



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF CANTON

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News Release

Dec. 16, 2013

From: Canton League of Women Voters

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League of Women Voters Study on Mental Health Services in Farmington Valley Finds Numerous Obstacles Prevent Access to Care

Report suggests steps to increase access to services; League to continue its focus on mental health, switching from study stage to advocacy mode.

A Canton League of Women Voters (LWV) study committee has concluded its year-long study of mental health resources in the Farmington Valley and reported that:

- Services that are currently available to valley residents are multiple and increasing, but are not available to all because of numerous obstacles;
- Barriers to receiving service are numerous and include lack of transportation, lack of insurance, a shortage of psychiatrists and more, and
- Solutions are possible. The report urges specific public and private measures that would increase access to care.

Based on the report, the Board of the Canton LWV adopted this formal position:

“The LWV US believes that every U.S. resident should have access to a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost that includes mental health care.

“The LWV of Canton has found that residents, town officials and providers in the Farmington Valley believe that quality, affordable mental health care is not as accessible to residents of the Farmington Valley as it should be.

“The LWV of Canton favors actions by local, state and federal governments to remove barriers and enhance access to mental health care for residents of the Farmington Valley including, but not limited to the following measures:

- Providing more and better information about mental health and services;
- Expanding prevention and early intervention services in the Farmington Valley;
- Removal of barriers to services such as transportation, lack of or complexity of insurance, lack of housing, shortage of mental health professionals, stigma;
- Expanding services and addressing gaps in the service system such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for all police in the Farmington Valley towns;

- Establishment of more mental health services *in* the Farmington Valley towns by Capitol Region Mental Health Center and other public and private providers.”

The study committee interviewed and summarized data from area social services directors, school nurses, special education directors, ministers, rabbis, youth services specialists, addiction professionals, state agencies and more.

The committee will continue to work, changing its focus to advocacy of the above measures.

In its 41 years, the Canton LWV has conducted 38 studies on local, state and national issues, many of which led to specific public policy changes – most recently, the creation of Canton’s Board of Ethics.

The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization of men and women. It encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. See www.canton.lwvconnecticut.org for more information, including on joining the Canton League.

For more information see attachments:

- 1) Executive Summary and Position Statement
- 2) Report
- 3) Services in Valley Towns Chart
- 4) Age and Type Insurance Graph
