

Partner Meeting

August 16, 2019, from 9:00 to 11:00 am

Hypertherm, 71 Heater Road, Lebanon

Meeting Notes

Introductions & Information Sharing (see list of attendees on last page):

- **Suellen Griffin** announces that the new CEO of WCBH will start on September 16th.
- **Maggie Monroe-Cassel** shared information about Celebrate Recovery Day on September 28th.
- **Whitney Hussong** announced a September CIT class with 2 openings.
- **Dana Michalovic** announced a temporary hold on dental patients to give them time to address a backlog. Please call for urgent needs.
- **Bridget Aliaga** announced several childcare trainings and the syringe exchange program at Valley Regional Hospital.
- **Steve Yannuzzi** reported on Hepatitis A vaccines. Currently, there have been 174 cases in NH. Rudy Fedrizzi reports the VT DOH is also doing Hepatitis A vaccine clinics.

Director's Update:

Alice provided brief update on the following:

- Planning for the Fall Legislative Event
- New Childhood Lead Prevention Work
- Review of the agendas for upcoming PHC meetings

PHC Presentations and Work Session:

Providing Mental Health Services & Supports in the Upper Valley: New Initiatives, Gaps & Opportunities

Panelists:

- Suellen Griffin, West Central Behavioral Health
- George Karabakakis, Health Care & Rehabilitation Services
- Susan Borchert, Counseling Associates
- Faye Gearson, Twin Pines Housing

Suellen provided an overview of WCBH's services:

- The benefit of their recent Access Redesign was that patients were never discharged when they could be and this fed the waitlist. They are starting to discharge some patients and opening up space for new patients.
- Workforce shortages still create blockages that come and go depending on vacant positions. They still need masters level therapists, APRNs and psychiatrists. They have a 25% turnover rate now, which has gone down but is still too high.
- They will be taking over management of the Bridges Program for the State of NH. This Bridge Subsidy Program assists consumers diagnosed with serious mental illness (SMI) or SMI with co-occurring substance abuse disorders secure affordable housing. This model incorporates payment of security deposits, utility connection (not arrearages), and rent supplement until the consumer is able to receive a federal Section 8 housing voucher or another subsidy. This is not limited to WCBH clients.
- Suellen highlighted larger state (NH) issues:
 - Emergency Department Boarding problem – state is opening up 40+ beds for children in Hampstead, which may relieve the problem for children, but Hampstead is very far away for many local families.

- State's 10-Year Plan – there are funds in the budget to address parts of the plan. There is an increase in Medicaid rates, student loan repayment.
- There is a 3rd MCO entering the market (AmeriHealth).
- Rule changes on transporting patients from EDs to NH Hospital. Previously patients had to be in handcuffs and shackles (by state law). This was traumatic and stigmatizing. Governor has signed a bill to allow medical providers to determine what restraints as needed.
- The 99 Faces project is trying to help address stigma.

George Karabakakis provided an overview of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services:

- They are the designated mental health agency for Windham and Windsor Counties, serving adults and children, with a staff of about 600 and 13 locations;
- They are the region's developmental services agency;
- They provide emergency mental health services;
- They run the Kimball Farms School, providing behavioral health services to boys;
- They provide services for VTs Division of Children and Families, are embedded in numerous schools and primary care settings (5 hospitals in the region), and collaborate with the Haven, law enforcement (police social worker), and do a lot of SDOH supported employment work. They also run an In Shape program, supportive housing and some residential programs.

George discussed the importance of the continuum of care and mentioned Great River Terrace, a program with the Windham-Windsor Housing Trust, as a model of low barrier, housing first approaches.

Their challenges include:

- Workforce recruitment and retention (20 to 22% turnover rate);
- 90% of their revenue comes from Medicaid and rates are not adequate;
- They have gone through a payment reform, which is working reasonably well;
- They use peer support programs to help fill gaps.

Susan Borchert provided an overview of Counseling Associates:

- 15 years old and growing steadily, they are a private practice, mission driven provider, taking all insurances (including VT/NH Medicaid and Medicare).
- They have about 35 clinicians. They have struggled with recruitment but with IDN support they have grown their internship relationships with UNH, SNHU, and Plymouth State.
- They have counselors and social workers, but no MD/Psychiatrists yet.
- They conduct Outpatient Treatment, groups, MAT (new) and have offices in New London, Claremont, Newport, and Hanover.
- They are embracing the integrated care approach as well as SDOH. They are integrating into school districts in Lebanon, Grantham, and Sunapee, among others. They are also working with employers.
- Hoping to increase their capacity to deliver SUD services.

Faye Grearson shared the Twin Pines Housing Trust's perspective on mental health supports:

TPHT staff are generalists who do outreach on behalf of their clients/residents.

TPHT has about 400 apartments from Enfield to Woodstock. Some of their funding is dependent on them providing supportive services. They have 2 FTEs dedicated to supportive services but need more. Their goal is to work with all residents, providing regular check-ins.

They have some specialty housing. Their transitional housing is difficult to sustain and tough when people have to move out. Housing First is not housing only. Their Parkhurst Apartments are for chronically homeless residents; this is a joint project with the Haven and 14 other organizations that they

have reached out to for services. [18 months in there have been no evictions and one person voluntarily moved out to stable housing elsewhere in TPHT, of a total of 16 units].

In October, TPHT will be hosting a landlord training session to help landlords learn about resources and strategies for supporting residents.

- There is a monthly housing support meeting to keep landlords up to date and engaged.
- They promote Master Lease Agreements with agencies to be able to house special populations.

Faye closed with their philosophy that it is critical to keep your “eyes on the apartment.” It may be invasive, but it is important to see problems early to help people preserve their housing (e.g., hoarding, fire hazards, etc.).

Discussion: What else is needed?

- Mobile Crisis Teams in NH (per Suellen). We have ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) but this isn't quite the right thing yet. Vermont does have mobile crisis teams and there 70% of calls are to the ED and 30% are to homes. Suellen suggests more of the police social worker approach.
- Vermont is hoping to fund peer support providers in the ED.
- Lack of transportation options plays out in mental health services, too.
- HCRS is embedded in primary care, but there is still room for improvement.
- Whitney Hussong says the Lebanon Police Department is interested in a police social worker and might have access to some law enforcement grants.
- In primary care integration and SDOH work, there is need for more trainings because of staff turnover. Also, workplace stress suggests the need for more training in self-care and wellness programs (WCBH) to support staff and nurture connections.
- Housing
- Information for clinicians to help clients, referrals
- Forums to listen, we all have our own mandates and missions, but we share the goal of helping people live healthier lives. We need opportunities to get over stigma. According to George, there is a group that meets in WRJ. Perhaps we can develop a small project to bring people together. Alice to talk to George for more ideas.
- Dental Care (AmeriHealth has a dental benefit.)
- Food insecurity: Build out the summer meals programs, invite other programs to come with information and resources. Leverage these opportunities.
- What can businesses do? Volunteers, teach yoga/mindfulness, etc, educate themselves about mental health and stigma.

Next Meeting:

Friday, September 20, 9:00 to 11:00 am
Hypertherm, 71 Heater Road, Lebanon

Meeting Attendees (August 16, 2019)

Pedro Altagracia, New Futures
Susan Borchert, Counseling Associates
Stephanie Cameron, IDN 1
Anne Carey, Kearsarge Regional School District
Patrick Christie
Nora Doyle-Burr, Valley News
Jim Esdon, CHAD/Injury Prevention Center
Alice Ely, PHC
Rudy Fedrizzi, VDOH -- WRJ
Faye Grearson, Twin Pines Housing
Suellen Griffin, WCBH
Samantha Hardy, LSRVNA Intern
Whitney Hussong, HCRS/ Hartford PD
George Karabakakis, Health Care & Rehabilitation Services
Casey Kelly, Alice Peck Day
Steve Kelly, Better Life Partners
Lisa LaBombard, Hypertherm
Karry LaHaye, Alice Peck Day
Maggie Monroe-Cassel, TLC Family Resource Center
Peter Mason, IDN
Dana Michalovic, Good Neighbor Health Clinic
Liz Swanton, Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital
Steve Yannuzzi, DHMC
Emily Zanleoni, Hartford Community Coalition