



**General Membership Meeting
May 4, 2017**

9:35 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.

Southcoast Center for Women's Health, 300 B Faunce Corner Road, North Dartmouth, MA

Members present (11): Barbara Acksen, Olivia Botelho, Rachel Collins, Jean DeCoffe, Maritza Irizarry, Jay Kenney, Anne Lynch, Kathy Spear, Amy Sylvia, Sharon Terreault, and Kathleen Wilbur. *If your name does not appear on this list and you attended the meeting, please contact gnballies@gmail.com.*

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Chair, Barbara Acksen, who welcomed round table introductions of those in attendance.

**Presentation: *Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative, Meeting Street Early Head Start*
(Sharon Terreault, Director, Early Head Start)**

Rachel Collins, peer recovery coordinator of the Fall River and New Bedford Recovery Connection Centers, gave an overview of her organization. Ms. Collins said the Fall River and New Bedford Recovery Connection Centers are part of the Southeast Recovery Learning Community (RLC) which has sites in four other locations, including Brockton, Hyannis, Plymouth and Taunton. This group is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) and is partnered with the Boston Medical Center (BMC) who holds the contract for the organization. They are also planning on adding a seventh location in Quincy in the near future.

Ms. Collins said her organization offers a wide range of supports that can be life-changing for individuals aged 18 or older who are struggling with the impact of psychiatric diagnosis, trauma, homelessness, addiction and a variety of other life-interrupting challenges. She said the Southeast Recovery Learning Community is the only DMH-funded organization that offers supports available without "red tape" like referrals, registration and waitlists. Consequently, they are the only DMH supports that can be accessed immediately, both by people who are receiving DMH services and those who might end up needing DMH services in the future if they don't get support now.

Unlike other DMH offerings, Ms. Collins said the supports offered by the Fall River and New Bedford Recovery Connection Centers are strictly peer-to-peer which attracts many people who might otherwise avoid seeking help at all. The supports are also generally more flexible and defined by the individual. She said her organization is "laid back," "welcoming" and "non-clinical."



Ms. Collins said the Fall River and New Bedford Recovery Connections Centers are very active and provide a number of varied support groups for individuals who are struggling with mental health issues. Among the support groups she mentioned include Adult Survivors of Child Abuse, Peer Support Groups with Open Discussions, Expressive Arts, and the 12-step Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA). They also have a Spanish speaking support group in Fall River and they are looking to start one in New Bedford.

Ms. Collins also cited a study which indicated positive outcomes for individuals participating in the RLCs. She said these people often see a reduction in rehospitalization and usage of emergency rooms, as well as those with a history of addiction/substance abuse were more likely to take steps toward recovery.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Ms. Collins distributed a May 2017 calendar and flyers for upcoming events they are hosting that month in Fall River and Greater New Bedford. She said noted that no health insurance, membership dues or fees of any kind are required to participate.

For more information about the Southeast Recovery Learning Community, contact Ms. Collins by e-mail at collinsr@vinfen.org or by phone at 508-675-3137. You can also visit www.southeastrlc.org.

Meeting Business

Meeting minutes – approval

April 6, 2017 – Jean DeCoffe moved to approve the report, Rachel Collins seconded, with no discussion all members present approved the April minutes.

Treasurer's Report – approval

- Bank balance 3/31/2017: \$195,306.43
- Total Encumbered Funds: \$157,206.29
- Unrestricted net assets: \$43,032.23

Kathy Spear moved to approve the Treasurer's report, Kathy Wilbur seconded, with no discussion all members present approved the report.

Standing Committee reports

Health Access – Barbara Acksen reported that the Health Access Committee met last month and worked on establishing places where they could have support groups. Among the locations she mentioned were the three hospitals, Greater New Bedford Health Center, Parenting Teens, and the faith community. She said the Health Access Committee discussed expanding their provider network, and they would like to have the providers contact information available online. She also



said they would like to offer more mother-women trainings to the public and their names would eventually be placed on the providers list. Furthermore, Dr. Acksen reminded everyone that the committee meets on the second Thursday of the month. The next meeting will take place on Thursday, May 11, at 9:30 a.m. at the Kennedy Donovan Center in the white building.

Health Equity – Since no one was present from the Health Equity Committee, this report was tabled.

Member Announcements

Members are always welcome to provide handouts for others and to share upcoming events.

- Anne Lynch noted that the Kennedy Donovan Center's (KDC) Early Intervention Program is holding a Family Fun Day on Saturday, June 10, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. They will have many fun-filled activities, community resource tables, treats at the bake sale, and raffle items. The KDC is located at 385 Country Street in New Bedford.
- Sharon Terreault noted that 7 of the 36 slots for the home visiting program at Meeting Street Early Head Start in New Bedford have been filled and they currently have six referrals to review. She said the program is available to income eligible families with children (newborn to three years old) who reside in New Bedford. She said preference is given to families affected by substance abuse, child abuse or neglect, and those who have had interactions with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families. She said referrals can come from a variety of sources, including pediatricians and obstetricians, early intervention programs, drug treatment programs, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, and even self-referral.
- Kathy Spear provided an update on some of the things that are taking place at the New Bedford location of the High Point Treatment Center.
 - She said they have one person who is in the process of being trained to help addictive gamblers. It's been a long process to get someone certified, but they are getting there.
 - She said their outpatient addiction program runs five days a week, helping anyone who has been diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder.
 - She said they are in the process of expanding their adolescent services, including the A-CRA (Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach) Program which is a behavioral intervention that aims to replace structures supportive of drug and alcohol use with ones that promote a clean and healthy lifestyle. She said they are in process of getting someone trained in this program and they recently hired a new adolescent psychiatrist who has office hours on Mondays. This person has been prescribing for adults but hasn't seen enough adolescents yet.



- Ms. Spear also said that High Point is piloting an urgent care model for adolescents at their Middleboro location. She said it will run for five days a week for three hours each day. For more information, contact 774-213-8535.
- Olivia Botelho noted that she would like to make a presentation on BMC HealthNet at a future GNB General Membership meeting.

Adjournment

Kathy Spear moved to adjourn the meeting, Jean DeCoffe seconded, with no discussion all members present approved to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on June 1, 2017 @ 9:30 a.m. at Southcoast Center for Women's Health, located at 300 B Faunce Corner Road in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts.