


Tompkins County
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD

Tompkins County Whole Health
201 East Green Street
Ithaca, New York 14850-5421

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Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee

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Substance Use Subcommittee

Mental Health Subcommittee Meeting
Via Zoom
April 16, 2024, @ 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Minutes Approved
May 21, 2024

Present: Mary Hutchens; Ed Bergman; Jessica Conner; Tracy Decker

Excused: Larry Roberts; Ben Komor; Dan Doyle; and Susan Tabrizi

Unexcused: Mary Orsaio

Guests Present: Briggs Seekins, Challenge; Roy Murdough, Amanda Howlett, Catholic Charities; Tim Lockwood, Catholic Charities

Staff Present: Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, DCS; Rich Shaw, TCWH Dual Recovery Coordinator; Ross Milne, Public Health Fellow; Frankie Pyrtle, Public Health Fellow; and Karan Palazzo, LGU AA TCWH

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Mary. Introductions were made. A quorum was not made, and the March 19, 2024, minutes could not be approved.

Privilege of the Floor & Announcements: Jessica shared that the YMCA is hosting their annual Healthy Kids Day on Saturday, April 20th from 1 – 3 pm. It is a free community event.

Request for Proposals (RFP) Updates - Ross Milne, Public Health Graduate Fellow provided updates on the three Request for Proposals (RFPs) that tie into mental health and substance use disorders and will briefly discuss the relationship to local services plan objectives.

The Request For Proposals:

- Innovation Housing Solutions and Intensive Supports RFP: To provide emergency housing, intensive support, and streamlined service coordination to help stabilize people living in a cycle of crisis and bridge the gap between crisis response services and permanent supportive housing/community-based care. Combined funding was \$1,369,000 from the Local Governing Unit (LGU) and the City of Ithaca which was approved by the Legislature. It aims to bridge gaps between crisis response services and traditional supportive housing and to provide housing and support services for 10 individuals

- Opioid Settlement Funds RFP - Facilitated County Opioid Settlement Funds Task Force distribution of \$725,000 to community organizations
- coupled with the City of Ithaca, the RFP is out and advertised to the public
- The Outreach Worker Program RFP – the City of Ithaca and the Downtown Alliance partnered to create a joint RFP for the Outreach Worker programs to operationalize in the downtown and rural areas. The RFP is under review with county finance and the county attorney and after its approval, the RFP will be advertised.
- Facilitate an RFP process to find a vendor to administer the program

- Received pilot funds from OMH to Outreach Worker program to rural parts of the county
- Advocate for and received funds from TC legislature to continue the program
- Led the Community Services Board to create a rapid housing and crisis services program using Opioid Settlement Funds

Mental health concerns, gaps, and challenges for students, families, and their parents

- Students and/or caregivers struggle to access mental health therapists
- Long wait lists for intakes and limited appointments
- Limited access to mental health services for students with learning disabilities and social-emotional disabilities who are having significant mental health behavioral challenges (tier three children)
- Limited available crisis services while students are in crisis
- Limited intensive case management, in-home crisis support, crisis support skills for parents/families, and transportation issues
- Limited finances and accessing Family & Children's Services (long waitlist)
- EMS evaluation of situations who deny service when kids are in crisis or make statements of intent to harm
- No discharge plans after the crisis kids are stabilized and no follow-up
- No access to medical homes and transportation issues
- No services for kids with substance use issues (Harmony stated that they are working closely with OASAS to develop a proposal for prevention services since the Alcohol & Drug Council's closure)
- Direction on how to assist students when parents are not involved or against mental health services which hinder support for the child (how to help the child when the parent does not give consent)
- Need for autism services and co-occurring mental health services
- Acknowledging kids in tier one and tier two
- Accessibility to programs for younger students
- School avoidance/absenteeism and substance use are common
- Lower academic skills impacting mental health and behavior skills
- Increased suicidal ideation including in elementary children
- Accessing psychiatrists, medication, and prescribers in a timely and competently
- Lack of eating disorder services
- Need for family-based activities
- Parent struggles to find mental health resources for their children leave them feeling isolated and helpless
- Limited resources for students who are not Tompkins County residents despite being eligible for services
- Impact of new housing developments in the already limited mental health services available
- Connecting families with needed resources and assistance in navigating multiple barriers to access resources
- Bullying

Staff concerns

- Limited and insufficient number of special education teachers, school psychologists, nurses, resources, and training
- Feeling overwhelmed with increased demands for mental health support leading to inadequate resources for some students
- Need for information on available services and resources in our immediate county and surrounding counties

Wishlist

- Family liaison/coordinator/navigator
- More One on One Aides
- More sports activities
- Mentors
- Mental Health First Aid trainings (MHA and Sally Manning offer and work with TST BOCES on a coordinated approach to suicide prevention training)

Suggested platforms to continue the dialogue

- Clinical Supervision/Project Teach
- Suggestion box for teachers
- Utilize existing calendar spaces for professional development
- Google form

Sally, the children's SPOA coordinator shared that a new resource is available called the Youth Assertive Community Treatment (ACT). It is a resource for tier 3 youths in crisis, recently hospitalized, recently out of high levels of care, or using all the resources but still not stabilizing. She is available for consultations and encouraged all to reach out to her at SallyMCSS@racker.org. She will join the monthly Mental Health Group in April to explain referrals to SPOA and share other important information.

The Office of Mental Health put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for home base crisis intervention, a very intensive family treatment at home for six to eight weeks for youths 5 to 21 to address some of the needs discussed. Awards will be announced in April.

Sally responded to a question regarding concerns, patterns or challenges in her work: She continues to see children under the age of ten presenting self-harm concerns to the emergency room and not being admitted (she noted that the hospital has beds only for teens); youth with intellectual disabilities and mental health concerns face significant gaps in care with siloed responses from OMH; addressing youths who need higher levels of care, hospitalizations or residential treatment;

Deputy Commissioner's Report/Update - Harmony Ayers-Friedlander

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 pm.

The Next Meeting is Tuesday, May 21, 2024 @ 1 pm