



# The Coalition



WWW.WACOALITION.ORG

November 2004

## Advocates for Ethical Mental Health Care

**Editor's Corner:**  
**Peter N. Moore, Psy.D.**

The Coalition had its annual meeting on Saturday, October 9. The three-hour gathering was jam packed with news of our group's accomplishments, challenges, and changes. The highlight of the meeting was lobbyist Laura Groshong's presentation on new HIPAA Security Rules that affect how we keep and store our records. A summary of her presentation will appear in the *next* newsletter.

This issue reports on Board Chair Sue Wiedenfeld's review of the year's accomplishments, changes on the Board, improvements in member services, and plans for the future. She also reported on the Board's ongoing work on refining our mission and developing a "strategic plan" to more effectively protect ethical mental health care.

Finally, this issue reports on who the Mental Health PAC supported this election year and on what it based its support. With the election over, we face an ongoing political fight to preserve the type of mental health services we value. The legislators who will carry our fight to Olympia need our support. Unfortunately, many in the mental health community failed to contribute this year. If everyone donated a modest \$25 to the PAC, it would have a healthy war chest. Please, next time you are asked to contribute, consider it an investment in the sanctity of your practice.

### Who Ya Gonna Call !?!?!?!?

Coalition Helpline: 206-444-4304

Who's My Legislator: 1-800-448-4881 (State and Federal)

Legislative Hotline: 1-100-562-6000

## Coalition Annual Meeting: Past Accomplishments Reviewed/Busy Future Ahead **Peter N. Moore**

At Wallingford's venerable Good Shepherd Center, the Coalition held its annual meeting. Board president Sue Wiedenfeld recounted the group's accomplishments over the past year and told assembled members on a gray October morning, that the group's future is bright with promise.

In September, the Board met with House Speaker Frank Chopp, Parity Commission Chair Randy Revelle, and Representative Tom Campbell to celebrate the **Coalition's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday**. They were thanked for their support of parity for mental health benefits. (See *The Coalition* Summer 2004 issue)

Sue reported that she and Laura continue as representatives to the **Regence Behavioral Health Advisory Committee** composed of mental health professionals and representatives of Regence Blue Shield. Citing a "real breakthrough," Sue noted that the Coalition helped influence Regence to restructure its mental health benefits. Now Regence offers a number of sessions without a review. She complemented Regence's ability to listen to the mental health community.

Sue said that new blood on the board has brought an infusion of energy that has increased its organization and member service. Cynthia Stover<sup>2</sup>, our **new treasurer**, is using her accounting experience to provide comprehensive and understandable financial reports to the Board's monthly meetings. She also brings increased discipline and planning to the Coalition's financial affairs.

*See Annual Meeting on p. 2*

Susan Cohen, our new **membership chair**, has added some pizzazz to membership. New and renewing members now routinely get a packet of goodies as a thank you for their dues. Also she has procured buttons that read *Ask Me about the Coalition* that anyone can wear to meetings and conferences. Now members can tell colleagues how they can help support ethical treatment, strengthen mental health benefits, and fight to preserve confidentiality, choice, integrity, and quality of services.

Chris Lange has helped organize the ongoing construction of our **Web site**, [www.wacoalition.org](http://www.wacoalition.org). Members can now go to the site to review past newsletters, legislative updates, and other important news. In the not too distant future, members may be able to post messages and receive late breaking e-mail alerts.

Board member Jane Palmer is using her experience in business to help the board develop a **strategic plan** for the future. Her persistence and determination have helped the board refine its vision and mission and develop concrete strategies and tactics for the future. Please see Vision and Mission article on page 3 for the specifics of this ambitious plan.

Finally, the Coalition is gearing up its quarterly **brown bag seminars**. These informal meetings were originally designed to provide a forum and support group for members seeking to reduce if not eliminate their ties to managed care and insurance. Sue solicited ideas for future meetings to build participation. The group discussed suggestions such as focusing on practice building and sharing practical tips for managing the business end of a practice. We hope to see you at our next meeting!

Board President, Sue Wiedenfeld (*left*) and lobbyist Laura Groshong, (*right*) share a moment at the annual meeting.



## **Coalition Revises Vision and Mission: Ambitious Agenda Revealed**

**Peter N. Moore, Psy.D.**

Sue Wiedenfeld, Coalition Chair, reported that the Coalition Board has been busy refining the organization's vision, mission, and strategies to achieve its strategic objectives. Board member Jane Palmer a therapist with a background in business organization has helped the Board look hard at "what are we about."

The Coalition now seeks to be "recognized as the leading mental health advocacy organization in Washington State." It will do so through its presence in the legislature, by uniting mental health professionals of all disciplines, and by enlisting and representing consumers.

The **purpose** of the Coalition remains the same: to advocate and support ethical mental health care. However, it has expanded to "promote mental health benefits as a vital component of standard medical care" and to "preserve choice, confidentiality, integrity, and quality in mental health services."

To accomplish their mission, the Coalition has **four major goals**: to increase membership (especially among consumers), increase revenue, increase public and political visibility, and improve mental health coverage.

The Board has identified seven strategies with specific tactics as to how it will achieve these broad goals. It will continue to have a **political presence** that seeks to "build and maintain relationships with key legislators, meet regularly with their staffs, and support the MH-PAC." Lobbyist Laura Groshong now ably does much of this work.

The Coalition will also continue to have a strong **professional strategy** that will update and maintain its web site, develop an E-mail alert system, and publish a membership directory. These efforts will complement the existing newsletter, brown bag lunches, and Helpline.

The Coalition plans to strengthen its **consumer strategy** by establishing a Consumer Issues committee to network with existing mental health consumer groups and distribute coalition material to these groups.

The Coalition seeks to build on its **healthcare industry strategy**. It will seek to "influence health insurance industry policy" by continuing to serve on the Regence Behavioral Health Advisory committee and meet yearly with the health insurance companies and the state Insurance Commissioner.

Building a **public relations strategy** is another aim. The Board has set its sites on developing a public relations plan, a press kit, writing op-ed pieces, and cultivating relationships with key media people.

The Coalition will continue its **business strategy** of educating purchasers of mental health insurance "about the importance of equitable, quality mental health care." It hopes to conduct an annual member survey to inform businesses of their health plan's performance, build its speakers bureau to give talks at business organizations, develop relationships with insurance brokers, and discuss mental health benefits with targeted business groups.

*Vision & Mission continued on p.4*

Finally, the Coalition will gear up its **member strategy** of increasing its membership from all-professional disciplines and consumers. Specifically, it hopes to send member recruitment mailings, advertise in professional newsletters, recruit members at professional trainings, meet with student groups, and expand its volunteer base.

Members seemed impressed with the ambitiousness of the plan. Clearly the Board cannot accomplish these goals by itself. It seeks members to help with specific time limited projects. It also invites members to serve on the Board as the Coalition enters a busy and exciting era.

### **MH PAC QUESTIONS THE CANDIDATES**

The MH-PAC earlier this year submitted a list of questions to candidates running for the state legislature in the primary and then the general elections. Responses to these questions along with phone calls and meetings formed the basis for endorsements.

1. Currently mental health services are covered at levels lower than medical services with regard to co-pays, lifetime limits, established diagnostic categories, etc. Do you support putting mental health coverage at parity with medical coverage? Do you think mental health parity should be mandated for businesses with 50 employees or more?

2. There have been some problems in the adjudication of complaints using the current system. The Department of Health sponsored several bills this year that would have turned the oversight of licensed mental health professions by their respective Boards and Commissions over to the Secretary of Health. What is the best way to address these problems, given the joint responsibilities of the professions and the Department?

3. Registered Counselors are not required to have any training in the field of mental health, or any other field related to health care. In fact, a Registered Counselor was found guilty of giving flu shots this past December. Licensed mental health professionals are required to have 3-5 years of post-graduate mental health supervision and experience to become licensed. Washington is the only state that allows ANYONE to become a Registered Counselor by paying \$40 and taking a 4-hour HIV/AIDS course. Given the problems with this category, would you support deregulation of Registered Counselors?

4. Communications between therapist and client are extremely sensitive and clients are unlikely to be honest about their problems unless they have true privacy. Currently there are many loopholes in Washington's confidentiality law which severely limit the right of mental health patients to privacy, including subpoenaed records for civil lawsuits. Would you support stronger privacy standards for patient-therapist mental health communications in Washington?

## Mental Health PAC 2004 Endorsements:

MH-PAC has endorsed many candidates in the current elections. All these candidates support mental health parity, privacy of mental health records, adequate training of mental health professionals, and involvement of professionals in the adjudication of complaints. About 75% of PAC supported candidates won their races.

### The MH-PAC Board

Sal Ziz, LICSW, Chair

Robin Westby, LICSW,  
Treasurer

Laura Groshong, LICSW

Raelene Gold, MD

Kathy Ringwood, LICSW

Sue Wiedenfeld, Ph.D.

Neil Smith, Ph.D.

**CANDIDATES ENDORSED  
BY MH-PAC FOR THE  
GENERAL ELECTION,  
November 2, 2004**  
[\* = Incumbent,  
D=Democrat  
R = Republican  
XX = Legislative District]

**Governor:** Christine Gregoire

### Senate (11 Endorsed)

\*Rosemary MacAuliffe (D-1)

Tim Hattenberg (D-4)

Kathy Huckabay (D-5)

Laurie Dolan (D-6)

Dave Seabrook (D-18)

Phil Rockefeller (D-23)

\*Jim Kastama (D-25)

Helen McGovern (D-28)

\*Jean Berkey (D-38)

Brian Weinstein (D-41)

Craig Pridemore (D-49)

### House (38 Endorsed)

\*Al O'Brien (D-1)

Tom Campbell (R-2)

James Peck (D-4)

Barb DeMichele (D-5)

Jeff Griffin (D-5)

\*Don Barlow (D-6)

Eileen Macoll (D-9)

Nancy Conard (D-10)

Deb Wallace (D-17)

\*Brian Sullivan (D-21)

Sherry Appleton (D-23)

\*Dawn Morrell (D-25)

\*Pat Lantz (D-26)

Derek Kilmer (D-26)

\*Mark Miloscia (D-30)

Joe Henry (D-30)

\*Ruth Kagi (D-32)

\*Maralyn Chase (D-32)

\*Shay Schual-Berke (D-33)

\*Eileen Cody (D-34)

\*Joe McDermott (D-34)

\*Kathy Haigh (D-35)

\*Mary Lou Dickerson (D-36)

\*Helen Sommers (D-36)

\*Eric Pettigrew (D-37)

\*Sharon Tomiko-Santos  
(D-37)

David Simpson (D-38)

\*John McCoy (D-38)

\*Judy Clibborn (D-41)

\*Hans Dunshee (D-44)

\*Jon Lovick (D-44)

Larry Springer (D-45)

\*Jim McIntyre (D-46)

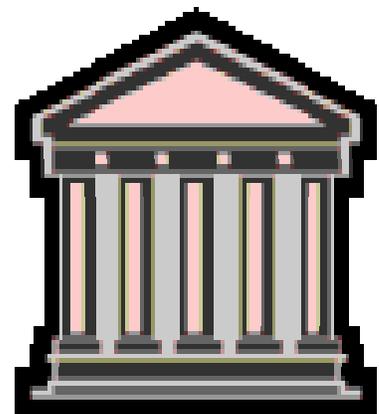
\*Geoff Simpson (D-47)

Pat Sullivan (D-47)

\*Ross Hunter (D-48)

Debi Golden (D-48)

\*Bill Fromhold (D-49)



**The Coalition** of Mental Health  
Professionals and Consumers  
PO Box 30087  
Seattle, WA 98113-2087

**2004 MEMBER DUES NOW DUE  
THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT  
FORGOTTEN ?? IT'S NOT TOO LATE !!**

Join or Renew Your Commitment to Protect Quality Mental Health Care

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

(Check here if you do not want to be listed in Coalition Directory: \_\_\_\_\_)

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ (For Coalition use only: Get breaking professional developments and legislative alerts) (Check here if you do NOT want E-mail listed in directory: \_\_\_\_\_)

Member: \$65 \_\_\_ \$110 \_\_\_ Willing to help with specific tasks (mailings, phone work): YES \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \$15

Consumer: Free Organization: \$124