

# State office hopefuls discuss mental health

BY AMY EAGLEBURGER AND DEVIN ROONEY  
SENIOR WRITERS

RALEIGH — Ten candidates running for statewide office took advantage of a mental health forum Monday to share their opinions and hear from activists on the issue.

The system's shortcomings and possible solutions were the focus of the N.C. Mental Health Coalition's forum at the RBC Center.

All of the registered candidates

for lieutenant governor were in attendance, and six of the gubernatorial candidates were present. Two Republican candidates, Pat McCrory and Elbie Powers, were absent.

Pat Smathers, who is running for the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor, said the state's situation is severe.

"If anyone tells you we are not facing a mental health crisis, they are not dealing with reality."

In 2001, the N.C. General

Assembly passed a sweeping mental health care reform bill that sought to privatize care.

Seven years later, providers have overcharged the state and underserved the majority of mental health care patients, candidates said.

Audience members expressed concern that many people have received minimal care and that some needing long-term treatment were prematurely released to community support services.

N.C. Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, who was the primary sponsor of the reform legislation, has expressed displeasure with its unanticipated fallout.

Candidates charged that lack of detail in the legislation allowed for loopholes that private, community-based organizations manipulated for their benefit, and said those hurt were the mentally ill, developmentally disabled, brain trauma victims and substance abusers.

Every candidate admitted to varying degrees of ignorance on the subject, but all pointed to a quality they feel they have: leadership.

"I never claimed to be a good politician, but I'm a hell of a public manager," said State Treasurer Richard Moore, a Democratic candidate running for the governor nomination.

Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, also a Democratic contender, was in office at the time of the reform. She said that she acted to the fullest extent

of her powers and that she does not accept credit nor blame for the failed reforms.

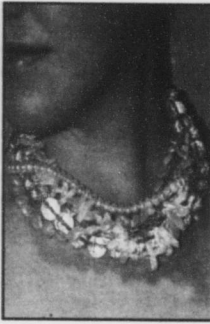
North Carolina's mental health system is in flux, with the director of the state's mental health care division set to retire Friday.

All candidates pledged to continue discussion with activists and experts to find a workable solution.

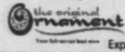
Contact the State & National Editor at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

deals deals deals deals deals

Custom Made Jewelry...  
at The Original Ornament



**The original Ornament**  
Your full-service bead store  
From the traditional to the unexpected.

**20% OFF**  
entire purchase  
with coupon  
  
Expires 3/4/08

www.TheOriginalOrnament.com  
Sunday-Saturday 10am-6pm  
Thursdays 10am-8pm  
919.933.3467  
Carr Mill Mall • Suite A-11 • Carrboro, NC

**JAPAN EXPRESS**  
Japanese Fast Food

928-9600 Dine In or Carry Out

**1/2 Price Entree**  
Buy 1 entree and get 2nd of equal or lesser value 1/2 price

**SPECIAL**  
Hibachi Chicken Entree with Drink only \$4.99

ONE PER CUSTOMER. MUST PRESENT COUPON. CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH OTHER SPECIALS OR OFFERS. EXPIRES 3/15/08

261 S. Elliott Road • Chapel Hill (next to Peak Fitness)

LOW FAT • NO MSG

**35**  
Chinese Restaurant  
Chapel Hill

FREE DELIVERY

DINNER BUFFET  
**\$9.35**  
\$1.00 OFF with your UNC student ID

35 Chinese has the best variety of Chinese food around. You can choose from over 50 items on our Super Buffet, or order from the extensive menu.

Lunch 11am-2:30pm  
Friday/Saturday Dinner 4:30pm-10pm  
Sunday-Thursday Dinner 4:30pm-9:30pm  
CLOSED MONDAY

University Square • 143 W. Franklin Street • Chapel Hill • 919.968.3488 • [www.citysearch.com/rdu/35](http://www.citysearch.com/rdu/35)

**Fast Delivery. Not Fast Food.**

We bring Chapel Hill's best restaurants to your door.

**Club Nova Thrift Shop**

Clothing, Books & Music, House & Kitchen, Gifts

Buy one item of clothing, get one item of equal or lesser value free with this ad!  
One coupon per customer - \$10 maximum value.

Tues-Fri 10 AM-6 PM • Sat. 10 AM-4 PM  
(919) 967-6985 • 103 C West Main Street, Carrboro  
(Downtown Carrboro behind Wendy's)  
[www.clubnovashop.org](http://www.clubnovashop.org)

Club Nova promotes and provides opportunities for individuals living with mental illness to lead meaningful & productive lives of their choice in the community. Club Nova is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3). All donations are tax-deductible.

**Tarheel Take-Out**

919.942.7678  
[www.tarheeltakeout.com](http://www.tarheeltakeout.com)

Mention this ad and get **\$2.00 OFF** any order

Must present coupon to driver.

Why not give the gift of hassle-free dinner?  
Gift certificates available in any amount.

**Ladies Fitness & Wellness**

**\$100 OFF Enrollment**  
expires 3/18/08

Discounts for UNC Students, Faculty & Staff

969-8663  
752 MLK Jr. Blvd  
(Next to Foster's, 1/2 mile from campus)

**Ladies**  
fitness & wellness center

**GUMBY'S PIZZA & WINGS**

FAST DELIVERY  
919-968-3278

OPEN LATE HOURS  
Mon-Wed: 4pm-3am  
Thursday: 4pm-3:30am  
Fri & Sat: 11am-3:30am  
Sun: 11am-2am

306A W. Franklin St.

**STIX-IT-TUESDAY**  
BUY-1-GET-1 FREE!!!  
POKEY STIX

**TRIPLE TOPPERS**  
SMALL \$16.99  
MEDIUM \$17.99  
LARGE \$18.99  
X-LARGE \$19.99

**BELLY BUSTER**  
LARGE 1-ITEM PIZZA  
+ LARGE POKEY STIX  
+ 6 PEPPERONI ROLLS  
+ 10 WINGS AND FREE 2-LITER  
ALL 5 = \$29.99

**COME 'N' GET IT**  
\*\* PICK-UP ONLY \*\*  
\* Choose 1 \*  
LARGE 1-ITEM PIZZA  
LARGE POKEY STIX  
6 PEPPERONI ROLLS  
\$7.99 CHOOSE 2 FOR \$14.99  
CHOOSE 3 FOR \$21.99

Offers may expire without notice