



Tompkins County COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD

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

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Mental Health Subcommittee Meeting Via Zoom May 20, 2025 @ 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Meeting Minutes

Minutes Approved
June 17, 2025

Present: Larry Roberts; Jessica Conner; Mary Hutchens; Tracy Decker; Thom de Lara; and Anderonke Ilegbusi.

Excused: Ben Komor and Susan Tabrizi

Unexcused:

Guests Present: Briggs Seekins, Challenge; Amy Jacot, TC Workforce; Amanda Howlett, Catholic Charities; Judy Magee, Unity House; Jenny Miller, MHA; Micheal Dinnen, SOS Catholic Charities; Cindy Freidmutter

Staff Present: Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm. Introductions were made. Thom moved to approve the April 2025 minutes, seconded by Mary; all were in favor.

Privilege of the Floor & Announcements: Dr. Conner announced that two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are available. The first RFP is focused on creating youth-safe spaces and hangouts, which the Village of Ithaca will be applying for. The second RFP, which is through the New York State Education Department, seeks proposals to provide additional support for homeless youths, and TST BOCES is likely to apply for this.

Jenny mentioned that the Mental Health Association (MHA) has a new location at 511 W. Seneca Street. Additionally, Amy informed us that the Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee will hold its annual Resource Fair at Boynton Middle School on May 21st, from 4:30 to 6:30 PM. Michael shared that Catholic Charities' Housing First has 11 apartments in Tompkins County and has developed relationships over the winter with individuals to help them secure housing.

Discussions:

Emerging Challenges, Gaps, and Service and Progress Made:

Local Service Plan Progress: Larry explains that the Local Service Plan is a multi-year document submitted to state offices (OMH, PWDD, OASAS) that outlines the goals and strategies for community mental health and social services.

1. Unarmed Response Program
 - The Ithaca Police Department and the City of Ithaca are unveiling a new unarmed crisis response program
 - Trained personnel to respond to crisis situations without law enforcement escalation
2. Substance Use and Prevention
 - Addressing youth substance use risks, particularly fentanyl overdoses
 - Discussing Narcan and fentanyl test strips in schools
 - Publicizing resources about substance use and prevention
3. Funding and Resource Awareness
 - Monitoring potential Medicaid and Section 8 funding cuts
 - Exploring 1115 waivers to optimize community resource allocation
 - Tracking potential impacts on mental health service access

4. Crisis Intervention
 - Monitoring 988 suicide prevention crisis line developments
 - Establishing better relationships between mental health recipients and law enforcement
5. Potential Future Presentations
 - Inviting representatives from various agencies to discuss their programs
 - Focusing on youth services, mental health access, and community resources
 - Accessing mental health services for transition youth

Dr. Conner suggests addressing social determinants:

1. Invite Nicole Zulu or someone from the Human Services Coalition to discuss 1115 waivers
2. Create a more concerted effort to:
 - Understand available funding streams
 - Optimize how the county directs funds to community services
 - Educate the community about available waivers and funding

Larry advocates for a comprehensive understanding of how social and economic factors affect health access and outcomes. He expressed concerns regarding potential cuts to Medicaid and their impact on funding.

Tentative Schedule of Topics for the Remainder of the Year to Complete LSP 2025 Objectives: The group provided suggestions on topics of interest below:

- The developing relationship between 911 and the Suicide Prevention Crisis Line
- REACH Medical's outreach worker program
- Relationship between mental health individuals and law enforcement
- Improved relationship between IPD and the Sheriff
- Invitation to Director of Communications over Tompkins County Whole Health to present
- Invitation to Mental Health Clinic Director to present
- Invitation to new SPOA Coordinator at RACKER
- Invitation to Family & Children Services to present
- TCWH Updates
- School Districts

Amanda states she appreciates the monthly MH subcommittee meetings and the presentations from the different community partners and agencies and finds them very beneficial.

Larry thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting adjourned at 1:53 pm.

The Next Meeting is Tuesday, May 20, 2025 @ 1 pm