

Legislative and Policy Committee

Purpose and Membership

[Approved: January 2015]

The Committee is to serve as the focal point for coordination of mental health funding and policy recommendations for the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health (WCMH).

To accomplish this, the Committee will:

- Identify, engage and involve representatives from all major consumer, family and advocacy groups to be part of the committee.
- Strengthen relationship with legislators, state agencies and counties.
- Strengthen collaboration with relevant state councils.

Membership Rationale

Successful mental health legislative and policy advocacy requires the coordination of efforts across all major interest groups. When consumers, family members, advocates, providers and other interest groups (such as the counties and other disability groups) are not giving consistent messages to the members of the Legislature and state government, the likelihood for successful advocacy is greatly diminished. Therefore, participation in the Committee is structured to support this consensus and the coalition-building process. The Committee shall work with other committees of the WCMH to coordinate the WCMH's work on the funding and policy priorities.

Formal Members

The following comprise the formal (voting) members of the Committee:

WCMH Members: Members of the WCMH, including at least one Co-chairperson of the Committee. No more than three WCMH members may be members of the Committee unless they are also an organizational member.

Organizational Members: One member representing each of the following organizations (and nominated by that organization):

- Grassroots Empowerment Project
- NAMI-Wisconsin
- Mental Health America of Wisconsin
- Disability Rights Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Family Ties
- Wisconsin Counties Human Services Association
- Wisconsin Independent Living Network

Each organization is encouraged to nominate an alternate. Such alternate may only vote at L&P meeting when the organization's primary member is not present at such meeting.

Collaborating Members: Individuals may be appointed to represent other groups or organizations with whom the WCMH has or wishes to develop a collaborative relationship around mental health funding and policy. Such organizations may include, but are not limited to:

- Other state councils or committees (e.g., the State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, the Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities).
- Provider organizations.

At-Large Members: The at-large members should represent underrepresented or underserved groups such as:

- Older adult advocates.
- Persons who are Deaf
- Other persons with developmental, physical, sensory, substance use or other disabilities
- LGBTQIA communities
- People Living with HIV or AIDS
- Youth/Young Adults
- Racial and ethnic minorities

Other Participants: Other individuals may participate in the Committee, subject to the ruling of the Chairperson, but may not vote. These may include representatives of the public, legislative offices, state agencies or others.

Membership Considerations

The Committee membership shall not exceed 15 individuals. The membership structure is designed to maximize the likelihood that various constituencies within the mental health advocacy community are represented on the committee. As committee member selection proceeds, additional consideration should be given to ensuring geographical and ethnic diversity among the committee members and balancing the involvement of consumers, family members of children with SED and family members of adults with mental illness. Because organizational members are proposed by the organizations, the ability of the committee to achieve optimal balance in some of these areas may be constrained. The Committee shall seek out consumers and family members for membership to form a majority of the Committee.

Leadership

The WCMH Chairperson shall appoint a Chairperson, Co-chairpersons and/or Vice-Chairperson for the L&P Committee to work with staff and facilitate meetings. The Chairperson or one Co-chairperson must be a WCMH member. The Vice-chairperson or one Co-chairperson should not be a WCMH member.

Linkages

The Legislative and Policy Committee will actively work to link to other organizations with common agendas.