



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
☐ Disabled
☐ Substance Abuse
☐ Transportation

Approved on March 2, 2022

YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 5, 2022 12:30 p.m.
Via Webex

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

L. Gonski	S. Becker
F. Brown	G. Kaufman*
S. Carew	L. Zimmermann
L. Ranieri	P. Griffin*
L. Gudino	L. Gabel
A. Gatanis*	C. Montelius
A. DeLuca	S. Rozycki*
T. DiFranco*	L. Zellar
M. O'Reilly	S. Van Doren

EX-OFFICIO

K. Williams
C. Baxeveane
M. Scherer

STAFF

D. Childers

GUESTS

J. Cassano
S. Pawlowski
M. LaRoche
J. Raczyk

*Designees

- I. "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."

PURPOSE: The Commission shall serve as an advisory committee to the Human Services Advisory Council and to the Board of County Commissioners to maximize provision of assistance to youth and their families, and to promote prevention programs that enhance the building of competencies and positive development of children and youth and reduce the likelihood of juvenile delinquency and other socially unacceptable behaviors.

G. Kaufman opened the meeting and introductions were made among the participants.

- II. **MINUTES:** L. Zimmermann made a motion to approve the minutes from November 3, 2021 and C. Montelius seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

III. **REPORTS:**

A. **Children's Interagency Coordinating Council (CIACC):** L. Gudino reported that CIACC will be present at the Superintendents Roundtable on February 4, 2022. She noted they were scheduled to be present in January but there were some scheduling conflicts. They have been awarded a \$10,000.00 grant from the Promising Path to Success 2.0; currently they are brainstorming how to best utilize that money. It is a two-year grant, and the main objective is to support the elevation of family voice and participation in CIACC. More information to follow. The Hunterdon CIACC will be meeting on Monday, January 10th at 1:00 pm. She conveyed the meeting dates for 2022 were forwarded and if anyone would like to attend, let her know.

B. **Department of Children and Families – Children's System of Care (CSOC):**

- i. **Tri-County Care Management Organization (CMO):** L. Zimmermann reported as of yesterday, the agency's total enrollment is comprised of 658 youth. L. Zimmermann stated youth are either relegated as acute high or moderate behavioral health.

Hunterdon County enrollment of 117 youth - 97 classified as moderate behavioral and 20 as more acute behavioral. Among the 117 youth, there are 16 youth who have achieved developmental disability eligibility status. Within the enrollment, 14 youth that are either newly enrolled or re-enrolled in Hunterdon County.

L. Zimmermann reported on demographics, 69 males and 48 females, with most youth between the ages of 11 through 17. However, there's a modest increase in serving youth under the age of 5 - Children's Mobile Response is serving one youth who is either 3 or 4. There are no reported youth at age 21.

There are currently 114 out of the 117 youth residing in home, with the remaining 3 residing in various out of home treatment facilities and programs.

As it is known, reporting for the top diagnosis continues in their Tri-County reports. They are showing in descending order in Hunterdon County as: adjustment disorder, anxiety, depression, ADHD, and opposition defiant disorder, and conduct disorder.

L. Zimmermann stated their Hunterdon referrals continue primarily to emanate from Children's Mobile Response followed by family, community providers, Children's Crisis Intervention Services, transfers from other CMO's, Department of Child Protection and Permanency, and the courts. The communities where their Hunterdon youth and families reside primarily are Flemington, Glen Gardner, Hampton, Milford, and Annandale.

For substance use needs in Hunterdon, data is based on the substance use module of the strength and needs assessment tool that is used. 11 youth scored with a value of 1 (treatment may be needed) or a value of 2 (treatment is needed as substance use impairs youth's life functioning). In summary, 3 youth have a substance use diagnosis and 8 do not have a diagnosis, however their substance use score reflected in their strength and needs assessments. The primary clinical diagnosis for the 3 youth is cannabis related.

- ii. **Tri-County Family Support Organization (FSO):** P. Griffin wished all a very Happy New Year. She stated that after the last meeting, the Tri-County FSO was able to provide 50 families with Thanksgiving meals in Hunterdon, Somerset, and Warren Counties.

P. Griffin conveyed a local construction company “adopted” 38 of the Tri-County FSO families and provided them with holiday gifts. FSO-HSW provided a total of 84 families additional gifts as well; they were very happy to help.

The English support groups are held every Wednesday from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm. The Spanish-speaking support groups will now be held twice a month, the second Thursday and last Thursday of the month.

On January 12, 2022, the English-speaking support group will have a financial advisory attend and speak to the families about post-holiday finances.

P. Griffin stated the FSO Warm Line contracts are beginning to increase. She indicated if there are families in need of resources to refer them to their Warm Line. December’s numbers were high, and she is expecting January to exceed those already reported numbers. Due to COVID, food and financial insecurity needs continue to be a concern, she anticipates more people will be calling especially with youth being home.

- iii. **Tri-County Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS):** L. Zellar reported for December 2021, Mobile Response had a total of 138 dispatches for the Tri-County area, 21 were in Hunterdon County; 18 were face-to-face and 3 were virtual. For referrals, there was a small increase from schools. MRSS had an increase in discharge referrals to CMO, outpatient therapy services, and extended IIC services. Current trends are youth with symptoms of signs of anxiety and depression, school refusals, disruption behavior in the home and school, and issues stemming from conflict with parents and/or parental estrangements.

- C. **N.J. Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P):** C. Baxeavane stated personnel returned to the office for a short period of time but returned to remote due to high COVID numbers among staff. Personnel will not be returning to their offices until January 18, 2022. Sadly, a co-worker passed away. Condolences were offered to those affected.

C. Baxeavane echoed P. Griffin’s report about a lot of people come out to adopt families for the holidays. Toys for Tots, Weichert in Flemington and the Harvest Family Success Center continue to provide for the community.

For the month of December in the Hunterdon County local office had very high numbers related to drug and alcohol allegations. Although the agency is remote, the staff is still responding to families; nothing has stopped with assisting the community.

M. Scherer had nothing to add from the area office for DCP&P.

Discussion ensued regarding C. Baxeavane’s experiences with Toys for Tots and other resources available for families.

S. Carew inquired about the increased numbers of substance use disorder by other agencies - any numbers reported related to treatment services? She’s not seeing an increase in her agency’s

numbers. P. Griffin replied related to her Warm Line reports. She feels the numbers will be on the rise in January due to various factors. L. Zimmermann offered her experiences and insight. Discussion ensued. P. Griffin and S. Carew exchanged contact information.

- D. N.J. Juvenile Justice Commission (NJJC):** K. Williams reported the JJC is beginning their restorative and transformative initiative. This is monies allocated by the Governor that the JJC was asked to manage. The JJC is creating a Restorative Justice pilot program for the highest sending municipality in the State, specifically Trenton, Newark, Camden and Patterson. It is a 2-year pilot program, all services will be in one specific location, so the youth do not have to travel extensively. The JJC is hopeful that at the end of the pilot program that a statewide roll-out will happen to provide services to youth in their own communities. More information to follow.

K. Williams conveyed staff was back in the office five days a week and are now working only two days. It is possible the visitations with the youth may also be put on hold due to COVID numbers are high.

- E. School-Based Youth Services:** L. Gonski reported that since the COVID numbers are increasing, some schools have implemented a half-day schedule. Hunterdon Central may go into red which will impose a half-day schedule as well.

L. Gonski shared some good news, their programs had expanded quite a bit and are full-time at North Hunterdon and Delaware Township due to a high need. In December, Hunterdon Central required a waitlist due to so many new cases. Right before the holidays, school-based youth services received a one-time funding increase totaling 18% of their budget. This funding must be spent before June 2022; spending options include purchasing gift cards, dinners, sporting events, guest speakers and a lot more which is very exciting.

- F. Family Crisis Intervention Unit (FCIU):** C. Montelius reported as of to date, there are 2 cases; both are female and are involved in family conflict reasons. She does have a case pending in intake to be addressed the following week. The case is a male which is more of a diversion case with some family conflict. There are no youth in detention at this time. There had been a youth in a shelter at the beginning of December and since left, and no one is on crisis petition at this time.

FCIU had been conducting successful hybrid sessions, but due to the recent spike in COVID cases, the program had to revert back to virtual. This has posed a challenge to some families as many youth are burnt out on Zoom sessions. She is hopeful to go back to this hybrid model since it was so well-received and effective.

She doesn't suspect truancy numbers are low, but she does suspect the schools are overwhelmed with the changing field of COVID that things maybe falling to the waist side. She recently attended a Superintendent Roundtable on December 10, 2021, to discuss family crisis and traumatic loss coalition. All involved are proving to be very overwhelmed. C. Montelius encouraged that FCIU is continuing to reach out to schools and advised they can help with truancy cases in the current situation.

She indicated there were a few responses related to the traumatic loss coalition. She was at local high school because of a student loss, and it seemed the support was helpful. A team will be going back out to the school later in the week for additional support. Another response was a teacher loss at another local school.

C. Montelius also conveyed she does suicide prevention training/gatekeeper training. She stated that if anyone was looking for any kind of training which can be provided to any kind of staff or the general population, it is called Question Persuade and Refer (QPR). The training covers what to look for, the warning signs to take notice of and how to ask the questions should one be presented in a situation. It also covers how to get the distraught connected to help to ultimately prevent a suicide from happening.

- G. **Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI)**: D. Childers reported there are three meetings scheduled in January for some of the committees. No other reports.

IV. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- A. **Nominating Committee Report**: G. Kaufman reported that C. Montelius, S. Carew, K. Williams and herself met as the nominating committee to review the list of eligible candidates. She is happy to announce that Sheriff Brown has accepted the nomination to be Co-Chair for this committee for 2022. Thank you, Sheriff Brown! The other nominee will be the new juvenile judge that has yet to be appointed.

Gayle Kaufman asked if any committee member was opposed to the nomination of Sheriff Brown as the Co-Chair for the 2022 year. C. Montelius made a Motion and S. Carew seconded the Motion to nominate Sheriff Brown as Co-Chair of the Youth Services Commission. No oppositions. The Motion carried.

V. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. **Prevention Programming Planning Discussion**: D. Childers shared this is a combination of unfinished and new business based on discussion from the September and November meetings. There were two topics discussed - 1) devising a way to adjust the planning process for the comprehensive plan, and 2) redirecting funds from an existing program through re-RFP. After further discussion at the county level, there wasn't adequate planning documentation to align with the existing scope of services used in the departments' RFP process. The YSC planning recommendations that were completed in 2020 need to be revisited. D. Childers feels right now this would be a wonderful opportunity to get a jumpstart on the planning process for 2023. She stressed the importance to discuss prevention programming planning and the needs in Hunterdon County. Substance use disorder has always been a topic of discussion and unfortunately, with the change in juvenile laws, police won't be involved with handling these types of cases which is concerning. Historically, Hunterdon County has been of the preventative mindset to address behaviors early on, so youth won't progress deeper into the system, including family court. D. Childers feels this would be a great opportunity to include the schools. They are overwhelmed as C. Montelius commented earlier, and mostly will now handle substance use concerns without assistance from the police departments. The subcommittee would be meeting and discuss what the issues could be, what type of programming that could work and possibly have a representative from each of the high schools. This may be a good opportunity to re-think how schools can better access services within the county.

C. Montelius asked when D. Childers was looking to conduct these meetings as she had some suggestions to support this effort. She mentioned a FCIU has a working group through the Prosecutor's Office called the Violent Youth Working Group, schools participate so maybe something could be worked out.

L. Gabel stated she had meetings with Hunterdon Central High School, and she offered to email D. Childers some suggested names of people who are already involved in that subcommittee. She also

advised the school is piloting a program solely at Hunterdon Central and they did not have enough resources as needed. The cases had increased to 20 now. What the school is doing based on the types of problems the schools are having a lot of harassment, intimidating, and bullying concerns with the younger grades, as well as assaults. Discussion ensued.

VI. AGENCY NEWS:

Youth Employment Services – S. Rozycki conveyed the agency is still looking for referrals for those out of school youth 16-24 who need any help with any barriers.

Family Success Center – L. Gabel reported that C. Gettings had retired. The new director is Megan Moore. She had been with Prevention Resources for two years. The staff is sad to see Carmel Gettings retire but are certainly happy for her! L. Gabel again raised the concern of the increase of cases related to assault, harassments, bullying, as well as criminal mischief, cyber harassments, vaping, and marijuana in the schools. She noted the agency is expanding their LEAP program to work with parents regarding their children that are struggling. She stated that all their services are provided all remote.

Safe in Hunterdon – S. Pawlowski stated Safe In Hunterdon is looking to get their central violence programming ready for the Spring 2022. She conveyed her agency is also running into the same issues as school going virtual and are overwhelmed. Hopefully, they will receive some good news by the end of the month, their targeted schools are JP Case in Flemington and Clinton Township Middle School.

VII. ADJOURN:

The meeting of January 5, 2022 was adjourned, and the next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 12:30 pm via Webex. A motion was made by Sheriff Brown and seconded by S. Carew.