



Tompkins County
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD

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

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Substance Use Subcommittee

Substance Use Subcommittee Meeting
September 13th, 2023 – 12 to 1 p.m. Via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

Minutes Approved 10.11.23

Present: Marley Brooks; Jacob Parker Carver; Stu Bergman; and Ron Schoneman

Excused: Tom Lipa

Unexcused: Molly Murphy

Guests: Briggs Seekins, Challenge; Scott Sherwood; Roy Murdough; Brad Walworth, CARS; Eric Jensen, CHS/CARS; Ashley Dickson, TC3; Susie Pedersen; Noah Valdez; and Brandi Remington TST BOCES

Staff Present: Rich Shaw, TCWH; Zoe Lincoln, TCWH; and Karan Palazzo, LGU-Administrative Assistant, TCWH

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The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Jacob. Introductions were made. Ron moved to approve the July 2023 minutes; 2nd by Marley; all were in favor.
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Privileges of the Floor:

Announcements/Correspondence: Brandi shared that October is Anti-Bullying Month and encouraged members to go to TST BOCES' website for upcoming events. Zoe shared that a Suicide Prevention Townhall will take place on September 28, 2023, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at GIAC with light refreshments.

Jake met with SUS members and guests and found that people wanted direction and action steps coming out of the space; presentations from agencies on their work; issue-based discussions on specific topics relevant to the community with multiple providers speaking on how to address the issue; a better understanding of the entire ecosystem of prevention, treatment and recovery; to hear from agencies about gaps and challenges; and to have open conversations about systemic obstacles in providing care; and to hear from staff about burnout and barriers to recruitment and retention for substance use services.

Jake and Marley plan to attend the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities subcommittee meetings; see what other counties' substance use subcommittees are doing and take notes;

Review of the Local Services Plan: The PowerPoint presentation provided the structure and guide for the subcommittee's work including reporting back to New York State on the progress towards the goals and objectives with a timeline. Below are the listed goals with no particular priority. The Substance Use Subcommittee (SUS) is not responsible for all of the objectives under of goals but there may be opportunities for collaboration with other subcommittees in shared responsibilities in identified goals and objectives.

- Goals:
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|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Workforce | 3. Crisis Services | 5. Non-Clinical Supports | 7. Transition Age Services |
| 2. Housing | 4. Cross Services | 6. Adverse Childhood Experiences | |

Workforce – Support the implementation of recruitment and retention strategies by mental hygiene service providers in Tompkins County as measured by a reduction in staff vacancies.

Marley suggested hearing from agencies about how the workforce shortage is impacting service, how are they adapting based on the shortage of staff and what incentives are they offering to retain them. As Stacy of ADC has mentioned in meetings, they had to delay the opening of the Detox Center due to challenges in hiring.

Eric shared that CARS experienced significant vacancies for clinical and nursing staff similar to ADC. Although they have been able to address the issue, they had to restrict the number of people they could accommodate. Eric said that with a skyrocketed vacancy rate at the hospital during COVID-19, they did not have to restrict the number of beds but incurred financial challenges as they relied on agency staffing. CARS was only able to accommodate less than 50% of the licensed residence capacity; accommodating only 26 – 30 of the 60 licensed beds.

Brandi added that they are experiencing the same challenges in prevention with staffing shortages. TST BOCES has been down prevention specialists for two years and there are shortages of social workers and counselors in the schools throughout the county.

Brad added that significant checks and training for new staffing are necessary.

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.

Eric shared that many individuals in recovery without state-issued ID face barriers to accessing housing. Rich, the SPOA Coordinator states there have always been waitlists for supportive housing for recovery, and the paperwork and proper document issues tie into it.

Crisis Services - Support the development of comprehensive crisis services that address the mental hygiene needs of Tompkins County and our region as it relates to substance use.

Marley suggested having discussions of how other communities are responding to overdoses, their follow-up, and crisis support for future topics.

Cross-System Services - Improve access to care across the mental hygiene system as it relates to substance use. SUS is responsible for improving public awareness of available services across systems for improving coordination of services across Mental Hygiene systems and using opioid overdose data to guide interventions across Mental Hygiene systems.

Marley believes it would be a powerful opportunity to bring everyone together to address the cross-systems service gaps and highlight the ones that are working.

Non-Clinical Supports - Recognize the importance of social determinants of health to promote wellness and recovery and improve health equity. SUS is responsible for identifying healthcare access barriers for Medicaid recipients receiving mental hygiene services by the end of 2026.

Jake proposed that SUS improve health and equity for substance use services and is excited about improving access for mentally minoritized populations as well as supporting greater awareness and utilization of peer support services.

Adverse Childhood Experiences – Build resilience in youth and adults impacted by childhood trauma. SUS is not responsible for this but can factor into conversations.

Brandi added that it is important to focus on what are the supportive protective factors. Rich agreed and added to address and identify risks when people develop substance use disorders in their pre-teens and teens.

Age Transition – Ensuring adequate supports are available for youth especially as they transition to adulthood across the mental hygiene system. SUS is responsible for ensuring the availability of effective substance use prevention services for youth and young adults.

Brandi added that prevention is a spectrum with different markers for different age groups.

Substance Use Subcommittee Responsibilities:

Due
End of 2024

- Understand the Scope of the Workforce Shortage
- Quantify the Impact of the Workforce Shortage on Service Delivery
- Better Understand Interaction Between Homelessness and Disability
- Gather Information about Housing Reductions

End of 2025

- Highlight the Severity of the Workforce Crisis in Advocacy Efforts
- Support Workforce Diversity
- Advocacy for Housing Solutions
- Identify Best Practice Crisis Response Across Mental Hygiene Systems
- Expand Access to Crisis Supports
- Improve Public Awareness of Available Services Across Systems
- Improve Coordination of Services Across Mental Hygiene System
- Use Opioid Overdose Data to Guide Interventions Across MH System
- Ensure Availability of Effective SU Prevention Services for Youth/Young Adults

End of 2026

- Gather Information about Housing Solutions
- Identify Healthcare Access Barriers for Medicaid Recipients Receiving Mental Hygiene Services

Provider Updates:

St. John’s Community Services – Roy shared that SJCS is anticipating providing reintegration services at 402 South Albany Street, Ithaca in Tompkins County by November 1st after a review from the Behavioral Health Services Advisory Council on September 21st. Grant money was received through the Tompkins County Recovery Fund for renovations. A program director has been hired and looking to be fully staffed to provide services.

IRC – Scott shared that a new AAA group focused on the LGBTQ community called “Out and Sober” meets on Sundays at noon. The local NA is growing and meets Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 7 p.m.

CARS – Eric shared that they currently have no vacancies in nursing and have added three full-time psychiatric nurses; the development of the women’s residence campus is moving forward; and the men’s residence will transition over to the women’s residence soon. Their residence staffing issues were addressed through hiring, retaining, and collaborating with Cayuga Medical Center by prioritizing the internal growth and development of employees, particularly in the field of psychiatric nursing.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

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**The next Substance Use Subcommittee Meeting
will be held on October 11, 2023, from 12 – 1 pm**