and Medication Management for Consumers with Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders." This event marked a milestone for the SQIP committee. Both Dr. Steven Steury and Director Steve Baron gave opening remarks welcoming everyone. SQIP contracted Xcenda of Amerisource Bergen Specialty Group to provide the training and accompanying material. The training provided samples of new brochures covering issues associated with co-occurring disorders and medical adherence. Additional tri-fold brochures explained psychosis, schizoaffective disorders, and schizophrenia. In addition to a pamphlet, Xcenda dedicated a full 45-minute session on co-morbid conditions "signs, symptoms, management, and resources." Questions from the audience echoed the growing concern about obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes within the specified consumer group. The SQIP training acknowledged the special role caregivers have with treatment. These brochures are color-coded for targeted audiences to identify easily. DMH's Office of Organizational Development and Training along with the Office of Accountability plan to make them available to CSA's in the coming weeks. Copies of the brochures are immediately available to consumers at CAN's office.

The final session demonstrated a new software tool developed by Xcenda exclusively for the District of Columbia. Xcenda emphasized the software's sole purpose is to reveal the prevalence of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorders and psychosis not otherwise specified. One goal is to "promote appropriate drug use in schizophrenia management such that improvements in quality of care and resource utilization are realized." It will also increase awareness of co-morbid conditions and what types of medications and services have been provided so the service providers can make use of best practices to improve their services and to help them educate consumers. Marketed as a programmatic tool, the software supports mental health providers with medication management and program development. It primarily tracks incidence by treatment site, consumer demographics and specific treatments utilized per identified illness(es) (e.g. type, dosage and frequency of prescribed medications). The software is shipped pre-loaded with 2008 adult data from Medicaid and Pharmacy Claims; thus providing a retrospective analysis of claims data. In the near future, DMH intends to provide software support to the CSA's. Per Xcenda, next installment of upgraded data has not yet been determined. Questions from the audience brought out the absence of hospitalization (med and psych) and Emergency Room data.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

DC GOVERNMENT

Department of Mental Health
Access HelpLine
1-888-7WE-HELP

DC Housing Authority
202-535-1000

Income Maintenance Admin
Food Stamps, TANF, Medicaid, IDA
202-698-3900

Board of Elections and Ethics
202-727-2525

Division of Tax and Revenue
202-727-4TAX

Mayor's Office
311

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Social Security Administration
1-800-772-1213

Housing and Urban Development
202-708-1112

Immigration and Naturalization
National Customer Service Center
1-800-375-5283

Internal Revenue Service
1-800-829-1040

LEGAL AGENCIES

University Legal Services
202-547-4747

Washington Legal Clinic
for the Homeless (WLCH)
202-328-5505

DC Bar *Pro Bono* Program
202-737-4700

SHELTERS

Community for Creative
Non-Violence
202-393-1909

Central Union Mission
202-745-7118

WOMEN & FAMILIES

House of Ruth
202-667-7001

Ramona's Way
202-257-6790

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Community Council for the
Homeless (CCHFP)
202-364-1419

Manna Housing
202-832-1845

Woodley House, Inc.
202-328-4069

GENERAL SERVICES

Green Door, Inc.
202-464-9200

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Washington Hospital Center
at Trinity Square
202-877-6333

McClendon Center
202-754-0073

DUAL DIAGNOSIS SERVICES

APRA
202-442-5955

N St Village NW
202-939-2076

FOOD/CLOTHING

Martha's Table
202-328-6608

So Others Might Eat
202-797-8806

EMPLOYMENT-EDUCATION

Ida Mae Campbell Wellness and Re-
source Center
202-462-4092

Rehabilitation Services
Administration
202-442-8400

HOME HEALTH CARE

Human Touch
202-483-8181



We want extend a special thanks to all of the core service agencies, outreach centers and youth services centers that participated in our 2009 Satisfaction Survey. A special thanks to the adults and the children that provided valuable feedback on the survey. This is such an important instrument for us that helps us gauge the quality of services rendered to consumers. We submitted the report to the Department of Mental Health and we will release the results once it is approved. Again, we thank you.



Effie Smith, Executive Director



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CAN Mission Statement

Consumer Action Network (CAN) empowers mental health consumers by promoting recovery and self-advocacy, each and every consumer's voice ringing out and making a difference.

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