

# The Pipeline

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Fall 2004

## Current & Upcoming Events

Georgia Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services Conference, Jekyll Oceanfront Resort Jekyll Island, GA  
October 6-8, 2004

Mental Health Awareness Candle Light Ceremony  
The Carter Center  
Circle of Flags  
7:00pm-9:00pm  
October 10, 2004

Alternatives 2004  
Marriott City Center Hotel  
Denver, CO  
October 13-17, 2004

Peer Support Institute  
Epworth by the Sea  
St. Simons Island, GA  
October 26-28, 2004

National Mental Health Association of Georgia  
Open House/ Holiday Sale  
100 Edgewood Avenue,  
Suite 502  
Atlanta, GA  
December 3, 2004

Certified Peer Specialist Training  
Epworth by the Sea  
St. Simons Island, GA  
December 6-10 (Part 1)  
December 13-17 (Part 2)

## 13th ANNUAL SUMMER CONFERENCE "SUPPORTING RECOVERY THROUGH BEST PRACTICES"

# A BIG SUCCESS

### !!!



Over 500 Consumers Attended Summer Conference

Every year we look forward to the opportunity to gather together, learn and share at St. Simon's Island. Despite the rain, almost everyone stayed in good spirits and enjoyed the Conference. Our Keynote Speaker, Dan Fisher, was exceptional. His talk, "Implementing the President's New Freedom Commission Recommendations" was dynamic, informative and inspirational. Although several of the workshops were filled past capacity, the attendees had few complaints. The Art Show was particularly impressive. The Talent Show was one of the best ever. The comradery was wonderful, and I met a ton of wonderful folks. Thanks to all of the over 500 people who made this event the success it was.

## 5 Priorities for GMHCN

As usual, at this conference, consumers identified **5 priorities** for GMHCN to work on during the coming year. In order, they are: **Peer Support Services, Jobs, Transportation, Education/GED/Training and Increased Wages for peer workers.**

## MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS- INVEST IN THE WHOLE PERSON

*“You have to have confidence in your ability, and then  
be tough enough to follow through.”*  
\_\_Rosalynn Carter

## Free Prescriptions for the Uninsured

A new pilot program is being offered in Georgia, Wisconsin and New Mexico. The Partnership for Prescription Assistance offers prescription medicines to treat asthma, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, HIV/AIDS, depression, seizures, heart disease, arthritis, skin conditions, thyroid disease, high cholesterol and other diseases. The program urges people who have trouble affording their medications to **call 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669)** or visit their website, [www.pparx.org](http://www.pparx.org), to guide them through the application process.

## POETRY CORNER

### To Find Myself by Rosa Lee

Sometimes I feel like a whisper in the wind.  
Whatever happened to that bright-eyed girl;  
Where has she been?  
How I long for that energy, that enthusiasm;  
What used to be,  
Finding oneself indeed.  
I know that I am older now;  
A better one will appear somehow,  
In time, with a little work.  
I know my hopes; I have my dreams,  
Although life is not what it seems.  
To find myself, I'll have to go inside,  
Hoping mental illness hasn't taken me aside.  
I'll find myself and then I'll know,  
Life is a challenge I hope to win,  
and so it goes.  
Amen

# A Word About Recovery

Advance Psychiatric Directives (also known as Psychiatric Advance Directives) are instructions about how you wish to be treated in a psychiatric crisis. GMHCN takes a strong position that consumers deserve the right to determine their treatment preferences. Consumers can take more responsibility for their own treatment by exercising "Choice and Voice". Advance Psychiatric Directives allow the consumer to make treatment choices when they are not in crisis and express these clearly so that their wishes may be carried out if they are hospitalized or need emergency care. It is important that "the system" knows and honors what works for each individual.

Current Georgia law recognizes a "Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care". Anyone can file a document giving another individual the right to make Health and Mental Health Care decisions and speak for them when they are not able. As in "Living Wills", you must file a notarized form to assign this power. We recommend that you keep a copy readily available and give one to the "agent" you assign. Some give copies to their health care and/or mental health providers and to hospitals or institutions that may care for them in crisis. In some cases, a psychiatrist may overrule the decisions of your agent, so I recommend writing a crisis plan in addition, to give to your doctors, Peer Specialists and/or mental health professionals. This type of advance planning document is an Advance Psychiatric Directive. It does not guarantee your wishes will be followed, as it still may be overruled by a psychiatrist; but it documents your wishes and increases your chances of getting the treatment you want.

A good example of an Advance Directive is the WRAP Crisis Plan. Certified Peer Specialists are trained to help you develop one according to your individual needs and wishes. The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network would like to see the WRAP Crisis Plan legally recognized as an Advance Psychiatric Directive, so that your wishes may be honored when you are less able to make decisions about your care. We would like to actively work with other advocacy groups and individuals to educate the legislature and give your choices the respect they deserve.

Randy Tucker, Pipeline Editor

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## “One hundred years ago we had silence, then we had a whisper; now we have a voice.”

One of the most exciting parts of the 2004 Summer Conference was the opportunity to express views, ask questions and make suggestions to the Governor’s Advisory Council for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse. Some of these (not necessarily the views of GMHCN) were:

“When you cut funding for Medicaid, you are cutting our food, transportation, treatment and housing. You tell us to take action. Why don’t YOU take action?” “More beds are needed, more immediate response for treatment.”

Q: “Why is there such poor funding for affordable housing? Why a 5 year waiting list? Why not in every county?”

A: The division is partnering with the Bureau of Community Affairs. There will be special vouchers (200) for Section 8 housing (for people with disabilities).”

Q: “Why is there no Medicaid funding for PTSD or abuse victims/ trauma sufferers?”

A: “District Attorneys have state funds set aside for CrimeVictims.”

A: “Medicaid doesn’t recognize PTSD/Abuse as a mental illness, but depression, anxiety disorder is.”

“Pharmaceutical assistance is being cut. Even expensive medication costs far less than hospitalization.” “Doctors should decide which medications should be used, not legislators or managed care.”

Q: “Why are we sent to Jail when we hear voices, etc? How do we get better services?”

A: “We know it’s a problem and we’re working on it. Jail is not a desired option.”

A: “I suggest mental health courts to sort out mental health and criminal issues.”

A: “Hospitals, Sheriffs and Legislatures are now talking.”

“We are handcuffed and locked up because of anger problems, medical compliance problems. We are put in inappropriate facilities. We need more funds to keep Mental Health facilities open, more hotlines, crisis services and peer support.” “Coming out of jail, there are no support services or pre-release planning.”

Q: “How do we stop our children from being taken from us because of our mental illnesses?”

A: “Get on TV, radio, etc. and express your passion.”

Q: “Then our children, teachers and employers will label us and treat us worse.”

A: “You just can’t do it by yourself.”

“There are abuses and lack of treatment in inappropriate jail placements. There is no advocacy or peer specialists in Jails. Why not?” “Why are our voting rights, etc. taken from us because of federal charges related to our mental illnesses?” “There are abuses in Foster Care. We are prevented from effectively advocating for our children in placement.”

Q: “What do you do when your Senators and Congressmen don’t respond to you?”

A: “Vote them out. Get others to vote them out.”

“We have to go to the emergency room before being able to get crisis services. This is likely go get us locked up.”

Q: “Transportation services treat us like cattle. The food in group homes is worse than jail.”

A: “Call the Office of Regulatory Services and the Regional Board. Then follow up.”

“Transportation people are arrogant. They won’t show willingness to work with us or give us transportation when we need it. They don’t understand the concept of having 2 medical needs in one day.” “People label us—even social workers. We hear them say ‘they’re just one of that crazy bunch.’” “If lottery money is for education, why not use it for educating people about mental illness?” “Why aren’t teachers educated more about Mental Health Problems?” “We need peer support in high schools to teach kids how to do it. Could a program be initiated to try it?” “How about Public Service Announcements about successful consumers who have recovered? Couldn’t the State do this economically?” “Education needs (particularly higher education) are not being met in the community.”

Q: “Adult Education was taken out of the Community Service Boards. Why?”

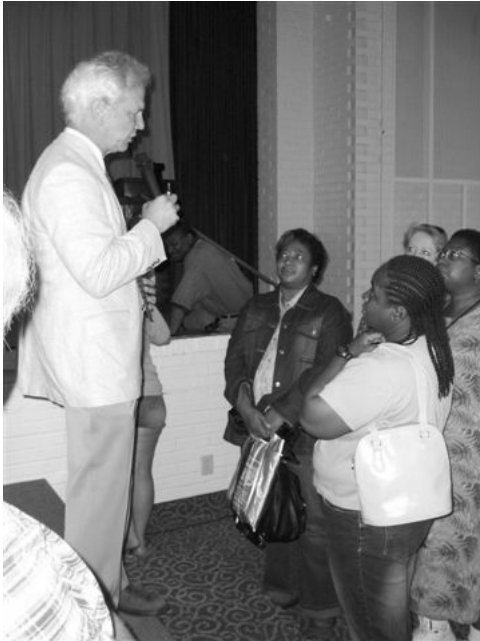
A: “If a volunteer comes into the center, it can be billed. It is not a Clinic Service.”

“We need more focus on developing meaningful jobs for consumers who are successful in coping with their mental illnesses.” “Job training for people with Mental Illness seem to focus on janitors and dishwashers. This is not very life empowering. Shouldn’t there be more support for good jobs? “Why do peer support services have such a low reimbursement rate? We are hard workers.”

**How do you think Georgia is doing in regards to Mental Health and Addictive Diseases? You have a voice. Write or Email us at [office@gmhc](mailto:office@gmhc) and we’ll help you get your comments and questions to the appropriate individuals.**

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Keynote Speaker, Dan Fisher, answers questions  
from Consumers

## Rene Kemp gives up Re- election Bid for State Senate



(Awardee Rene Kemp speaks to Consumers at Conference)  
Rene Kemp, a longtime supporter of Mental Health initiatives, will be stepping down from office in January, 2005. Citing health reasons, he has decided not to run for a seat in the upcoming term. He served in the Georgia House from 1977 to 1982 and was elected to the Senate in 1992. Senator Kemp has been known as a champion of Mental Health issues and spoke out last year to allow physicians to prescribe the drugs of their choice to persons with mental illness, rather than drugs on the Medicaid preferred drug list. This measure was not heard due to early adjournment of the Senate last year, much to his chagrin. He serves on the Governor's Advisory Council for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse and has been a dynamic speaker on Mental Health reform. Last year, Senator Kemp pushed through important legislation to prohibit the sale of children by their parents. He will be sorely missed.

# JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN), a mental health advocacy organization, seeks former or present recipient of mental health services to serve as full-time project director for the GMHCN Self Directed Recovery Project (SDRP). The position will require managing the overall operations of the SDRP under the supervision of the Executive Director of the GMHCN. The applicant should have experience in Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), advanced experiential knowledge about recovery and supporting others in the recovery process, advanced training skills, own transportation and the ability to travel statewide. Strong written, verbal and computer skills required. Peer Specialist certification desired. Salary depends on experience. Please send letter of interest and resume to GMHCN, 246 Sycamore St., Suite 160, Decatur, GA 30030 by October 29, 2004.

## Please Send Us Your E-mail Address!

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network now has the capability to send to you by e-mail our quarterly newsletter. But we need to know who you are! Send an email to [office@gmhc.org](mailto:office@gmhc.org) and request your e-mail address be added to our list. You will receive the latest editions of The Pipeline to archive, print or send to your friends! You'll be glad you did.