

Seneca County Community Services Board

Susan Ottenweller, Chair

MH SUBCOMMITTEE

November 16, 2021

(Conducted via videoconference)

Members Present: Margaret Morse, Brenda Black, Pat Plyter, Bob Ritter, Jeanette Rock, Susan Ottenweller, Ashley Kise, Jennifer Palmer, Shelby Fisher, Tammy Anhorn

Members Excused: Sandie Case, Kathy Sinkiewicz, Sally Manning, John Cleere, Ann Scott

Welcome - Meeting was called to order. Introductions made.

Bob Ritter – Children Services – Quarterly report was sent out. Pathways – there are 11 youths on the waiting list. There is a waiting list as there is a staff shortage and the staff that is currently working at Pathways will not travel to Seneca County. These youths are referred by their care manager to any agency that provides the services needed. Bob will facilitate to work the all the agencies to get the youth connected with services. Pathways should be reaching out to the care managers that have referred the youth to their facility to see if another agency has the capacity/services to get these youth connected. Bob Ritter will monitor the next reports from the agency to see if these youth have been connected to services. This is in part to these numbers are reported to the Community Services Board. Cayuga Centers also currently has a waitlist. These agencies are not subcontracted thru Seneca County to service Seneca County Youth. The only agencies that report to the subcommittees are contracted with Seneca County. The shortage of staff is a state wide issue.

Bob Ritter has become certified to train as a Youth Mental Health First Aid trainer. Joe Fantigrossi from Family Counseling of the Finger Lakes was also trained. It is recommended to co-teach. This will be offered to the community, to the schools and to other provider agencies. Part of the application when we become certified was when do you anticipate the first training to be set up, Bob had commented in January 2022. The training Bob had taken was in October 2021 and November and December are big holiday months. In January Bob Ritter and Joe Fantigrossi will look at the calendar and start reaching out to everyone and see when they are available throughout the year.

Ashley Kise – Lakeview – A quarterly report was submitted. The forensic apartment is currently occupied. A second forensic apartment will open as soon as a place has been established and the paperwork completed. Prior to someone moving in the apartment will undergo a remodel and then be ready for rental.

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West End Heights in Ithaca will be opening by the end of November 2021. These are regular residential treatment beds, community beds and ESSHI supportive housing beds. Residential and ESSHI only requires a SPOA referral from any county. Anyone can apply for a community apartment. Ashley can forward the application to Margaret Morse to send to Seneca Housing.

Overall residential including Seneca County we are looking at staff shortages and unable to fill beds. Without a full staff we are unable to accommodate all the clients. Lakeview is doing their best to get close to full occupancy.

All of Lakeview's residential programming are reported for occupancy. Out of 176 beds across the region, 143 are filled. Lakeview Heights is just specific to the Heights. Lakeview Heights has 4 vacancies. Some of the issues is based on the property management or paperwork for verifying financials.

Are inmates accepted in the West End Heights bed? There are certain restrictions from a tax credit standpoint of certain offenses that cannot be accepted. There is a thorough back ground check. Developmentally handicapped for residential would need to be screened for residential to see if they meet the need. They would need to have a diagnosis of a severe and persistent mental illness. There also has to a certain level of self-sufficiency, they would have to administer their own medications, and they would need to be self-preserved. There are certain things that disqualify anyone from residential beds or community beds.

Shelby Fisher – Happiness House – Submitted a Quarterly report. Happiness House serves children in the preschool level, there are also adult services for people with traumatic brain injury (TBI), or falls on the nursing home diversion. This service is a wrap-around program to help keep people out of the nursing homes. And in their home in the community. There is also day programming for individuals with TBI/NHTD, along with clinic and some counseling services. Happiness House is down two service coordinators and staffing has been an issue with that. Across the board when another agency refers someone to Happiness House it may be due to them not having the staffing.

Happiness House continues to serve 5 individuals from Seneca County that has TBI's. The agency is looking to expand services and will provide Management services for children and adults through CHHUNY and HHUNY. It has been a challenge to connect with HHUNY to begin this process. When reached out to CHHUNY, they are not onboarding new agencies. Currently we service about 50 individuals with TBI/NHTD's across the area.

Happiness House is looking to hire 2 Service Coordinators for open positions. Individuals applying must have a Bachelor's degree with three years Case Management experience.

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Sandie Case – Unity House – A report has been submitted. Not in attendance.

Sally Manning – Rackers Center – A report was submitted. Sally Manning is on vacation.

Jeanette Rock - reporting for Tom Premo – Drop In Center – New Staff schedule for Monday – Wednesday from 10am to 4:30pm, Thursday and Friday from 10am to 7pm, and a half day on Saturdays from 12 to 5. There were 364 members last month, a few of the old members have come back. We meet with FLACRA twice a month and they are looking to start an advisory board for the staff in the public. The DIC transports a few individuals who have memberships, twice a week on Wednesdays and Friday to NYCC.

Margaret Morse – DCS – The Crisis Response Team will have 4 peer advocates, they do not have to be certified when they begin, they will need to have lived experiences as a qualification. Once started, through the grant they will go through trainings to become certified. They would need to be provisionally certified within 6 months and have their permanent certification within a year. The individual for peer counseling will be certified for mental health and substance abuse, they may come in as a certified recovery peep advocate, but will get the mental health training as well to serve both populations.

The addictions clinic essentially has two full times peer advocates. The individuals who work with them would say that services that these individuals offer to them are the some of the most valuable they experience.

Mental Health is working with Finger Lakes Health in promoting Zero Suicide framework with providers in Seneca County and surrounding counties in hopes this is being conducted at every visit, adult and child, whether it is a well visit or sick visit. In fidelity to the Zero Suicide model and the evidence that we have that 40% of persons who died by suicide had a health care visit within 30 days. If we could do universal screening with everybody, we could save lives.

Next meeting will be held February 15, 2022 @ 5:30. CSB to follow at 6:30pm.

Submitted by: L. Reynolds