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Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital Receives Consultation Report

Carson City, NV - The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) today responded to the release of the recommendation report produced by hospital consultants Dr. Ken Appelbaum and Dr. Joel Dvoskin regarding operations at Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (SNAMHS) Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital.

“We appreciate the time and effort Dr. Appelbaum and Dr. Dvoskin gave to thoroughly review and analyze Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital,” said Mike Willden, DHHS Director. “The doctors’ positive findings and meaningful recommendations will help us strengthen the services we provide and help us improve mental health programs within our state. Moving forward, I believe we will have a much stronger organization to help us provide greater care to those we serve.”

To gather their findings, Dr. Appelbaum and Dr. Dvoskin spent a week on-site at SNAMHS and conducted an in-depth review of policies and practices with full access to the facility. , have experience working with dozens of other mental health facilities across the country.

Appelbaum and Dvoskin’s findings identified many of the same areas DHHS had already recognized as areas for improvement. As a result, SNAMHS has already taken corrective action on a number of the recommendations and will implement the remaining recommendations outlined in the report.

Additionally, the state has taken action to improve services and has proposed more than \$16 million to fund mental health programs and initiatives including an innovative home visiting program, community based-outpatient mental health services, additional long-term care beds at SNAMHS, and a housing assistance program for those with mental illness. These recommendations have largely been approved by the Legislative Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means committees.

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Background

We appreciate the time and effort hospital consultants Dr. Ken Appelbaum and Dr. Joel Dvoskin gave to thoroughly review and analyze Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (SNAMHS) Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital. The doctors' positive findings and meaningful recommendations will not only help us strengthen the services we provide, but will also help us improve mental health program within our state. Their findings identified many of the same areas we had already believed needed attention and consequently SNAMHS has already taken corrective action on a number of these recommendations. However, SNAMHS will work to improve its facility and is dedicated to implementing all the recommendations outlined in the report.

To gather their findings, Dr. Appelbaum and Dr. Dvoskin spent a week on-site at SNAMHS and conducted an in-depth review of policies and practices. They observed and talked to staff and clients alike during all hours of the day and night. They had full access to the entire facility – they went where they wanted to go, looked at what they wanted to see, and talked to whomever they wanted to learn from. The consultants have worked with dozens of other mental health facilities across the country and were able to bring a great depth of knowledge and insight to their recommendations on how we can structure an optimal mental health facility.

In addition to the recent review from the consultants, SNAMHS has also received several other reviews within the last few months from licensing and regulatory agencies to include Nevada Health Care Quality and Compliance, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and The Joint Commission (TJC). We have welcomed and embraced these opportunities for review, critique and recommendations and have already implemented a number of corrective actions.

Some of the already publicized changes that have occurred are to the Client Transportation Back to Home Communities policy which now requires additional medical staff and administrator approval for all requests for out-of-state travel, in addition, the client must be accompanied on the trip by a designated chaperone.

Other changes already underway include initiating discharge planning at the time of admission; conducting daily treatment groups and sessions by a pharmacist, psychologist, social worker, nurse, mental health technician, and peers; forming robust client-centered treatment teams; restructuring the documentation process; and increasing staff opportunities to participate in a variety of quality improvement projects.

The Governor has already taken action to improve services and has put forward over \$16 million budget recommendations to fund mental health programs and initiatives such as an innovative home visiting program, community based-outpatient mental health services, additional long-term

care beds at SNAMHS, and a housing assistance program for those with mental illness re-entry the community from the correctional facility. These recommendations have largely been approved by the Legislative Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means committees.

Link to Consultation Report