Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Who we are……..

What we do……..

What is the Advisory Council?

The Advisory Council is composed of a group of concerned citizens, volunteers and professionals who support and guide the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute (NVMHI). The Advisory Council is a 501 c(3) non-profit agency and participates in the Combined Federal Campaign Charitable Drive. Its number is 6007.

As a state-supported acute-care facility serving the psychiatric needs of the seriously mentally ill residents of Northern Virginia, the Institute is particularly sensitive to the community's needs and expectations. The Advisory Council plays an important and formal role in advocating for the needs of the patients and the community.

Who are the members of the Advisory Council?

Members include mental health professionals, representatives from local mental health agencies, mental health consumers, family members, and concerned citizens and volunteer
advocates from the business, religious, and social community. Staff members from the Institute and patient representatives from the Institute's treatment units actively participate in Advisory Council meetings.

What are the Council's objectives?

The Advisory Council:

- Develops and promotes programs and projects to support the patients and staff of the Institute.
- Advises the members of the Council and the public on the operation, structure, aims, policies, mandates, needs, and accomplishments of the Institute.
- Advocates for high quality of care at the Institute and the well-being of all patients.
- Solicits donations for identified needs not covered in the Institute's budget.
- Advises and consults with the administration of the Institute on matters related to patients' needs.
- Participates in regional planning.
- Educates community leaders and legislators.

What are the Council's activities?

Over the years, the Council has coordinated a variety of activities. They have included:

- Presenting seminars for the public, particularly for the families of those with serious mental illness, to inform them about the public mental health system and available resources in the community.
- Sponsoring seminars for, and visits by, representatives of local governments and the Northern Virginia delegation to the General Assembly.
- Raising funds for services not included in the Institute's budget. Examples included an all-purpose athletic court and a "quiet garden" for patients' use, pictures for patients' room, patient clothing, video and athletic equipment, and contributing to the Discharge Assistance Fund.

- Providing input on construction, growth, change and leadership at the Institute.

What commitment is asked?

Council members are expected to attend and participate in monthly meetings, typically held at the Institute on the second Tuesday of each month, from 10 a.m. to noon. In addition, each member is asked to join one of the Council's four standing committees.

- **The Advocacy Committee** is charged with keeping the Council informed on pending legislation and emerging policies that may affect the Institute.

- **The Program Committee** is charged with presenting programs at Council meetings to inform Council members about the Institute and its activities.

- **The Membership Committee** is charged with recruiting Council members.

- **The Community Relations Committee** is charged with supporting the community-relations and volunteer-recruitment efforts of the Institute.

How do I join the Council?

Recommendations or self-nominations should be made to the Director of Volunteer Services at 703-645-4001. For additional information about the Council, contact Council President, Saranna Rankin, who may be reached by phone at (703) 792-7866 or by e-mail at srankin@pwcgov.org.