

The SmithWaters Group was founded by Frank and Bill SmithWaters. With more than 50 years of combined experience working in the mental health community at the local, state and national level they have a firm commitment to ensuring that the rights of individuals receiving mental health services are upheld.

The SmithWaters Group is dedicated to ensuring that all individuals are able to thrive and live their lives in a manner that provides them with the greatest opportunity for success.

All of the staff of the SmithWaters Group have experienced life as both a provider of services and a recipient of services. We have a unique perspective of how the system functions and having that life experience is something we all draw from for effective advocacy. We value the diversity of life and incorporate that completely into our services.

The SmithWaters Group currently provides contractual direct advocacy services to the mental health community in select counties throughout California:

The SmithWaters Group

Main Office: Sacramento, Ca 95816

1-800-970-5816

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The SmithWaters Group

Providing Mental Health Advocacy Services



1-800-970-5816





Some Important Rights Guaranteed to you in the Mental Health System

Persons with mental illness have the same legal rights guaranteed all other persons by the federal constitution and laws, and the constitution and laws of the state of California, unless specifically limited by federal or state law or regulations. California Welfare and Institutions Code 5325 and 5325.1

You Have The Right To:

Timely access to care, including making services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, when medically necessary to treat an emergency psychiatric condition or crisis condition.

Respectful treatment by mental health practitioners, agency, clinic and hospital staff members and with due consideration for your dignity and privacy.

Receive information on available treatment options and alternatives, presented in a manner appropriate to your condition and ability to understand.

Informed consent to treatment and to prescribed medication.

Request to receive a copy of your medical records, and request that they be amended or corrected.

The right to access the services of a Title IX Patients' Rights Advocate at all times.

Confidential care and record keeping.

Be free from any form of restraint or seclusion used as means of coercion, discipline, convenience, punishment or retaliation as specified in federal rules about the use of restraints and seclusion in facilities such as hospitals, nursing facilities and psychiatric residential treatment facilities where you stay for treatment.

Receive services that are culturally competent, sensitive to language, to cultural differences and ethnic backgrounds.

Participate in planning your own treatment, in developing a treatment plan that includes the goals of treatment and the services that will be delivered.

Participate in decisions regarding your mental health care, including the right to refuse treatment.



The SmithWaters Group

Providing Mental Health Advocacy Services
In Select Counties Throughout California

The SmithWaters Group provides full Title IX Patients' Rights Advocacy Services in California.

Those counties we currently serve include:

- **Napa County Office of Patients' Rights**
- **Lake County Office of Patients' Rights**
- **Sonoma County Office of Patients' Rights**
- **Yolo County Office of Patients' Rights**
- **Sutter/Yuba Counties Office of Patients' Rights**
- **Del Norte County Office of Patients' Rights**

We represent the expressed interest of individuals in the mental health system.

We provide representation in 5250, 5270 and Medication Capacity/Riese Hearings. We handle complaint investigations and mediation between clients and providers when disputes arise.

We provide education about patients' rights, the civil involuntary hold process and governing statutes to clients, program staff, service providers, family members as well as individuals in the community.

We provide program consultation to a variety of behavioral health programs throughout the state.

The SmithWaters Group Staff

Frank SmithWaters Director



Frank has been involved in the mental health system for more than 30 years. He has experienced life as both a consumer and provider of mental health services. Frank was one of the individuals that worked early in the system to develop self-help centers in California and ultimately was successful in bringing to Sacramento its first client driven Patients' Rights program. Frank later expanded his involvement with Patients' Rights and became the Director of the California Office of Patients' Rights. For many years he provided oversight with his dedicated staff to advocacy in all State Hospitals in California and technical assistance to County programs. Frank has worked at both the state and national level to ensure that the interest of clients in the mental health system are valued and respected. Eventually Frank pursued providing consulting services to many mental health programs over the years. In 2013 Frank and his husband Bill decided to launch their own advocacy firm and now provide advocacy services to counties throughout California.

Bill SmithWaters Program Director



Bill's first exposure to the mental health system came at the age of 15. He learned early on what it meant to be disrespected in life and not offered opportunities that were available to only those with the means and connections. Bill became involved in the provision of mental health advocacy services initially as a volunteer with the California Office of Patients' Rights where skills that he developed while in the military became an invaluable tool in ultimate reform in oversight of state hospital procedures. In 2005 Bill joined the Sacramento County Office of Patients' Rights and worked as an advocate in both Sacramento and Yolo Counties. He became Director of the Sacramento Wellness and Recovery Center, providing oversight to staff and ensuring that self-help opportunities were always available to clients that participated in the program.

When Frank and Bill decided to create the advocacy firm Bill chose to take on the role of Program Director and has oversight of the daily advocacy operations of the organization.

Solomae Mora
Office Logistics Coordinator/Title IX Patients' Rights Advocate



Solomae was raised in a setting that had keen awareness of the struggles of mental illness. Both her grandmother and her uncle suffered from mental illness. She witnessed first-hand the trials that many families suffer through when mental illness becomes a part of daily life. Solomae chose a career path of assisting all individuals with their healthcare needs. She became a Certified Nursing Assistant direct out of high school. She became interested in the plight of adults suffering from severe mental illness and dementia and went on to become a licensed RCF Facility Director. Her interest in advocating for the rights of clients in this system led to her joining our team in 2015. She is a dedicated advocate for the rights of individuals that are part of the mental health community. She currently is providing all logistics services to the organization and is in the middle of course studies for psychiatric nursing.

Jackie Shepherd
Title IX Patients' Rights Advocate



Jackie joined the SmithWaters Group as a Patients' Rights Advocate in 2016 after an entire career of helping others in the mental health system. Jackie is a consumer/survivor and has worked for years ensuring that the rights of individuals in the system are upheld. As a consumer she worked always to help those that did not have their own voice and provided the support many needed to become successful at life. Jackie worked in client driven programs throughout the years, culminating as Program Director for People Empowering People, which oversaw a mental health client-directed Center in Napa. The Center provided a safe place for clients to come and be themselves without fear of judgement of those around them. Jackie's ability to assist individuals is well-known throughout the client community. Jackie was the recipient of the 2017 Sally Zinman Award – given to those people that have made a difference in the lives of others throughout their lifetime.

Mellony Torres

**Title IX Patients' Rights Advocate
TBI Specialist**



Mellony has had a long career working in the healthcare industry, specializing in the provision of therapeutic services to individuals with traumatic brain injury. Throughout her career working with this population she always has a passion for assisting individuals through any difficult situation they would encounter. She witnessed extraordinary practices of discrimination against individuals that had little to no opportunity to fend for themselves. We immediately saw the importance and value of having Mellony on the SmithWaters Group team and she began working with us in 2017. Her services have become invaluable in working with not only our clients that are involuntarily held in locked facilities, but also in working with specialized issues that we encounter with individuals having crossover disabilities. Mellony's passion for protecting the rights of individuals and her ability to apply the law to difficult cases is invaluable.

Michell Chisham

Title IX Patients' Rights Advocate



Michell has had an outstanding career as a Psychiatric Technician and has worked in several settings throughout California. Michell's passion for ensuring that the needs of her clients in locked facilities are met is well-known. Michell tackles difficult issues head-on and is not afraid when necessary to confront an issue with the intent of having her clients' needs met and at the same time making certain that both staff and clients have an understanding of why a change was important. Michell approached us in 2018 with the possibility of working as an advocate as part of a transition in her career. Having been familiar with the working style and ethics that Michell has we welcomed her into the SmithWaters Group with open arms. Michell has an uncanny ability to work calmly and methodically with difficult clients and staff alike – and achieve results that were thought to be unreachable.

Matt Ulm

**Title IX Patients' Rights Advocate
AOD Specialist**



Matt has experienced life as both a recipient of services and as a provider. Matt became involved with the mental health/AOD system at an early age. For more than 20 years he endured homelessness, multiple hospitalizations and treatment programs that did prove effective in dealing with his mental health and addiction issues. He reached a point in life that he had literally no choice but to find a new path. He entered into a system that he fully embraced and ultimately developed the skills to be able to help others.

Matt became a natural fit into the role of a Patients' Rights Advocate. He has an ability to relate to the struggles that many of our clients face and has become the voice that they many times are not able to be. Matt has dedicated his life to the recovery process and has provided assistance to countless individuals that have needed the appropriate support in life.

Marsha Ballard

Title IX Patients' Rights Advocate



Marsha is a valuable addition to the SmithWaters Group staff. Marsha began her patients' rights career working in the Sacramento County Office of Patients' Rights for more than a decade. She is well known in the community as a person that has the ability to be empathetic and compassionate – and at the same time be a fierce fighter for rectifying injustices in the mental health system.

Marsha maintained a keen interest in assisting individuals when she retired. After significant pleading she agreed to return to the forum with The SmithWaters Group. Her knowledge of mental health law is stellar. Her ability to relate to the struggles that many clients face in the system is an important component to the overall success of our program. Marsha understands the value of working relationships with providers to be able to successfully advocate for her clients.

Callum Hancock

Title IX Patients' Rights Advocate



Callum is the most recent addition to The SmithWaters Group. Callum brings a passion for working with underserved and often ignored populations – and ensuring that their voices are heard. Callum has worked as Outreach Director for the LGBTQ Center in Sacramento and most recently was a Peer Navigator, helping folks work through the complexities of the mental health and AOD systems. Callum's dedication to ensuring that the rights of individuals are protected is a quality strongly admired in the advocacy world.



The SmithWaters Group

Providing Mental Health Advocacy Services
In Select Counties Throughout California

Who We Are

Frank and Bill SmithWaters have worked in the mental health community for more than a combined 50 years of service. Frank has been involved with Patients' Rights programs since 1990 with the creation of the first consumer driven Patients' Rights program in Sacramento County. For many years he served as Director for the State Office of Patients' Rights.

Bill has been involved with Patients' Rights programs at both the state and local level. Additionally he was the Director of the Wellness and Recovery Center in Sacramento. He currently oversees daily operations in all of our county-based programs.

Our advocates are extremely dedicated to ensuring that the voice of the client does not go unheard. Many have been involved in the mental health client movement as well as providing client advocacy services throughout the region. Their knowledge, willingness to assist and dedication is unparalleled.

We are all committed to ensuring that the rights of all clients in the mental health community are observed and protected.

The SmithWaters Group currently provides mental health advocacy services in Sonoma, Napa, Lake, Yolo, Sutter, Yuba and Del Norte Counties.

