

# The Demo-Chat 2004

Volume 2, Issue 12 of the 33<sup>rd</sup> District Democrats Newsletter.

Jack Arends, Editor

December 2004

## 33<sup>rd</sup> LD DEMOCRATS

### Executive Board for 2003-04 (\*elected)

|                  |                         |                     |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Chair*:</b>   | <b>Tara Jo Heinecke</b> | <b>206-870-8819</b> |
| Vice-Chair*:     | Tim Clark               | 253-854-1895        |
| Secretary*:      | Tina Shamseldin         | 206-409-3038        |
| Treasurer*:      | Cass Prindle            | 360-280-6661        |
| WSDCC Reps*:     | Jo Ladd Clark           | 253-854-1895        |
|                  | Aaron Ernst             | 206-579-6875        |
| KCDCC Reps*:     | Elizabeth Brant         | 206-870-1759        |
|                  | Chris Elwell            | 206-784-8206        |
| KCDCC Alts*:     | Meenakshi Sharma        | 206-878-4988        |
|                  | Clark Dodge             | 206-244-9849        |
| KCDCC LAC Reps*: | Barbara Fithian         | 206-242-5055        |
|                  | Bob Fithian             | 206-242-5055        |
| KCDCC LAC Alt*:  | Dan Caldwell            | 206-824-0736        |
| Parliamentarian: | Bob Stephens            | 206-824-2699        |
| Registrar:       | Jean Hueston            | 206-878-8706        |
| Admin. Officer:  | Diane Odegard           | 206-870-7090        |
| Sgt.-at-Arms:    | Jim Fossos              | 206-824-8537        |
| KCYD Reps:       | Audry Cohen             | 206-212-0769        |
|                  | Shaun Miller            | 253-872-9973        |



These Democrats represent the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative District in Olympia. Representative Shay Schual-Berke, Senator Karen Keiser, and Representative Dave Uptegrove are there to serve you. Please contact them if you have an inquiry.

|                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Senator Karen Keiser   | 360-786-7664/ FAX 360-786-1999 |
| Rep. Shay Schual-Berke | 360-786-7834/ FAX 360-786-7317 |
| Rep. Dave Uptegrove    | 360-786-7868/ FAX 360-786-7317 |
| Legislative Hotline    | 1-800-562-6000                 |

## Re-Organization Set for Dec. 13; Holiday Party Set for Dec. 19

The 33<sup>rd</sup> District Democrats will reorganize for the 2005-2006 biennium at 7 p.m. Dec. 13, 2004, in the multipurpose room of Normandy Park Congregational Church. Precinct Committee Officers elected during the September primary election will be the only members eligible to vote on these officers (per state and county party rules):

- Chair;
- Vice chair;
- Secretary;
- Treasurer;
- State and county central committee representatives;
- State and county alternates; and
- County legislative action committee delegates and alternates.

State Rep. Shay Schual-Berke will host this year's potluck holiday party from 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 19, at her home, 604 SW 206th St., Normandy Park. For more information, visit the district web site:

<http://www.33rdDems.org>

## December Reorganization Meeting

**Monday, Dec. 13, 2004**

**Normandy Park Congregational Church**  
19247 First Avenue South, Normandy Park, Washington  
AGENDA

(Additions may be made to this agenda)

- 7 p.m. Call to order, election of chair  
7:15 p.m. Election of other officers, approval of Nov. minutes  
8:15 p.m. Post-election program      9 p.m. Adjourn

**General Membership Meeting**  
Minutes  
November 15, 2004

**Meeting Opening**

Chair Tara Jo Heinecke was ill and unable to attend. Vice Chair Tim Clark called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. After the flag salute, the agenda was reviewed and Jim Fossos moved to accept it; Ted Schwarz seconded and the motion carried.

Representatives Shay Schual-Berke and Dave Upthegrove did not attend tonight because they were attending a House Democratic Caucus meeting in Bremerton.

**Medicaid and Medicare Updates**

*Marilyn LaCelle, CEO of Valley Cities Counseling & Consultation (VCCC), made a presentation to the group concerning the "state" of mental health funding. She opened by sharing information about her agency.*

*"Our mission is to contribute to healthy and secure communities and quality of life in South King County through the development, promotion, and delivery of exemplary behavioral healthcare services and related human services. Valley Cities provides a full-range of mental health and substance abuse services to individuals of all ages and their families." [www.valleycities.com](http://www.valleycities.com)*

They employ more than 200 staff and have offices in Auburn, Kent, Federal Way and Seattle and served more than 12,000 individuals and families in 2003.

Marilyn gave an overview of the prevalence of mental illness in the population. More than 54 million Americans have a mental disorder in any given year, although fewer than 8 million seek treatment<sup>1</sup>. According to the President's New Freedom Report:

*"Mental illnesses rank first among illnesses that cause disability in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe<sup>2</sup>. This serious public health challenge is under-recognized as a public health burden. In addition, one of the most distressing and preventable consequences of undiagnosed, untreated, or under-treated mental illnesses is suicide. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently reported that suicide worldwide causes more deaths every year than homicide or war<sup>3</sup>.*  
<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/reports/Finalreport/FullReport.htm>

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<sup>1</sup> Surgeon General Report on Mental Illness (1999).  
[www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html)

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization (2001). *The World Health Report 2001 - Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization (2002). *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

### **Medicaid Issues in the Mental Health System:**

Our current community mental-health system in Washington State operates under a 1915b waiver (the type of waiver varies between states) and the dollars flow from the federal government to the state, where they are matched with local dollars (50/50 ratio). Our state has a decentralized system so the dollars are funneled from the State Mental Health Division to the counties or groups of counties called Regional Support Networks (RSN). The RSN then contracts with mental health agencies to provide services.

In the mid-1990s the RSN also became "Prepaid Health Plans" to manage health plans for persons on Medicaid with serious psychiatric disorders. The federal government benefits from the "capitating" Medicaid dollars as a cost-containment measure and the perceived benefits for our state was more local control on the types and intensity of services provided. In recent years, the Federal requirements placed on managed care entities as a result of the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997 have led to increased documentation of service hours that have decreased the amount of flexibility that was inherent in a capitated system.

As Prepaid Health Plans, RSNs authorize both inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care (excluding dollars from state hospitals) and are responsible for limiting their use of state hospital beds. If they exceed the contractual limits of state hospital beds they are heavily fined. Outpatient services include crisis services, case management, medications, counseling, residential and vocational services. The crisis services are available to all citizens, regardless of income. The goals of this new system include helping people remain and/or return to their communities and to live in the least restrictive settings possible. The system is moving toward a recovery model and has been directing more services and supports to help individuals pursue their goals such as vocational training and employment and living in apartment settings.

There is a current crisis situation in the public mental-health system stems from policy changes at the federal level from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)<sup>4</sup>. The changes:

- Historically the mental health system has used unspent Medicaid funds from the Prepaid Health Plan to serve non-Medicaid clients or to deliver services not covered by Medicaid. As of April 2004 CMS decided to no longer approve this arrangement and the mental health division along with the RSNs have had to review the service needs of non-Medicaid clients across the state in order to make the case for state funds to cover those needs. Persons may not be on Medicaid for a variety of reasons, such as: being homeless and not able to navigate the funding process, having a work history and a fixed disability income that is too high to qualify for Medicaid, being a non-documented immigrant; or just experiencing an initial break

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<sup>4</sup> The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) administers the Medicare program, and works in partnership with the States to administer Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and health insurance portability standards. CMS is responsible for the administrative simplification standards from the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and quality standards in health care facilities through its survey and certification activity. [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov)

and not having a lengthy history of mental illness. All of these individuals may not be able to access mental health services after January 2005, unless in crisis.

- CMS also will no longer fund group homes larger than 16 beds that provide intensive 24/7 services, because CMS views these as institutions, thereby disqualifying them for federal funds.
- CMS also will no longer fund some innovative services that support recovery goals such as job readiness and vocational training, as well as paid peer positions.

CMS is currently auditing a number of RSNs throughout the state and may withhold dollars in the next resource allocation. It is estimated that this "withholding" may exceed \$45 million.

### **Medicare Issues in the Mental Health System:**

Medicare, the nation's largest health insurance program, covers nearly 40 million Americans. Enacted in 1965, the program provides health insurance to people age 65 and over, those who have permanent kidney failure, and certain individuals under 65 with disabilities<sup>5</sup>.

In the current system, Medicare beneficiaries who have low incomes and limited resources may receive help paying for their Medicare premiums and out-of-pocket medical expenses through Medicaid. There are various benefits available to "dual eligibles," about six million Medicare beneficiaries who are eligible for some type of Medicaid benefit. In recent legislation passed by Congress to cover Medicare prescription costs, persons who qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid will be moved from Medicaid medication coverage to this new plan. Many mental health providers are concerned that these individuals will have a difficult time covering the co-pay required in this system; it is unknown if the full range of psychiatric medications will be covered.

### **Medicaid and Medicare in the Community Health Clinics**

*Thomas Trompeter, CEO of Community Health Centers of King County*, spoke to the group on issues related to Medicaid and Medicare for individuals accessing medical services at their community health clinics. The community health-care clinics serve many individuals who are on the Basic Health Plan, Medicaid, Medicare and uninsured. They provide a safety net for community members who may have limited access to primary care and other medical services.

During the last 12 years, Community Health Centers of King County have found it increasingly difficult to cover their clinic costs with increased inflation and medical reimbursement staying the same and at times decreasing. With the federal and state budget deficits, there is a looming threat that further reductions may occur. In addition, the people they serve may face increased premiums and co-pays.

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<sup>5</sup> CMS Website

### **Senator Karen Keiser: Update**

Karen gave the group updates on what lies ahead for the next session. She said legislators are working on a "Fair Share Health Care" bill that would require all large employers, such as Wal-Mart, to provide health care or pay into the Basic Health Plan for their employees. Also, if Chris Gregoire becomes our next Governor, she has pledged to move our state to provide health care for all children.

### **Chair's Report**

Tim reminded the group that we will elect new officers at our next meeting **December 13**, a week earlier than usual because of the December 17 deadline for the legislative districts' Democrats to reorganize.



Only Precinct Committee Officers who were elected in the September primary will be able to vote, but any member of the 33<sup>rd</sup> District Democrats can seek office, even if not an elected PCO. Greg Rodriguez will chair the group during the voting process.

There had been some discussion at the Executive Board meeting about creating a Nominating Committee, but this did not move forward because the Board was concerned that it may appear as if it were pushing a blanket slate. Tim emphasized that it is important for persons who are voting members of the board to attend board meetings so there will be a quorum for voting on items.

### **Other Business**

- Shay has graciously offered her home for the 33<sup>rd</sup> District Democrats' Holiday Party again this year. The event is scheduled from **2-5 p.m. Sunday, December 19.**
- The raffle raised \$118. The group decided to donate it to the King County Democrats to help them cover their \$7,000 debt.
- The King County Democrats will reorganize December 4.
- The Washington State Democrats will hold their Holiday Party at the Westin Hotel on Sunday, December 5.

### **Membership Business**

Cass gave the treasurer's report, stating that as of Nov. 15 we have **\$1,210.57 in the non-exempt account and \$485.77 in the exempt account.** Representative Shay Schual-Berke returned the district's \$675 contribution to her campaign.

Jean Hueston gave the registrar's report and stated we had 53 voting members in attendance. Jean moved to accept these individuals as members: **Michael Miele, Chris Stevenson, and Barbara Stainman**; the motion was seconded by Elizabeth Brant, and was carried. Tim Clark then adjourned the meeting at *exactly* 9 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted, Tina Shamseldin, Secretary**

## **The Demo-Chat 2004**

33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative District Democrats

2035 S. 223<sup>rd</sup> Street

Des Moines, WA 98198

E-mail: [demochat@33rdDems.org](mailto:demochat@33rdDems.org)

Message board: [33rdDistrictDemocrats@yahoogleroups.com](mailto:33rdDistrictDemocrats@yahoogleroups.com)

Visit us on the World Wide Web:

<http://www.33rdDems.org>

### **RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**For more Democratic Party  
information, visit these web sites:**

<http://www.wa-democrats.org>

<http://www.kcdems.org>

**or call Tara Jo Heinecke, 206-870-8819**

### **Upcoming Events ...**

**Thursday, Dec. 9, 2004, 6:30 p.m.**

**33<sup>rd</sup> LD E-Board Meeting**

Carpenters Specialties Training Center

20424 72nd Avenue South, Kent

Information: Tara Jo Heinecke, 206-870-8819

**Monday, Dec. 13, 2004, 7 p.m.**

**33<sup>rd</sup> LD Reorganization Meeting**

Normandy Park Congregational Church

19247 First Avenue South, Normandy Park

Information: Tara Jo Heinecke, 206-870-8819

## **Save the Date:**

**2-5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 19: Holiday party at Shay Schual-Berke's home**