

July 31, 2018

I am submitting my name for consideration as Co-Chair of the Illinois Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council (IMHPAC). My vision for this vital Council is to continue its very important work to improve mental health through prevention and to ensure access is available and appropriate to quality mental health services.

The Co-Chairs of the Council in my opinion need to lead the Council in evaluation of the mental health system for accessible and effective care. The Council should advocate for an accountable system of responsive services that are strength-based, recovery-oriented, culturally competent, and cost-effective. To achieve these ends, the Council should educate the general public, the mental health administration, the constituency, and the legislators.

The Illinois Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council is mandated to oversee the mental health block grant by advocating for children with serious emotional disturbances and adults with serious mental illness; to review and report on the public mental health system; participate in statewide planning, and to advise the mental health administration and Legislature on priority issues.

The Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council should provide public input into mental health policy development and planning and recommend the realignment of mental health program responsibility and funding. The Council is designed to be an appropriate structure for public input, planning, and evaluation of performance indicators for mental health programs.

Mental health is essential to personal well-being, family and interpersonal relationships, and the ability to contribute to community or society. As a Co-Chair of the Council I will give attention to ensuring services for individuals including new opportunities for access to and coverage for treatment and prevention services.

I believe my forty years of working with and for people with serious mental illness, both children and adults, have prepared me well for Co-Chair of the Illinois Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council.

Respectfully,

Mary Ann Abate MS LSW

