

## **KY MENTAL HEALTH COALITION ADVOCACY PRIORITIES – 2011**

### ***Behavioral Health IS a priority – Invest in it!!***

**INVEST IN MEDICAID:** Urge the Governor and General Assembly to continue to invest General Fund dollars into the Medicaid Program, particularly in addressing the Medicaid deficit and then investing funds to assure that current levels of Medicaid coverage and services are maintained as federal health reform is implemented.

- Provide funding to include Substance Abuse treatment in the array of Medicaid services so that individuals with addictive disorders and co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders may be appropriately treated.
- Reimburse Peer Support services delivered by those consumers who have completed DBHDID-approved training and who have passed the KPS examination to become Kentucky Peer Specialists.
- Set a reimbursement rate for non-psychiatric physicians working in the CMHCs to provide medication management and physical health services.
- Amend the Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) statute to add Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) in the areas of: Behavioral Health, Children’s Health (including KCHIP) and Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (including waiver programs).
- Assure access to the most appropriate medications for the individual with mental illness.
- Expand and adequately fund preventive services offered to Medicaid-eligible individuals.
- Expand utilization of telehealth to include other behavioral health providers.
- Improve efforts to enroll and retain children in comprehensive health care coverage.
- Educate stakeholders about the federal health reform law to ensure maximum benefits are realized from it.
- Take an active role in the development of health insurance exchanges to include private and public coverage and a comprehensive, consumer-friendly benefit package and structure.

### **OTHER ADVOCACY INITIATIVES:**

(Not listed in priority order)

**DEATH PENALTY AND SEVERELY MENTALLY ILL PERSONS:** Exclude from the death penalty individuals found to be severely mentally ill at the time of the capital offense if committed after passage of the Act.

2010 HB 16 – Introduced in the House and assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. The bill attracted a bipartisan group of co-sponsors. The bill was not heard by the committee during the session, but did have a hearing in the Interim Session by the Joint Judiciary Committee.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:**

- Support efforts to reduce Kentucky’s incarceration rate and reinvest savings in expanding community-based mental health and substance abuse treatment. (Pew)
- Allocate increased funding for community-based Substance Abuse treatment programs in conjunction with Adult Drug Courts. Expand and fund Adolescent Drug Courts and Substance Abuse community treatment programs for adolescents.
- Establish greater coordination and availability of community-based programs, including Medicaid funding, for individuals with MH/SA who are exiting the criminal justice system.
- Create appropriate funding mechanism to ensure vitality and effectiveness of the Jail Triage Program.

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:** Provide tax credits up to \$25,000 for those employers who contract with a nonprofit agency or work center for work performed by individuals with disabilities.

HB 10 – Butler and M. King – Introduced in the House and assigned to House Appropriations & Revenue (A & R) Committee.

**RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS:** Allow Kentuckians to vote on amending Section 145 of the KY Constitution to require the automatic restoration of voting rights after a person completes their sentence.

HB 70 – Crenshaw – This bill has passed the House for several sessions, but has never had a hearing in the Senate. PAR, KFTC, ACLU, League of Women Voters have worked hard on this legislation for years. Th3 2011 bill has been introduced in the House and assigned to the House Elections, Constitutional Amendments & Intergovernmental Affairs Committee.

**GAMBLING PREVENTION & TREATMENT:** Establish funding through assessment of lottery, race tracks and registered charitable gaming entities for education, awareness, prevention and treatment of problem gambling provided by certified gambling counselors and CMHCs.

HB 66 – Mills and Embry – Similar to bills introduced in past sessions, it would establish the Compulsive Gambling Awareness and Treatment Fund Advisory Council. This bill has been introduced in the House and assigned to the House Health & Welfare Committee.

**KENTUCKY FAMILY TRUST:** Creates a trust program to manage funds for the benefit of persons with special health care needs, with funds acting as a supplement to state-provided assistance for designated expenses.

HB 214 – Rollins and Pullin – A slightly different version was Introduced in 2010 and assigned to the House A & R Committee. No hearing or action was taken on the bill in 2010. This bill has been introduced in the House for 2011.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTIVE ORDERS:** Permit dating partners to be among the class of persons defined as “unmarried couple” allowed to obtain domestic violence protective orders.

HB 35 – Richards and Yonts – Include dating partners among the class of persons allowed to obtain domestic violence protective orders. This bill was introduced in the House and assigned to the House Health & Welfare Committee.

**For a complete listing of all bills of interest to KMHC member organizations and monitored during the 2011 KY General Assembly session, please contact KMHC at 1-877-894-0222, see [www.advocacyaction.net](http://www.advocacyaction.net) or email Christin at [actionoffice@bellsouth.net](mailto:actionoffice@bellsouth.net) to sign up for email alerts.**

**REJUVENATE HB 843 COMMISSION AND PROCESS:** This does not require legislative action, but advocacy to engage the Governor to call together the Statewide HB 843 Commission and urge active participation of all Cabinets, Departments and Divisions named in the statute, as well as representatives of consumers, family members and Regional Planning Councils.

Possible issues for study by the HB 843 Commission include:

Integration of Physical and Behavioral Health

Pew Commission Recommendations on Corrections & Substance Abuse

Medicaid Cost Containment Recommendations, including possible expansion of managed care throughout the Commonwealth

Gaps in the System – 202A, 504, Mandatory Outpatient Treatment

Contact KMHC or Sheila A. Schuster, Ph.D.

Phone: 1-877-894-0222 Email: [advocacyaction@bellsouth.net](mailto:advocacyaction@bellsouth.net) Website: [www.advocacyaction.net](http://www.advocacyaction.net)