



COUNTY OF HUNTERDON NEW JERSEY

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MENTAL HEALTH BOARD



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REFERENCE:

- ☐ Council
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Youth
- ☐ Disability Services
- ☐ Substance
- ☐ Use Disorder
- ☐ Transportation

Approved February 3, 2022

MENTAL HEALTH BOARD

Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 6, 2022 5:30 p.m.
Via Webex

MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Dudzinski
R. Walker
L. Hartman

MEMBERS ABSENT

M. Deo
P. Aquino

EX-OFFICIO

D. Davis

STAFF

S. Becker
S. Nekola
M. O'Reilly

GUESTS

*PAC-PACADA Liaison - M. Margulies

I. CONVENE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT:

"This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobbies of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, the first floor of the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street Building #1, Flemington, NJ; the first floor of the Route 12 County Complex, Building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ and County Clerk's Office."

ROLL CALL:

The regular public meeting was opened at 5:30 p.m. Introductions were made.

Due to the recent public health crisis, COVID-19, this meeting was call in and Webex ONLY

W. Dudzinski stated he is the Chairman of the Mental Health Board and CFO of NewBridge Services, Inc.

D. Davis stated she is the Program Analyst with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

L. Hartman stated she is attending Mental Health Board representing NAMI Hunterdon.

M. O'Reilly stated she is the Human Services Administrator in Hunterdon County.

S. Nekola commented she is from the Division of Social Work Services.

M. Margulies stated he is with Summit Oaks Hospital and the liaison for the MHB and PAC/PACADA.

S. Becker stated she is with the Department of Human Services as the Mental Health Administrator.

II.*A. MINUTES: A Motion was made by L. Hartman and seconded by W. Dudzinski to approve the minutes of December 2, 2021. There was one abstention. All were in favor. The motion passed.

B. CORRESPONDENCE: No correspondence at this time.

S. Becker conveyed DHMAS has released a few RFPs for substance use and hopefully mental health will benefit.

III. REPORTS:

A. County Update: M. O'Reilly stated that at the January 4, 2022 Commissioner's Organization Meeting, Commissioner John Lanza had been sworn in as the Commissioner Director and Commissioner Zach Rich had been sworn in as the Deputy Director. The Commissioner liaison for Human Services will continue to be Commissioner Shaun Van Doren.

The County received funding from the State to support the Code Blue efforts in 2022. The monies will be used to fund the Warming Center at Hunterdon Helpline.

The Point In Time Count is scheduled for the evening of January 25, 2022 and participating agencies received emails from Human Services with information on training. The survey is identical to last years. Nothing had changed as far as the questions are concerned. What is different this year is a mandatory street count. A lot of agencies are involved to organize this street count. Last year, a street count did not occur mostly due to COVID. She is hoping to have more people available to help this year.

B. State Update: D. Davis provided her update. As S. Becker had shared earlier, there are a few new RFPs out now related to substance use. She noted some notification dates are coming out for some past RFPs that had been out from the last few months. On January 14, 2022, there will be an announcement for the Cultural Competency Training and Practice for Opioid Treatment Providers. On January 13, 2022, there will be a notification date for the Community Support Services (CSS) for Individuals in Need of Community Support Services that is being expanded to Gloucester, Cape May and Salem Counties.

D. Davis stated a Request for Letters of Interest for Evidence-Based Practice Initiative: Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders for substance use disorder proprietors had been released. The purposes of the Request for Letters of Interest are to improve provider agencies provision of Motivational Interviewing ("MI") and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy ("CBT") and to improve clinical, direct-care staff skills in practicing therapeutic approaches that ensure meaningful outcomes to the people they serve. This was released on January 4, 2022 and the deadline is January 24, 2022. The announcement date for when it will be awarded is February 14, 2022. On February 21, 2022, the provided technical assistance to the providers who are interested in having that level of support will be made available.

The New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts had changed the name of “New Jersey Statewide Drug Court” to “New Jersey Statewide Recovery Court” effective January 1, 2022. It is exactly the same program with a better name and a lot less stigma.

D. Davis advised of some virtual director’s meetings for acute care programs statewide. Today, a Statewide PACT Director meeting had been held. A Short-Term Care Facility Director’s Meeting will be held on Friday, January 7, 2022 at 11:00 am, on January 13, 2022 at 1:00 pm, the IOC Director’s Meeting will take place and on January 20, 2022 at 10:00 am, a statewide Screening Director’s Meeting will be held. She stated she would share any outcomes from those meetings.

The Tele-Health Law had been signed into law December 21, 2021 by Governor Murphy. This law extends for the next two years the requirement adopted at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic that health benefits plans reimburse health care providers for telehealth and telemedicine services at the same rate as in-person services, with limited exceptions. At the same time, the legislation charges the Department of Health with conducting an in-depth study of the utilization of telehealth and telemedicine and its effects on patient outcomes, quality and satisfaction, and access to care in order to inform future decisions on payment structure for these services. This legislation will provide critical support to patients and providers while the State continues to address the challenges posed by the pandemic, and while the Department of Health evaluates how to best leverage payment and telemedicine to improve access to affordable care and maintain the highest quality of care possible. This remains in effect until December 31, 2023.

The NJ Department of Health and Vault Medical Services have partnered to offer a free, at-home COVID-19 saliva test kit that is available to every New Jerseyan who thinks they need a test – even if you do or do not have symptoms. D. Davis provided the website: learn.vaulthealth.com/nj/ in the Chat Box for more information and advised to share with those who are interested.

There are some upcoming mental health awareness trainings through the Disaster and Terrorism Branch of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. On January 10, 2022, a QPR (Question Persuade, & Refer) Training will be held from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm and another QPR training will be held on January 19, 2022 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm. Additionally, a Youth Mental Health First Aid Training will occur on January 26, 2022 from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. Pre-registration is required through Megan Sullivan; she provided her email. D. Davis will provide the details in the Chat Box and S. Becker will share the flyer.

S. Becker stated Megan Sullivan is from the DRCC (Disaster Response Crisis Counselors) who are all over the state and are always taking volunteers for mental health or someone can be a layperson. It is a few classes to be able to provide emotional support to those experiencing a disaster. The volunteers can volunteer for any or multiple New Jersey counties they wish to work in.

- C. **NAMI Hunterdon, Update:** L. Hartman stated NAMI Hunterdon continues to offer some of the programs that had been offered over the past couple years in terms of book club that meets online, the board meeting is hybrid and the walks that take place monthly are outside. She feels it is important to convey as a member of NAMI, a family member, a caregiver, someone who has a different experience and perspective on issues that most people are concerned about. The experiences in groups and reaching out to our loved ones relative to COVID has really

caused an impact. She stated that the video sessions had been embraced really well by many and is an amazing tool for them, but others experience some difficulty. The output delivers a mixed response. On a local level, President Larry Cartwright will be doing a presentation at the Hunterdon Central High School offering insights during this pandemic. The school reached out to NAMI requesting this presentation.

W. Dudzinski added that at the last board meeting he conveyed the agency would be recording guest speakers. At their last meeting, Nancy Rumore from Hunterdon Medical Center provided a presentation on all of the programs offered via the HMC. This presentation is up on the YouTube channel and W. Dudzinski emailed S. Becker the link for posting. W. Dudzinski also exclaimed that NAMI board is in a formulation stage of developing an award for each of the high school students who had personally faced or is facing a mental health situation via an essay contest or the like. It is still in an infant stage, but he was happy to announce this great idea. W. Dudzinski added NAMI members will be working with guidance counselors to see how this could possibly work. S. Becker suggested to connect W. Dudzinski with her school contacts. He was very pleased to hear.

L. Hartman conveyed NAMI had gone to live/in-person support groups. The first one was held in December, and it is anticipated another one will be held in January. Participants must wear masks and practice social distancing.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- A. State of Mental Health in American Report – S. Becker wanted to further discuss this topic that was on the December MHB agenda. There was no further discussion at this time.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Closing Agencies; Need for Services – S. Becker stated December 2021 was a rough month. She began with Kwenyan & Associates had closed up in Hunterdon County. They May be operating in other counties and again, no longer operating in Flemington. A setback is their support in treating juveniles, therefore, this poses a larger gap for youth. Acenda, Inc. and Genpsych both treat juveniles. The Genpsych Flemington location has turned strictly outpatient, but the youth can be treated for medical management as young as eight years old. The agency can see clients in-person eight and up for outpatient medication management. For program, the Bridgewater location can see clients from eight to 12 and the gap program (13-18; possibly 19 as long as they are in high school) are offered services in-person and a hybrid model. They are still seeing everyone virtual regardless of the program.

Hunterdon Drug Awareness Program, Inc. are no longer in business; they had been in business for 45 years. A variety of reasons were the cause factors; mostly due to the pandemic. HDAP played a major part in drugs and alcohol and one that the County had funded, so this leaves a huge gap for services for individuals to seek help.

Catholic Charities is still treating juveniles and is inundated and have a waiting list.

The Hunterdon Medical Center is taking people; possibly juveniles too but are at a setback in treating patients due to a lack of staff and finding beds for involuntary hospitalizations. Closing agencies and COVID all merge together because a lack of services. She commented that there were more overdoses in 2021 than since the start of the state keeping track. 2022 may be keeping on this track as well.

A question W. Dudzinski inquired about the County's funding or resource. S. Becker replied it is called Chapter 51. The State provides funds to the County and that monies is for drug and alcohol services, therefore, the County funds certain requirements. HDAP for an extended period of time was one of the larger providers that the County funded for Intensive Outpatient, as well as Outpatient and they contract with the State to run the DUI programs. Anyone who gets a DUI in Hunterdon County must partake in an evaluation and a 12-hour class and they were running that for the County as well. W. Dudzinski asked if an RFP will be offered by the County. M. O'Reilly replied that yes, an RFP will be released for services via Chapter 51 for 2022. W. Dudzinski commented it may not be a question of monies but a question of staffing. S. Becker echoed that is true. It is becoming more clients than what there are staffing to help attend to. More and more agencies are being affected. Discussion ensued.

S. Becker inquired with D. Davis if she had been aware of opening up funding for PPE again. She is not completely in the know but believes it was just substance use disorder programs who could apply but will look into it.

- B. COVID Increasing; Community Responses** – S. Becker asked what had the agencies been experiencing and discussing because of COVID; how are the agencies faring; is assistance needed? W. Dudzinski exclaimed COVID had been hitting his agency harder than ever before. There may be 10-12 cases within the last week out of about 150-160 staff members. They are predominantly consisting of group homes. Testing is a major cost factor. S. Becker advised she would be happy to provide the State of these concerns at the meetings she attends.

D. Davis suggested to check-in with Easterseals who is a major group home provider in Hunterdon County.

S. Becker asked W. Dudzinski if his agency is seeing a different in cases based on vaccination status. He replied they are all break-through cases. They are all highly vaccinated and had an arrangement to receive vaccinations, as well as boosters early on for residences. It is very contagious.

S. Becker inquired with D. Davis about testing supplies. D. Davis advised she shared some information in one of her reports from a few months ago. This may have expired. W. Dudzinski stated his organization is participating in that program that had been designed for staff to be tested twice a week for the unvaccinated to come into the office. S. Becker asked if W. Dudzinski is running into storage. M. Margulies added the costs of the test have increased immensely. D. Davis added the President is looking into insurance providers to help cover these costs. S. Becker announced she just received an email stating Governor Murphy is deploying the National Guard to long-term home facilities. She will forward the details she had read to the MHB membership.

W. Dudzinski conveyed salaries continue to be a huge problem to maintain staff.

S. Becker offered to go to an Urgent Care to receive a test in an effort to incur a lower cost for testing. Discussion ensued.

R. Walker made a motion and L. Hartman seconded to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The motion passed. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m. The next meeting will be on February 3, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.