

LUZERNE-WYOMING COUNTIES MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (MHDS)
ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, May 27, 2021
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Participants: Commissioner Tom Henry – Chairman, Linda Armstrong, Melisa Littleton, Craig Mark, Tom O’Neill, Councilman Steve Urban, Dave Wilson. *Staff:* Tara Vallet – Administrator, Amy Tomkoski, Margaret Manley, Gail Stredny, Joan Kaminski, John Alunni, Mike Donahue, Atty. Romilda Crocamo, Commissioner Ernie King.

Welcome – Commissioner Henry, Chairman of the Advisory Board, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

Approval of March 25, 2021 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes – *Commissioner Henry presented a motion to accept the minutes of the March 25, 2021 Advisory Board meeting. This was moved by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Ms. Littleton. All were in favor to accept the minutes as written.*

Administrator’s Report

- *Financial Services Update* – Ms. Manley, Fiscal Director, reviewed the Revenue and Expenditure Report through April 30, 2021 for fiscal year 2020-2021. Please see attached report. The following was also discussed:
 - Ms. Manley also reported that that the Human Services Block Grant application was received from the State. Fiscal information is being compiled for the plan which is due by the end of July. Staff is also working on end of fiscal year processes.
 - Mr. Wilson asked if the County MHDS Office will receive any funding from the American Rescue Plan that was passed by Congress due to COVID-19. The County MHDS Office submitted a proposal to SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) for over \$1 million for service creation. Ms. Vallet noted her concern since this one-time funding does not allow for sustainability of services. Commissioner Henry indicated that counties have not received exact direction regarding distribution of the funding but are watching it closely through grant announcements. Commissioner King reiterated that there is a mental health component which funding may need to be requested through a grant system. The funding will also be available to spend over a longer term to 2025. With this in mind, Mr. O’Neill stated it is a great opportunity to allow for pilot testing to occur. He recommended that innovative programs be created with the four-year funding that can then be used as a model to request additional funding. Mr. O’Neill suggested utilizing the monies to better retain employees in the system through possible outreach/awareness efforts. Ms. Vallet also noted that creation of a Fairweather Lodge is being discussed. This is a recovery, evidence-based program, with consumers operating a business downstairs so job skills are being taught. Apartments would be available upstairs for safe, stable housing. Commissioner Henry noted his support for this type of business for consumers which is a similar concept to the business/bakery that Keystone Community Resources operated in Tunkhannock prior to the pandemic.

Commissioner Henry presented a motion to accept the financial report. This was moved by Mr. Mark and seconded by Mr. Wilson. All were in agreement.

- *Developmental Services Update* – Ms. Tomkoski, MHDS Deputy Administrator, provided the Developmental Services update. Please see attached report. The following was also discussed:

Commissioner Henry commended the creation of a Facebook page for the Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Employment Coalition. Mr. O'Neill asked which provider will be hosting the Facebook page. Ms. Tomkoski indicated that it will be Keystone Human Services.

Commissioner Henry presented a motion to accept the Developmental Services' report. This was moved by Mr. O'Neill and seconded by Ms. Armstrong. All were in favor.

- *Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) Update* – Ms. Stredny, SCO Manager, provided the SCO update. Please see attached report. The following was also discussed:
 - Commissioner Henry asked for further clarification regarding the 236 individuals she addressed in her report. Ms. Stredny explained that these individuals either expressed no interest or no desire to share the information related to their vaccination status. Mr. O'Neill inquired what percentage of the population this would be. Ms. Stredny reported that it is approximately 20% of the population. Mr. O'Neill also asked for Ms. Stredny to provide a perspective over time since individuals who were reluctant to receive the vaccine in the beginning may reconsider. Ms. Stredny indicated that SC's continue to follow up and share information/resources with families to access the vaccine if there is an interest. Providers can also facilitate access to vaccines by assisting with transportation and helping individuals to report any concerns. Although there are no vaccination sites being coordinated by the State or County, Ms. Vallet assured that SC's will continue to assist individuals in accessing the vaccine if they express a need.
 - Commissioner Henry emphasized the importance of the vaccine being provided at the Wyoming County prison with the rising number of Covid positive cases at the jail. Although vaccines are available throughout Wyoming County, one additional vaccine clinic will be operating on an upcoming Saturday at Tunkhannock Area High School. Commissioner Henry reported that over 700 vaccines were administered in Wyoming County.
 - Mr. Donahue announced that The Burke Center has approximately 250 doses of the vaccine available until June 11. Individuals can call The Burke Center at 570-240-4774. Mr. Donahue indicated that this information can be shared with providers and SC's. Commissioner Henry also reported that individuals can call the County since vaccines are available through Wyoming County.

Commissioner Henry presented a motion to accept the SCO report. This was moved by Mr. O'Neill and seconded by Mr. Wilson.

- *Mental Health Services Update* - Ms. Vallet, MHDS Administrator, provided the Mental Health Services update. Please see attached report. The following was also discussed:
 - Ms. Vallet reported that all Board members will continue to receive information regarding Trauma trainings. Board members are welcome to register if interested in any of the trainings. She recommended participating in Trauma 101: "An Overview of Trauma-Informed Care," since it is a basic training for anyone, regardless of background or what one does for a living.
 - Mr. O'Neill inquired how the County MHDS Office informs others of the availability of Children's Mental Health Respite Services at the Catholic Youth Center (CYC). Ms. Vallet indicated that the County MHDS Office alerts providers since the referral must be generated from a provider agency. The Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) Coordinator reminds individuals of the program at all CASSP meetings. The CYC also conducts advertising.

- Mr. Wilson requested an overview regarding the recent suicides that occurred in the Luzerne County Correctional Facility. Ms. Vallet indicated that although she does not have specific information, she noted that historically, individuals who die by suicide typically do not have mental health histories, are not necessarily active in the mental health system and are middle-aged males. There is also a huge stigma with males seeking mental health support. Suicide prevention efforts are planned to target this population. Additionally, there is a caseworker at the jail which the County MHDS office supports financially. The caseworker has the responsibility to assure inmates are connected to the community upon release. Commissioner King asked what level of input/analysis is conducted with the prisoners to assess mental health. Ms. Vallet noted that each provider at the prison conducts multiple levels of risk assessments. Mr. O'Neill emphasized the importance of providing continuity of care to avoid a revolving door at the jails. Ms. Vallet noted that the Mental Health System works closely with the prison to assure individuals are connected to services upon discharge. Commissioner Henry reported that the Wyoming County Commissioners and Mr. Donahue are working closely with the District Attorney's Office and the Mental Health System to assure there is a plan upon discharge. Commissioner King mentioned that he has worked with prison ministry for years to provide some type of support to individuals upon release.
- Ms. Vallet thanked those Advisory Board members who participated in the Mental Health Awareness Month activities. It was greatly appreciated and means a lot to have the Board represented in events that the County MHDS Office sponsors.
- Ms. Vallet reported that the County MHDS Office is working with the Regional Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to advocate for the continuation of telehealth services. She emphasized the importance of this since many individuals who have been reluctant to participate through in-person services are more willing to receive services through telehealth.
- Mr. Wilson inquired about Geisinger's plans to create a new inpatient psychiatric facility in Moosic. Ms. Vallet noted that Geisinger will be closing three facilities and creating the Moosic site with beds for adults and youngsters. The County MHDS Office does support this new venture as numerous individuals continue to be hospitalized out of the area which reduces the ability to conduct family therapy and access to loved ones. Since February, 200 individuals were hospitalized out of the area. First Hospital continues to accept admissions despite 70-80 percent capacity due to staffing issues.

Commissioner Henry presented a motion to accept the Mental Health Services' report. This was moved by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Mr. O'Neill.

Other Business – Councilman Steve Urban discussed his concern for an individual recently placed in a state licensed group home in the southern part of Pennsylvania. Councilman Urban stated that he has been involved with this case for a family for quite some time. He reported that although the group home was licensed by the State, it did not have all the proper credentials to operate as a residence from a local/municipal level, which he discussed with municipal officials in that area. In order to be proactive, Commissioner Urban recommended that a checklist or proper diligence be completed on the home from a safety perspective prior to placing an individual in a group home to avoid any liability. Atty. Crocarno agreed that there should be additional checks in the system since the State approves these homes and not the County. She suggested that a subcommittee of the Advisory Board be established to address this topic with legislators in order to advocate for stricter provisions or creation of a system of checks and balances. She also suggested that this be coordinated with other counties since there are power in numbers. Mr. O'Neill reminded Advisory Board members that there were several cases settled in federal and state courts. Regulations must be reasonable, apply across the board and not be used as

a method to exclude individuals with disabilities. Mr. O'Neill also noted that a significant amount of progress has been made throughout the years and the welfare/safety of individuals served must continue to be a priority.

Public Comment – No members of the public were present.

Adjournment – Commissioner Henry presented a motion to adjourn the meeting. With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Craig Mark / @
Craig Mark, Secretary
Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Mental Health and Developmental Services Advisory Board

REVENUE & EXPENDITURE REPORT FY 20-21 (THROUGH APRIL 30, 2021)

	TOTAL REVENUES		TOTAL EXPENDITURES
DPW/FEDERAL	\$ 11,728,913.67		MH EXPENDITURES
LUZ/WY COUNTY MATCH	\$ 744,471.82		\$ 10,270,487.19
MA REVENUE (TSM/EI)	\$ 2,085,976.74		ID EXPENDITURES
MISC INCOME	\$ 1,052,927.75		\$ 4,447,253.64
	\$ 15,612,289.98		EI EXPENDITURES
			\$ 15,836,101.97
NET INCOME/FUND BALANCE, AS OF 04/30/21)		\$ (223,811.99)	
		260,276.63	
ADJUSTED NET INCOME		\$ 36,464.64	

Developmental Services Update for MHDS Advisory Board

5/27/21

COVID Update

- We continue to monitor Levels of Community Transmission to assist our provider network. Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) Manager, Gail Stredny, will be reporting on specifics related to our consumers and vaccines.
- Luzerne County is currently in the Moderate Range and all of our day program providers have reopened. Wyoming County continues to fluctuate between the Moderate and Substantial Ranges.

Early Intervention

- Staff completed a book project as an incentive for the Early Intervention (EI) Family Survey. 330 families in the EI Program received hard cover books and were asked to complete the survey. We have already surpassed the state-set mark for survey completion.

Developmental Services

- On May 24, the County MHDS office facilitated a virtual training specific to LGBTQ and Racism. The training also featured the PA Family Network speaking on the importance of Interconnectedness to promote the inclusion of individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ID).
- We have been training extensively with our provider network regarding the Fatal Five which refers to the top five disorders linked to preventable deaths of individuals in in community-based residential settings. These include bowel obstruction, GERD, Aspiration, Dehydration and Seizures. Most recently, the State office has added pressure injuries/wound care to the curriculum. The County MHDS Office will be hosting a virtual training on June 30, 10 a.m. - Noon on pressure injuries/wound care for the provider network.
- We have been meeting to discuss details needed to launch a Facebook page for our Employment Coalition. The hope is more connection with community partners. Launch date is anticipated for June 2021

Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) Report for Advisory Board

May 2021

The Support Coordination unit has continued to follow the State Office of Developmental Program's guidance recommending service development and support monitoring through remote means during periods of substantial transmission of COVID. This includes conducting meetings via video and phone conferencing. However, face-to-face meetings have been able to be provided when remote monitoring cannot effectively clarify an individual's safety needs. Support Coordinators have also been provided screening guidance to allow consideration for face-to-face service during periods of low to moderate transmission of the COVID virus.

During this last quarter (March 25 through May), the Supports Coordination unit has reported to the State, 12 individuals residing in the community, either with their families or independently, who have been diagnosed with COVID-19. This number is reflecting a continuing decline in the number of individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 through this past year.

The Supports Coordination unit has made outreach to individuals living with families or living on their own, to explore interest in receiving a COVID vaccine and to offer assistance in scheduling when desired. To date, 758 of these individuals and families have reported receiving a vaccine, 52 have been assisted to schedule a vaccine, and 236 have expressed no interest.

**Mental Health Services Update for MHDS Advisory Board
May 27, 2021**

- **Trauma Trainings:**

Trauma 101: An Overview of Trauma-Informed Care.	67 trained
Trauma 102: Basic Skills of Trauma-Informed Care.	71 trained
Trauma 103: Recognizing Vicarious & Secondary Trauma	76 trained
Trauma 107: Trauma-Informed Cultural Sensitivity.	74 trained

- **CarePortal** - To date, 19 families have been successfully served with an economic impact of \$14,150 in goods and services. We have seen a decrease in referrals.

- **Wellness Court** - Core Team consists of County Mental Health (MH), Drug and Alcohol (D&A), Juvenile Probation Office (JPO), Office of Human Services (OHS) along with attorneys from the Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, Conflict Council and Judge Rogers. Collectively, a Policy & Procedure Manual has been developed. The Court is projecting a start date of June 1, 2021. The identified provider, Children's Service Center is in the process of hiring positions to be part of the diversionary team: treatment case manager, youth peer/mentor, family peer/mentor.

- **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder** - To date, we have trained 230 individuals to be more aware of FASD. This training addresses the importance of recognizing an FASD in those with whom we work or live. The brain damage seen in FASD is examined, along with common behaviors that result from this damage and that may result in misdiagnoses such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, Conduct Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, and Antisocial Personality Disorder in the individual and viewing family members as neglectful and sabotaging treatment in family members. Methods to identify those with a possible FASD and how that can improve outcomes for individuals, families, and service providers are identified. As Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are 100% preventable, methods to integrate prevention into existing services are also discussed.

- **Catholic Youth Center (CYC) Youth Drop-In** - has remained open since January 5th, operating at capacity (25 youth ages 14-18 per evening) per CDC recommendations. Additional youth take advantage of the gyms and pool every evening, however, the "dedicated space" must limit youth to adhere to social distancing protocols. The youth are creating a YouTube channel to display videos of those participating in the culinary education program called the "Drop-In Kitchen".

- **CYC Planned Respite Program** – numbers serving 8 youth per week. This program remains in operation through the "child-care" license. Children are dropped off and picked up "curbside", as parents/caregivers are not allowed in the building. "Scheduled"

tours are available for parents/caregivers of new children to receive service. This program is now accepting “emergency respite”. Referrals for this portion will come from the children’s mental health crisis providers. (Respite program is averaging 40+ children monthly – over the past quarter)

- The Suicide Prevention Committee reviewed March and April suicide data. Luzerne County lost 7 males to death by Suicide during the months of March and April. No reported suicides in Wyoming County
 - Discussions included Zero Suicide Training Series being offered by Community Care Behavioral Health.
 - The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s September Out of Darkness Walk and their need for volunteers.
 - The committee discussed caring contacts, a simple, scalable intervention to reduce suicidal ideation and attempts. They are a non-demanding caring letters and could prevent suicide among high risk individuals. Caring Contacts will be discussed at May Quarterly Crisis Meeting with Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Crisis Providers.
- Program Specialist continue to monitor emergency mental health services and the increased wait times people are experiencing for psychiatric in-patient beds. Individuals are sitting in the emergency department for over 24 hours due to lack of beds, high acuity, and testing COVID-19 positive. Mental Health Program specialists continue to track wait time information in an excel spread sheet and providing administrative support as needed.

Crisis departments are providing psychiatric services to clients while they’re in the emergency department. The local crisis residential unit is being utilized when appropriate.
- Program Specialist participated in the state wide quarterly housing call. Information was shared on funding opportunities through the CARES ACT. The Consolidation Appropriations Act of 2021 included funding for states to establish Emergency Rental Assistance Programs. Pennsylvania received approximately 569 million dollars to administer assistance to renters, landlords, and utility providers who have been effected by the pandemic and economic insecurity.
- May is Mental Health Awareness Month – to celebrate our office held a number of community events, including
 1. Buttinhead Farms offered weekly virtual opportunities for people in the industry of helping others. This classes consisted of gentle stretch, mindfulness, grounding and positive affirmations to let go of stress.

2. Butthead Farms offered weekly virtual opportunities for families including your pet (optional) to relax and experience the benefits of yoga. This class consisted of gentle stretch, mindfulness, grounding and positive affirmations to let go of stress.
 3. The Zumba Team from Odyssey Fitness Center, offered free virtual Zumba classes. The Zumba classes were offered for a 24-hour period on Thursday, May 13, 2021 (Zumba) starting at 5 a.m. through 5 a.m. on Friday, May 14.
 4. Expressive Art Workshop – participants learned about the benefits of art in an interactive workshop that explored the many ways art can be beneficial in our daily lives. Together we created an art project and focused on improving self-esteem.
 5. Luzerne/Wyoming Counties System of Care sponsored a Fork Over Love event on the Luzerne County Courthouse grounds. We sponsored 400 meals, which were distributed within 29 minutes. Four local restaurants also benefited from the event.
 6. Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Mental Health and Developmental Services partnered with The Luzerne County Historical Society to hold a wellness walk. Participants took a leisurely stroll through downtown Wilkes-Barre and learn about Luzerne County's role in the Revolutionary War as we exercised our minds and bodies.
 7. The Zumba Team from Odyssey Fitness Center, offered free virtual Kids Zumba classes. The Kids Zumba classes were offered for a 24-hour period on May 22, 2021 (Zumba) starting at 5 a.m. through 5 a.m. on May 23.
 8. Mental Health Program Specialist and Early Intervention Coordinator organized trainings for Early Intervention Child Mental Health. The trainings were held virtually and facilitated by Shashi DeHaan, MAS-IFP, IMH-E[®], CFTP
 - a. Infant Early Childhood Mental Health
 - b. Observation: Relationship-Based Assessment
 - c. Perinatal Mood Anxiety Disorders
 - d. Reflective Supervision Basics
 - e. Sensitive Engagement of Families with Substance Use Disorder and their Young Children Exposed to Substances
 - f. Trauma-Sensitive & Responsive Care of young children
 - g. Supporting Negative Affect in Young Children and their Caregivers Toward Strengthened Relationships
 - h. Relationship Positives and Challenging Behaviors
 9. Our 5th Annual 2021 Children's Mental Health Awareness Creative Art Contest - Awards Ceremony was held virtually.
 10. Our providers also hosted several virtual events throughout the month.
- We submitted a letter of intent to SAMHSA to apply for a Mobile Response and Stabilization Service (MRSS): “Mobile crisis services are available 24/7 and can be

provided in the home or any setting where a crisis may be occurring. In most cases, a two-person crisis team is on call and available to respond. The team may be comprised of professionals and paraprofessionals (including peer support providers), who are trained in crisis intervention skills and in serving as the first responders to children and families needing help on an emergency basis. In addition to assisting the child and family to resolve the crisis, the team works with them to identify potential triggers of future crises and learn strategies for effectively dealing with potential future crises that may arise. Residential crisis stabilization provides intensive short term, out of home resources for the child and family, helping to avert the need for psychiatric inpatient treatment. The goal is to address acute mental health needs and coordinate a successful return to the family at the earliest possible time with ongoing services. During the time that the child is receiving residential crisis stabilization, there is regular contact between the team and the family to prepare for the child's return to the family.”

Voter Registration Opportunities	242
Clarks Summit State Hospital (CSSH) Luzerne/Wyoming Count	49
CSSH Discharges	3
CSSH Referrals	5
CSSH Waiting List – Pending adm. Date	2
302s Filed	175
Commitment Hearings	78
ID Referrals (April & May)	30
Supports Coordination Open Cases	2143
Supports Coordination Billing	91%
CASSP Meetings (April & May)	107
RTF Placements	46
Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) Host Home Placements (youth)	3