



In This Issue

Historic Settlement
Announced

Meet MHA-AZ Board
Member

Legislative Session
Started January 13th

Update on Community
Events

Donate



January 15, 2014

Dear Eddie,



Historic Settlement Announced

After 33 years, Arizona and the advocates involved in the *Arnold v Sarn* lawsuit have reached a settlement. The lawsuit involves a class of Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) residents in Maricopa County seeking implementation of a state law providing for a continuum of care. The lawsuit, and now the settlement, are designed to provide essential services that will allow SMI individuals to live successfully in their communities.

The settlement agreement was entered into by Governor Jan Brewer, the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest. The announcement was issued on January 8th, 2014. The agreement will be submitted to Maricopa County Superior Court for preliminary approval. Class members will have an opportunity to comment on the agreement's fairness prior the final order being approved.

As Governor Brewer stated in her press release, "...we have crafted a model behavioral health system based on best practices and well-established, proven guidelines. Furthermore, this resolution also keeps the state accountable and ensures Arizona will not fall short on its obligations to this population in the future."

Anne Ronan, attorney for the Plaintiff class, said "the

parties worked diligently for months on the terms of this agreement... we were optimistic that with the inclusion of most Class Members in the AHCCCS healthcare program beginning in 2014, and the Governor's long-standing commitment to persons with serious mental illness... a unique opportunity to realize the promise of this litigation... to allow all persons with serious mental illness the opportunity and support to live productive lives in the community."

So, what are the key elements of the settlement? Let's review, briefly, what should happen over the next two years.

1. Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams are to be available around the clock providing a wide range of flexible services, to help stabilize an individual in the community. The services may include crisis services, medication management or case management. It's a team that will have a whole tool box from which to assure that the SMI individual can be served at home. There will be 8 ACT teams established.
2. Supported Housing, that is provided at scattered-sites and is permanent for the individual, will help actualize the fact that housing is "health care". Stability is best attained when a person can have a safe place to live while tending to his or her health care needs with the assistance of various support services. The agreement adds capacity for at least 1,200 new people in supported housing.
3. Supported Employment services will help up to 750 individuals find and maintain employment in the community.
4. Peer and Family Support Services will help up to 1,500 peers and their families meet the challenges of SMI.

This is indeed an important milestone! As events unfold in the coming months, let's hope that SMI individuals and their families and advocates can clearly see the difference made by this settlement.

We do know there will be an annual review to assess progress towards reaching the goals outlined in the

settlement.



Meet MHA-AZ Board Member

I am Vicki Staples, Secretary of the Mental Health America-Arizona Board. Originally from the small town of Waupun, Wisconsin; I moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico for four years when I was thirteen. As I had fallen in love with the southwest and disliked the bitter cold winters of Wisconsin, I returned to attend Eastern New Mexico University where I obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology. Following my graduation in 1990, I moved to Phoenix and worked at Wayland, a children's residential center, and F.A.C.E. Center, a group home for girls, before becoming a children's case manager at Community Care Network (CCN). In 1992 when the behavioral health system in Maricopa was going through significant changes and the *Arnold vs Sarn* Joint Stipulation on Exit Criteria and Disengagement was being implemented, I transitioned to the clinic for persons with a serious mental illness at County Hospital. I worked at several clinics throughout the Valley until I accepted a position at the Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health in the Bureau for Person's with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) in 1996.

In 2003, I received a Master of Education with an emphasis in Counseling from Northern Arizona University and also became a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner. I eventually became the Bureau Chief for Persons with a SMI and then the Director of Recovery, Resiliency and Wellness. During the decade that I worked at the Division, I was fortunate to have aided in the creation and implementation of

several of the *Arnold vs. Sarn* stipulations. In addition, I was proud to be a part of the many statewide initiatives to improve the behavioral health system throughout Arizona including developing peer support services and enhancing services for individuals with co-occurring disorders.

Since 2007, I have been employed at Arizona State University's Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy. As the Associate Director of Clinical Initiatives, I work on a variety of projects that focus on improving the delivery of behavioral health services through increasing collaboration both within and across service systems, expanding workforce development opportunities, and providing evaluation activities that stimulate practice improvements and promote recovery.

Building partnerships with individuals, families and key stakeholders to promote recovery, increase resiliency and expand opportunities for individuals receiving behavioral health services continues to be my passion. I am very thankful to have had the opportunity over the past 24 years to work with and be mentored by so many dedicated, compassionate and talented individuals. My hope is that I too can encourage and support the future generations of advocates, service providers and policy makers to improve the lives of Arizonans who receive health and human services from the behavioral health, primary care, child welfare and criminal justices systems. I am honored to serve on the MHA-AZ Board alongside so many devoted individuals who have successfully contributed to many successes for our system of care and who continue to advocate for additional reforms needed in our State.



Legislative Session Started January 13th

Yes indeed, our locally elected State Senators and Representatives have returned to Phoenix for the 51st Legislature, Second Regular Session. The Governor has

delivered her State of the State and we're "off to the races".

Here are a few key dates to be aware of as we move forward.

- * January 16th, members of the House of Representatives are allowed to introduce only 7 bills per member. A similar provision is not imposed on members of the State Senate.

- * January 21st is the last day for State Senators to submit bill requests to Legislative Council. These are the folks who prepare bills for the Legislature.

- * January 25th, members of the House of Representatives have to get their requests over to the Legislative Council.

Obviously, the sooner a bill gets drafted and in the "hopper" (the actual submittal of the bill to either the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate), the greater likelihood of the bill being heard before a legislative committee. It is ultimately up to each committee chair to decide whether to hear a bill or not.

- * February 10th is the deadline for introduction of all bills in the House.

- * Senators have until February 3rd to get bills introduced.

- * February 21st is the deadline for the House of Representatives and Senate to have considered all the bills introduced in their legislative chamber. Otherwise the likelihood of the bill moving forward is slim.

So, the clock keeps running and there's lots of pressure to move issues along briskly. That's one reason the Interim -- the time between sessions -- is an important opportunity for advocates to be discussing their issues and concerns.

- * March 21st is the last day for the Senate to consider House bills and for the House to consider Senate bills.

- * If there is a need for a conference committee, its work needs to be done by April 18th.

Usually about 1,000 bills are introduced each legislative session, with between 250 and 300 bills finally enacted. Lots of things don't get considered, or they get tacked onto other bills that are moving through the legislative process. It does require vigilance to stay on

top of the moving parts.

Then magically by April 22nd, the Legislature, if it abides by its rules, should be done with its business and adjourn. That isn't a hard and fast rule, nor is it regularly met. There's always an office pool to predict when session ends; staff, members and lobbyists often participate. This is an election year and the desire to get home to campaign may indeed impact the date of when session ends this year. Got any predictions?

The Legislature is making an important change this week for those wishing to sign in to speak before a legislative committee. You will need to redo your 'sign-up' in the new computer system. Many of you have signed in at the kiosks at the Senate or House when you've been down for legislative days at the Capitol. We're still not able to remotely sign up for a request to speak on the www.azleg.gov website. Staff has informed me that'll be a feature added in the coming months, but not in time for this legislative session. Those of you doing your advocacy in your PJs from home or your office in Kingman will need to consider getting signed up next time you're at the Capitol.

It is difficult to predict what will be hot-button issues for the session. Some things will be back: the state budget, budget battles to restore funding to programs cut during the economic downturn in Arizona, providing adequate funding for education, and developing responses to the current child protective services crisis would be leading contenders in my opinion.

As session moves along we will try to update you monthly through this newsletter. We want to alert you to the impacts legislation and the budget may have upon behavioral health care in Arizona.

Upcoming Community Events

Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton will be hosting a Faith Forum on Homelessness and Domestic Violence on **January 30th** from 9 am to noon at the Memorial Hall at Steele Indian School Park in Phoenix. Registration is required, so check with the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness at 602-340-9393.

Healthy Living Workshop series begins in Prescott Valley on

Tuesdays starting on **February 4th** running through **March 11th**. Sponsors for the series are MIKID, Arizona Living Well Institute, Yavapai County Health Department and NACOG. To register for the series call, 928-775-4448 or 928-442-5480.

Members of the Arizona Council of Human Service Providers will participate in their annual Day at the Capitol on Wednesday, **February 5th**. RSVP to the Council office at 602-252-9363.

Empowerment Systems will host their 4th Annual luncheon Thursday, March 20, 2014 from 11:30 am to 1 pm at The Biltmore at 2400 East Missouri Avenue in Phoenix. This year's theme is "The Power of Wellness". Register by visiting their [website](#).

NAMI of Southern Arizona will be hosting their annual walk on Saturday, March 29th. To participate in the walk or to support their efforts register at this [website](#).

There are indeed lots of meetings and educational opportunities. Go get involved!

We invite your participation and sharing of this information through resending this newsletter or encouraging your friends and colleagues to sign up to be on the monthly newsletter list. We want to be inclusive. Share the word. Get involved.

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