Youth Support Partner Programs

1) Youth Partners in NYC – Brian Lombrowski

- St. Luke's Waiver Program Youth Advocate - Ewelina Wiecek functions as the equivalent to the parent partner position within a Medicaid funded Waiver care coordination program. No certification required, although she did attend the Family Development Curriculum. She'll be attending the Youth Summit, so if you would like you might want to connect with her then.
- Staten Island Parent Resource Center Youth Advocate - Provides some level of peer support and youth group facilitation. She's not particularly involved in doing one-on-one work.
- Bronx Parent Resource Center/CCSI Youth Advocate - Provides a range of services including respite and one-on-one peer support through a family support wraparound process.
- Queens Parent Resource Center Youth Advocate - Mostly provides peer support through youth group facilitation.
- The Brooklyn Parent Resource Center has hired a youth advocate, who is fairly new, last time I spoke to her she was just getting used to the role.
- Furthermore, there will be nine "family resource centers" opening up that will replace the current parent resource centers. Each will be hiring a youth advocate. I expect the function of each of these positions will be different based on the center that they're based out of, and based on who their supervisor is. These family resource centers and the parent resource center positions listed above are not Medicaid reimbursable and are funded through the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- Additionally, we have several youth advocates that have been hired by some foster care agencies in New York City, but I don’t think they serve in a wraparound capacity. No youth partners exist yet that I know of on Long Island, although there will be three youth advocates hired within Family Resource Centers that are being developed by the Nassau County System of Care grant.

2) Answers to Questions about Youth Support for Wrap Around

Where is the position being developed and within what sort of program or agency/organization?

- We have a Youth Advisory Council that has developed a SPOA (Single Point of Access) Youth Advocate Project. Our council is very interested in youth-centered service planning. Our project has been integrated into our County’s SPOA process. Our SPOA meeting weekly and is a part of Chemung County Children’s Integrated Services which is a preventive county agency which is our Coordinated Children’s Services Initiative.
Is the youth support partner position specifically for wraparound (ie somewhat parallel to the parent partner position in wraparound that has been described), or is it a different sort of peer support position (if so, can you describe briefly what the role consists in)?

- The role consists of being a part of the SPOA Team: The Advocate meets with a youth before their SPOA meeting to help them prepare to participate and get to know their strength and needs, hopes and desires. They share this information with the SPOA Team. They then sit with the youth at their meeting and act as an advocate during the meeting. Helping their voice be heard.

Is it Medicaid reimbursable and/or how is the position funded?

- The agency is funded through state 65/35 funds. There is a recipient account with CCSI funds from which we pay a stipend to the advocate. It amounts to about 10 hours a week. We wish we had better funding for this.

Is there some sort of certification required?

- No. Youth learn to be peer advocates by reading materials, one-on-one instruction and watching and following an experienced advocate.

Please provide contact info for someone who knows about the program so NWI members can network with them

- Pat Breux, Youth Advisory Council Coordinator
  Chemung County Children’s Integrated Services
  414 Davis St., Elmira, NY 14901
  607-737-2052

More information about SPOA:
What is a SPOA Meeting?
Children or youth who have a serious emotional disturbance diagnosis and meet high risk criteria may be referred to SPOA (single point of access). SPOA is a meeting of service providers, the parent or caregiver and the child if appropriate, school and other providers who have been working with the child or youth. At the SPOA meeting the child/youth and family’s strengths and needs are discussed and a determination of appropriate services is made.

What are the advantages of having a SPOA youth advocate?

- Can discuss with you ahead of time the services that might be offered from SPOA
- Can help you participate in decisions about your care.
- Can provide support as someone who has had similar experiences.
- Can help you prepare and understand what will be going on in the meeting.

Do I have to attend my SPOA meeting?
No. SPOA meetings are a place where decisions are made about the mental health services you will be offered. Participating in decision about your mental health care is one way to take control of your life.
Do I have to accept services?
All services are voluntary and offered to you and your family free of charge.

What is a SPOA youth advocate?
A SPOA youth advocate is a young person who has had experiences in the mental health system of care and who has also had specialized training and experiences with advocacy skills. A SPOA advocate helps a young person prepare to participate in their SPOA meeting and provides support. SPOA youth advocates are held to the highest standards of confidentiality.

3) Youth Involvement Initiative

YOUTH POWER! and the NYS Office of Mental Health are currently engaged in a joint initiative to increase youth involvement on all levels of services.

Participating Agencies: Office of Mental Health and YOUTH POWER!

Actions/Timeline:
In an effort to increase youth participation in service planning, delivery, coordination and evaluation, YOUTH POWER! will be hiring Regional Youth Partners (RYP). In each of the five OMH regions (Western, Central, Hudson Valley, New York City and Long Island) we will be hiring one young adult with personal experience in receiving services from multiple state systems. This young adult will be charged with networking youth involvement on a regional level and assisting local youth peer support and advisory councils to develop, build advocacy skills and grow strong. The RYP will act as a facilitator, ensuring meaningful two-way communication between child-serving agencies and the young people using their services. Funding for this project begins in October 2009. YOUTH POWER! has sought out youth input to develop the job descriptions and will continue to build the foundation and framework for these positions until the funding begins.

Budget: $269,000 annualized

Expected Outcomes:
• Increased youth participation in service planning, delivery, coordination and evaluation
• Increased awareness of challenges young people with cross-systems needs face as adolescents and young adults
• Increased youth involvement in community councils/organizations

4) We have through the Dept of Human Services a Youth Advisory Board. This is where a group of youth currently involved in the system and/or in placement. They meet regularly and represent youth voice on many issues. They are not (at this point) doing direct individual supports for wraparound youth but we are looking at doing that in the near future. We have someone from the Youth Advisory Board attend our HB 1451 Interagency Oversight Voice to give the youth perspective in both administrative and program issues. I hope this is helpful.
For more information:
   Art Navalta
   HB 1451 Manager
   Wraparound Coach
   (719) 444-5703
   (719) 444-5597-Fax

5) The RTC Waiver is Maryland's 1915(c) Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility Demonstration Waiver. We have three services that are available to RTC Waiver Participants that are provided by family members and youth. The first is Caregiver Peer-to-Peer Support, which is based on Maryland's Family Support Partner model. The second is Youth Peer-to-Peer Support, which is designed to be complementary to the Family Support Partner in the Wraparound process. The third is Family and Youth Training, which is a training that is provided by a family member or youth.

The Youth Peer-to-Peer Support can, at this time, only be provided by an individual who is employed by a Family Support Organization. The position is Medicaid reimbursable for services rendered to an RTC Waiver Participant if it is in accordance with the requirements of the program and provided by a Medicaid-enrolled provider. At this time, certification is not required, but there are a series of requirements for the youth before they can provide peer-to-peer support.

Corresponding documents:
   • Overview of the 1915(c) Community Alternatives to Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities Demonstration Grant Waiver
   • RTC Waiver Overview
   • Caregiver Peer-to-Peer Support Overview
   • Youth Peer-to-Peer Support Overview
   • Family and Youth Training Overview
   • What is a Family Support Organization?
   • Training Requirements for Caregiver Peer-to-Peer Support, Youth Peer-to-Peer Support, and Family & Youth Training Providers.

Contact Deborah Harburger at dharburg@psych.umaryland.edu or 410-706-1868 for more information, or go online to our RTC Waiver website: www.medschool.umaryland.edu/innovations/RTC_Waiver.asp