



**Summary Report on the Role of Clubhouses in a Recovery Oriented System of Care  
For Presentation to the DMHAS State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
North Central Regional Mental Health Board**

**December 15, 2010**

*Members of North Central Regional Mental Health Board wish to thank its six Catchment Area Councils, the Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) in Region IV, agencies providing clubhouse and resource center services, their staff, and persons in recovery who participated in the discussions held during this review. We hope that all the participants see this report as their opportunity to convey to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services their perceptions and recommendations.*

In FY 2010 North Central Regional Mental Health Board (NCRMHB) conducted a review and held Catchment Area Council (CAC) discussions in order to gain a picture of how clubhouses and resource centers operate in Region IV, the role they play in recovery, and the challenges and obstacles they face. The following organizations participated in the review via a pre-site questionnaire, site visits, and focus groups with administration, staff, and persons in recovery during April and May 2010:

- CA 15 We Can, Genesis Center of Community Health Resources (CHR)
- CA 16 Common Ground, InterCommunity, Inc.
- CA 17 Second Wind, North Central Counseling Services of CHR
- CA 18 Phoenix Club, Chrysalis Center
- CA 19 Team Time, Community Mental Health Affiliates (CMHA)
- CA 23 Recovery and Empowerment Center (REC), Chrysalis Center
- CA 23 Peer Support and Recovery Resource Center, Capitol Region Mental Health Center

A total of 21 NCRMHB volunteers participated in site visits and focus groups as review panelists. Review panels were comprised of NCRMHB Review and Evaluation Committee and CAC member volunteers and included persons in recovery, family members, providers, and concerned citizens. A majority of panel members (58%) were persons in recovery or family members. In addition 11 CAC members chose to participate as focus group participants at their clubhouse reviews. A total of 120 clubhouse members participated in focus group discussions.

The full 129 page report, "The Role of Clubhouses in a Recovery Oriented System of Care," provides valuable information from clubhouse members, staff, and administrators about the value of clubhouses; the strengths, activities and accomplishments of individual clubhouses; the review team's findings and recommendations for each clubhouse and the system as a whole; and actions taken or planned by each agency in response to those recommendations. A brief summary of the full report\* is provided below.

***What is Working Well: Notable strengths of Region IV Clubhouses***

- Strong evidence of leadership, esteem-building and skill building activities, promotion of wellness and creative endeavors, continuing efforts to improve programs, and a fervent dedication to support recovery.

\*A description of each organization's activities and accomplishments, our findings, and recommendations, and their responses are found in Appendix A of the full report, "Report on the Role of Clubhouses in a Recovery Oriented System of Care." Please contact Danielle Herbert at 860-667-6388 [dherbert@ncrmhb.org](mailto:dherbert@ncrmhb.org) to obtain a copy of the report.

- Strong testimony from clubhouse members about the clubhouse as a lifeline and a launching pad, a significant factor for promoting recovery, gaining skills, strengthening relationships, and socializing
- Creative efforts to address barriers, i.e. stigma, transportation, and funding that hinder access to involvement in clubhouses and other rehabilitative activities.
- Dedication to the challenge of addressing the needs of members with diverse levels of need and different preferences, ages (including young adults), and cultures.

***What is Needed: Recommendations for DMHAS***

**Policy and Standards:** Provide additional clarification about DMHAS's expectations for clubhouses and their role in a recovery focused service system, including the value DMHAS places on member governance vs. structured rehabilitation programming. Ensure that outcome standards and measurement system requirements for clubhouses are consistent with the level of member governance desired and allow for variation among clubhouses in response to the needs and interests of their members.

**Funding:** Continue to provide adequate funding for clubhouses. Address funding, transportation, and policy issues that lead to inequities with regard to access to clubhouses within and across catchment areas especially as they relate to Catchment Area 18 (West Hartford and Farmington Valley).

***What is Needed: Recommendations for Providers***

**Variation and Response to Diverse Needs:** Each organization must work to achieve a balance among the interests of at least three stakeholders in order to maintain its uniqueness and ensure that the clubhouse continues to thrive in these difficult economic times: 1) what people in recovery desire from the program, 2) standards set forth by DMHAS and what DMHAS is willing to pay for, and 3) what each LMHA is able to provide within its resources and other service demands and priorities in the catchment area. It is important to the agencies, clubhouse staff and members that the structure and emphasis of the program be clearly defined.

**Member Governance:** Continue to examine ways to increase member involvement and leadership as a powerful mechanism for promoting members' recovery.

**Community Integration:** Develop resources and opportunities for greater community involvement for members.

**Skill Building and Training Opportunities:** Ensure that adequate support for structured learning within the clubhouse and educational pursuits outside the DMHAS system are encouraged and available.

**Employment:** Define each clubhouse's role and means for promoting and supporting employment in response to the needs and interest of its members. Ensure clubhouse emphasis is aligned with DMHAS' intent and takes full advantage of the professional expertise available throughout the LMHA and community for this purpose.

**Age-Appropriate Activities for Young Adults:** Improve and expand upon age appropriate activities as needed and desired by young adults.

**Diversity:** Enhance cultural competence in all clubhouse programs.

**Support for Families:** Recognize and support the needs of members who wish to develop, maintain, or improve family relationships and other natural supports in their community. Information available through the NCRMHB Family Involvement Workgroup and clubhouses that are running successful family support groups may be a source of guidance in this area.

***What are the Outcomes: Notable Improvements***

Actions taken or planned by individual clubhouses were shared with their respective Catchment Area Councils (CACs) throughout the fall 2010. The review team is excited that our report has already had an impact as we are aware of changes and improvements that have occurred since our review team visits. Several clubhouses credited the review process for exposing them to activities and accomplishments in their sister programs that they could replicate for their own program improvement.

Two clubhouses are established in new facilities more conducive to robust rehabilitation programming.

Two clubhouses have strengthened their member governance structure and given members decision-making authority over a portion of the clubhouse budget.

Three clubhouses have renewed focus on leadership development in order to replenish clubhouse leadership.

One clubhouse expanded programming to include activities in a neighboring community.

All of the clubhouses have developed and/or strengthened specialized activities for young adults.

Two clubhouses invite member participation as a point of entry into the service system.

Collaborative arrangements have occurred between several of the clubhouses to share resources and activities.

Increased use of WRAP, Recovery University, Young Adult Super Advocacy, and Keep the Promise classes to augment the programming of all the clubhouses.

***What are the Next Steps***

NCRMHB will continue to monitor and encourage progress through CAC discussions throughout 2010-2011. We hope that these findings and recommendations will stimulate further discussions among clubhouses, between clubhouses and other service components, and with DMHAS, and that these recommendations further result in improvements in services for people in recovery from mental illness.