**Consumer Advisory Team (CAT)**

**Bylaws**

**Section 1 – Terms and Authority**

Definition of terms:

1. CAT – the Consumer Advisory Team of Region 6
2. BHAC – the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee of Region 6
3. Consumer Affairs – the Office of the Regional Consumer Specialist for Region 6
4. RCS – the Regional Consumer Specialist for Region 6

Authority:

1. The CAT is not a decision making body. Instead it is in place to advise the RCS as requested and contribute consumer input to Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare.
2. CAT decisions are non-binding.

**Section 2 – Functions**

CAT functions shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Offering advice and giving input in matters regarding Region 6 behavioral health system service provision or development, performance, and/or specific functions of the RCS.
2. Engaging the RCS in ongoing dialogue focused on members’ experiences, impressions, and expectations of the public behavioral health system.
3. Participating in events and activities sponsored by Consumer Affairs.
4. Providing consumer input regarding consumer related issues to the BHAC via the BHAC representative.

**Section 3 – Composition**

1. The CAT will strive to maintain a membership of at least six, but no more than 12 consumers and a maximum of one family members of a consumer.
2. The CAT will attempt to draw members from all 5 counties within the service area covered by Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare.
3. The CAT will represent a broad range of experiences through inclusion of members living with mental health challenges, substance abuse challenges, and co-occurring disorders, as well as certified peer support specialists.
   1. Long term membership goals will include recruitment of family members and youth consumers.
4. To be eligible for membership, a person must:
   1. Self-identify as a current or past consumer involved in the public mental health system in the Region 6 area, or as a family member of such a consumer.
   2. Currently reside in the Region 6 area.
   3. Good behavior is expected for continued membership. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to the following:

* bullying;
* emotional, psychological or physical violence or abuse;
* coercion, harassment and/or discrimination;
* aggressive/abusive behavior;
* unreasonable demands and undue persistence; and
* disruptive behavior

**Section 4 – Terms**

1. CAT shall have a maximum number of 12 members and recruitment of new members will continue until the maximum number has been met.
   1. There will be no term limits imposed upon members until such time as current membership reaches 12 for the first time.
   2. Once membership has reached 12, term limits will be determined by a group vote.
2. One CAT member will sit on the Region 6 Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC).
   1. BHAC membership is ultimately determined by the Region 6 Board of Governors.
3. To remain in good standing, CAT members are expected to attend a minimum of 50% of scheduled meetings annually.
4. The RCS retains authority to dismiss CAT members where good reason exists.

**Meetings and Votes**

1. Meetings will be open to the public and visitors will be given opportunity to speak, if desired.
   1. For the sake of expediency and continuity, public comment will be limited to three minutes per commenter.
2. An agenda will be prepared for each meeting by the RCS, and will be available to members at least one week before scheduled meetings.
3. A record of attendance will be kept for each meeting.
4. All CAT members in good standing will have the ability to cast a vote on issues before the group.
   1. The RCS sits as a non-voting member of the group.
5. Votes will be determined by voice count and decided by simple majority.
   1. In cases where a vote is tied, the RCS will cast a deciding vote.

**Schedule**

1. Meetings will be held monthly, but may be held more often as needed.
2. Meetings will be held at the Douglas County Health Centers, located at 4102 Woolworth Ave, Omaha, NE 68105
3. Alternatively, the RCS will strive to offer online access such as Webex.

**Expenses**

1. CAT members will be reimbursed for actual and necessary travel expenses related to CAT business. Reimbursement rates will be based on the current policies of the Region 6 Governing Board for expense reimbursement for agency employees.