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Community Counseling Center of Mercer County

2201 East State Street Hermitage, PA 16148

Toll Free: 1-866-853-7758

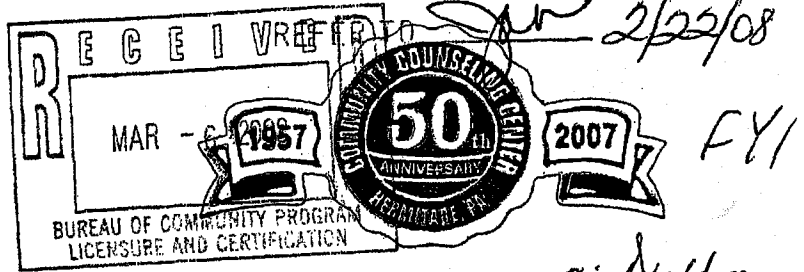
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- Family Based • Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services • School Based • Respite Care • Outpatient Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol
- Psychiatric Rehabilitation • Residential & Housing • West Central Center for the Deaf • Vocational & Employment Services

February 19, 2008

Calvin B. Johnson, M.D., Secretary
 Pennsylvania Department of Health
 8th Floor West Health and Welfare Building
 P.O. Box 90
 Harrisburg, PA 17108



Dear Secretary Johnson:

Community Counseling Center of Mercer County has been serving persons with Mental Illness, and Substance Abuse problems for over 50 years. As both a licensed Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic and Outpatient Drug & Alcohol Clinic, we have for a long period of time had concerns regarding the antiquated Drug & Alcohol Confidentiality Regulations. The regulations present the following problems to those in service for substance abuse problems and for those seeking service.

*c: Sutton
 Kogelman
 Mitchell
 BL*

*The federal regulations are more than sufficient. The current confidentiality law no longer achieves its intended purpose: To protect. In fact, we contend that the outdated laws hurt the client/family seeking treatment. No other state in the country has similar restrictions.

*It is hard for the client to understand that in many cases that, even with their support and informed consent, the current regulations do not allow the provider to share needed information.

*Individuals in the Drug and Alcohol service system often need help navigating other systems and applying for much needed benefits. The problems with 255.5(b) make it difficult to work with other important partners in the individual's recovery process such as the child welfare system, Social Security, and the criminal justice system.

*The 255.5(b) regulations make it difficult to get appropriate approvals/authorizations from insurance companies and managed care organizations for higher levels of care, continued care, and appropriate medications.

Your attention to this matter related to changing the Drug & Alcohol Confidentiality Regulations is appreciated.

Respectfully,

Angele Stamooolis

Angele Stamooolis
 Chief Executive Officer

AS/lc

cc: Estelle Richman

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An Affiliate of the UPMC Behavioral Health Network