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July 22, 2019

Mark W. Binkley, Interim Director
South Carolina Department of Mental Health
Post Office Box 485
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Director Binkley:

On behalf of the Healthcare and Regulatory Subcommittee, thank you, and your staff for your recent presentation to the subcommittee relating to the Department of Mental Health's budget and medical services. As a follow-up to the meeting, please respond to the following:

Budget and Expenditures

- Provide DMH personnel expenditures, inclusive of contract personnel. Refer to slide 5 of the July 8, 2019, budget presentation.
- Provide the personnel and operating expenditure charts on slide 5, shading the portion of each bar attributable to one-time funds.

Billing and Collections

- How many patients opt to pay by credit card upon leaving a facility?
- What portion of total collections are paid by credit card?
- How do agency staff notify patients of payment plan options? Is it a standardized type of notification?
- What are the mean and median costs to process a single bill? What goes into determining that cost?
- What are the mean and median lengths of time to collect payment from each payor source listed on slide 25?

Telepsychiatry

- Please provide citations to research regarding patient perception and reception of telehealth opportunities.
- Expand on the telepsychiatry performance measures, particularly any outcome data, presented in the program evaluation report.

Information Technology (IT)

- What is the strategic plan for IT?
- How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the area? What are the agency's indicators of effectiveness?
- Does the agency utilize external verification of IT security (i.e., practice hacks)?

HomeShare

- What are typical complaints for HomeShare providers/patients?
- What is the screening process for participation in the program?
- Have there been any documented abuse on patient or assaults on clients?

Community Mental Health Services

- In community mental health services, does the intake include a question on how a person learned about the services?
- Provide a list of county contributions to community mental health center operations. If there are in-kind contributions that can be quantitatively valued, please provide those.

Personnel

- What is the agency's process for identifying and hiring employees? Does this process differ for any classification of employees?
- How are education and experience criteria developed for agency leadership positions?
- Is the supervision structure for licensed staff (i.e., psychiatrists, physicians, licensed mental health professionals) appropriate?

Patient Care

- Do medical professionals in administrative positions have the opportunity to get work with patients in order to maintain their skills?
- What drug classes are being prescribed and to what percentage of the DMH population?
- How are systemic patient care issues reported to the commission?

Feedback

- What mechanisms are in place for employees to provide feedback to agency leadership and the commission?
- What mechanisms are in place for members of the public to provide feedback to agency leadership and the commission?
- What mechanisms are in place for DMH vendors to provide feedback to agency leadership and the commission?

Please respond to these and outstanding questions from the February 5, April 21, and May 10, 2019, letters by August 6, 2019. If these questions would yield responses that are not an accurate reflection of the agency or if additional time is needed to respond, please contact Committee staff. The Subcommittee looks forward to our next meeting on July 23, 2019. Thank you for your service to the citizens of South Carolina and for your continued cooperation with the legislative oversight process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay West". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the word "West".

Jay West
Subcommittee Chair

cc: The Honorable Robert L. Ridgeway, III
The Honorable Bill Taylor
The Honorable Chris Wooten