

WORKING TOWARDS RESILIENCE & RECOVERY

For the past year, members of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments have become increasingly focused on terrorism. During this time it has become very clear that terrorism has increased concerns about substance abuse and mental health issues and highlighted the need to have a strong infrastructure for the promotion of healthy resilient communities, families and individuals and for treatment for those individuals who need it. We all know that substance abuse and mental health are closely connected. Individuals that are mentally healthy are less likely to abuse alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Disturbing reports show that substance abuse increased after September 11, 2001. Other reports show that some victims and responders will carry life-long mental health scars from the terrorism attacks. The entire metropolitan area population has been affected by concerns about living in a target area. COG is convening a new committee (**Substance Abuse, Mental Health & Spiritual Care Committee**) that will work on regional issues, including policies affecting substance abuse and mental health in the short term (dealing with terrorism) and long term (mental wellness) in the National Capitol Region via the following:

- Taking the leadership role in galvanizing the general population to do prevention, mitigation, and recovery activities in coordination with the policymakers and through local jurisdictions;
- Working with the COG Board and COG policy committees to deal with the ongoing, ever-changing, and everyday needs of substance abuse, mental health and spiritual care that are not related to regional crisis response or bioterrorism; and
- Facilitating and developing an infrastructure via information dissemination to deal with crisis & non-crisis needs and general population resiliency.

We invite you or a representative from your organization to join us for our first meeting on **Thursday, March 6, 2003** from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. **Please RSVP to Sandra Adomako-Bempong at sabempong@mwkog.org**

Agenda

I. Welcome/Introductions

II. COG Update

- Priorities
- COG's Regional Emergency Coordination Plan
- COG Committee Structure
- Tasks

III. New Committee

- Purpose
- Missions
- Structure

IV. Lessons Learned in Community Response to Mental Health after September 11, 2001



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