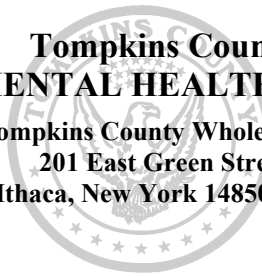


Tompkins County
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD

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



Mary Hutchens, Interim Chair

Ellice Switzer, Vice Chair

Frank Kruppa; Commissioner

Harmony Ayers-Friedlander,
Deputy Commissioner/Director of Community Service

Larry Roberts, Chair,
Mental Health Subcommittee

James Beaumont and Jeff Boles, Co-

Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee

Stu Bergman, Chair,
Substance Use Subcommittee

Chairs,

Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee
January 10th, 2023, 10:00 a.m. Via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

Approved 2.14.23

Present: Jeffrey Boles; James Beaumont; Sheila McEnergy; Nancy Saltzman; Allison Weiner-Heinemann and;

Guests Present: Anne Seepersaud, LifePlan CCO; Briggs Seekins, Challenge; Darlene Podolak, Unity House; and Madison Saufley, Southern Tier Connect.

Excused:

Unexcused: Dorothy Lovelace

Staff: Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, Deputy Commissioner; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

.....
The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by James. Sheila motioned to approve the December 2022 meeting minutes, Nancy 2nd by. All were in favor.

.....
Privilege of the Floor: None

Announcements/Correspondence: James shared that the City of Ithaca’s Holiday Show will be held at the Hanger Theatre on December 21st at 10:30 am and noting the first since COVID. Briggs shared that OPWDD released the **Specific Vocational Training** RFA for the provision of career-specific vocational training for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He believes the grant is structured more for urban areas or regionally vs. smaller communities and suggested agencies collaborate to produce the required numbers.

Ellice added that she spoke to Julia Kelly about this grant and approaching it regionally with an agency lead and have sub-awards to other agencies. She recommended including Jan Lynch of FLIC in the conversations.

Provider Updates:

Challenge – Briggs shared that Challenge received a \$52k grant from the Tompkins County Relief Fund to build out the college experience program with hopes of collaborating with Ithaca College.

Southern Tier Connect (STC) – Madison shared that getting out and seeing more people; people have the option for in-person or telehealth; will share links to upcoming webinars.

Unity House – James shared that they are looking to bring new people into the program with consideration of the settings for OPWDD and pushing for integrative space; the Ithaca program has the Lansing Community room at the mall four days a week. People seem to appreciate the mall’s location.

Darlene added that Unity House is collaborating with several agencies to submit an RFA due in February for the OPWDD career-specific vocational training.

Tompkins County Whole Health: Harmony shared that the County is starting a co-response model with the mobile crisis team with the sheriff's department. The Ithaca Police Department will soon follow. People can call 911 directly for law enforcement and the mobile crisis team to respond together in mental health crisis situations. Training work continues with the consultants' assistance on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics as well as trauma-informed care.

2023 Developmental Subcommittee Goals: Deputy Commissioner of Community Services, Harmony Ayers-Friedlander shared that any goals that were not completed moved over to the 2023 goals and shared her screen of the document of goals, and objectives to be achieved.

Goals pulled from 2022 to 2023

- Workforce Recruitment and Retention – Support the implementation of recruitment and retention strategies by mental hygiene service providers
 - Compile a list of innovative recruitment/retention strategies across mental hygiene services to share with local providers
 - Participate in ongoing advocacy efforts to highlight the severity of the workforce crisis at the state and local level
 - Solicit staff vacancy information from participating provider agencies to better understand the local impact
 - Quantify loss of services in the community due to workforce shortage across the service sector based on vacancy information collected above
 - Gather point-in-time data on staff diversity in the local mental hygiene system
- Housing - Promote a housing-first approach that increases the availability of affordable, emergency, and supportive housing that best meets the needs of individuals who require intensive, specialized community-based interventions for stabilization and success across the mental hygiene system
 - Gather information about local housing including available residential supports
 - Learn about new/proposed housing solutions including residential programming, the challenges, and successes
 - Prioritize restoration of OPWDD residential beds lost during COVID
 - Advocate for additional emergency and supportive housing solutions
- Crisis Services - Support the development of comprehensive crisis services that address the mental hygiene needs of Tompkins County and our region.
 - Promote new regional CSIDD services now available for individuals receiving services through OPWDD
 - Learn about the CLMHDs and OPWDDs piloted work with Mobile Crisis Teams – lessons learned, strategies to implement locally
 - Explore solutions to expand access to crisis supports across the mental hygiene system including improved community awareness of service offerings
 - Implement at least two activities designed to improve relationships between law enforcement departments and mental health recipients
 - Explore options with community stakeholders on ways to address gaps in current crisis services offered that are financially sustainable
- Cross System Services - Improve access to care across the mental hygiene system
 - Clarify what services are available to individuals with cross-system needs by creating a side-by-side comparison of services in OASAS, OMH, and OPWDD to maximize service provision
 - Advocate for OPWDD Waiver flexibility to better meet cross-system needs
 - Collaborate with 211 to ensure information is updated, and accurate and offers linkages across mental hygiene services to improve access to care
 - Identify ways to reduce potential barriers to post-secondary transition support services for transition-age youth receiving OPWDD services
- Non-Clinical Supports - Recognize the importance of social determinants of health including health equity and the social supports provided by peers.

- Become familiar with the barriers to healthcare access including dental and optical care for Medicaid recipients receiving developmental disabilities services.
- Identify gaps in community supports for mental hygiene recipients.
- Collect benchmark data on health equity to improve access to quality services for minoritized communities.
- Identify strategies to improve health equity across Tompkins County.

Harmony stated that the 3-year planning process from the State is not yet available but should be by the Spring.

Anne complimented Harmony on all the work done to pull this together and recognized that the three systems, OPWDD, OASAS, and OMH can work together to better support people.

Harmony clarified that “diversity” included in the Local Services Plans is currently being defined by a committee of DCSs’, members of the Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors, and state representatives. She will update when available.

James shared that he and Jeff met via Zoom with OPWDD Region 2 representatives for transition services that cover all 197 school districts within that region. They will present at the February meeting to discuss goals, strategies, challenges, services, and concerns for kids coming out of school. James stated that this would also tie into the 211 project and the provider fair nearly planned prior to COVID. He suggested re-planning the fair for Fall 2023 which will allow a space for all the OPWDD providers to inform the public of all the services available in Tompkins County.

James and Jeff met with BOCES representatives about transition services. An invitation was extended to attend the DD subcommittee meetings for them to get a better understanding of the process the kids need to get through the front door, HCBS waiver services, or other options.

Jeff is concerned about how to bridge the gaps in these multi-faceted problems and suggested forming a workgroup outside of the subcommittee for the conversations to continue. Briggs agreed to join the workgroup and voiced his concerns that the majority of BOCES kids have transition requirements and the guidance counselor is not clear on the front door.

Sheila agreed to join the workgroup but feels reaching out to people (Jennifer Gondek) currently working in the school district would be very beneficial as she has been retired for a few years. She agreed that parents must have access to information and must be informed so they can advocate on behalf of their children and also agreed with Jeff stating it is a multi-problem.

Anne stated that in her experience, it has been the parents’ choice to pursue it and sometimes they choose not to pursue it or when they are ready. She said LifePlan has a member engagement team department of experienced care managers who really understand OPWDD services and the front door with members who will join the workgroup. LifePlan has staff who regularly engage with the school districts in Tompkins County, BOCES, as well as pediatric offices to help provide information and encouragement. They have ongoing information sessions with key people who would help not only children but also adults access the front door and then hopefully services.

Madison agreed to join the workshop.

James reported meeting with TC3, Cayuga and Cortland Workforce Development. TC3# offers a healthcare fair every other year and wanted to tag human services to talk to students about working with people with developmental disabilities. He will soon meet with the Chair of the Human Services Department to discuss a certification similar to NADSP certification. TC3 has a current connection with Racker. James met with the new Workforce Development director and they are interested in encouraging more people to the human services field. James asked group members to join a workgroup about workforce issues. Amy will more than likely be interested in attending the meetings.

James reported that he unfortunately will not be able to attend next month’s meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:03 am.

**The next Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee Meeting is
February 14th, 2023, at 10:00 am.**