Local Advisory Council (LAC) – North

St. Louis County

May 20, 2021

Present: Claudia Skalko, Michelle Long, Tod Swenson, Daniel Triestman, Ann Marie Lubovich, Jennifer Rich, Lacy Podlogar

Absent: Wendy Dickhausen, Jessica Meyer, Jeff McNickle

Approved the Meeting Minutes from April 2021

Tod read the values of the LAC

Sandy let the LAC know that these meetings will now be open to the public and the Zoom Invite will be shared on the SLC Website under LAC Meetings. These Zoom Invites will still remain once we are back in person for those interested, so they can attend by Zoom instead of in person.

We did have David Mills from Cook County LAC attend our meeting. He wanted to see how the North LAC did their meetings.

Meeting minutes from April were approved.

Tod asked if everyone saw the email Sandy sent out regarding any changes to the online application to hire new LAC members. Tod and Lacy were the only ones that had a change to the application, so I did tell them that I would be bringing those changes to the LAC Follow-Up Meeting on Monday, May 24th.

South LAC will need to have their input heard also.

Tod spoke to the LAC about the meeting on Monday, May 17th between Gena Bossert, Brandie Webb, Kelly Sather, Sandy Tuin, Melanie Smith from the County and Ann Marie Lubovich and himself on the results of this meeting. SLC wanted to get clarification on the recommendations the LAC Council had turned in to Gena.

Tod and Anne Marie thought it was a really good meeting and felt the LAC is headed in the right direction. Tod and Anne Marie felt that the LAC was being heard and understood by the County. It feels good to know that the County will be doing what they can to help the LAC and know the information will get passed on to the County Board. The members from SLC praised the LAC on how well they are doing and how impressed they were with the recommendations. They also thought it was great that the LAC also came up with funding sources to help with their recommendations.

Next Agenda Items:

Tod asked if the LAC would like to take a break or keep working even though there will be a two month break in June and July. Lacy thought maybe if we could have assignments for each person over the break. Sandy mentioned maybe having a meeting in July to have the LAC go over the applications that came in so the LAC can hire those members in July and the new members could start at the August meeting. Everyone agreed that would be a good idea. The meeting would be after the week of the 4th of July. Sandy can send an email to everyone when she knows the applications are ready to be reviewed and come up with a date that will work for most members.

The speakers for tonight’s meeting were Anne Marie Florest and Sara Rohr from Range Mental Health ADAPT programs.

ADAPT – is a children’s mental health program that began in 2005. The program put counselors in the schools to help children with their mental health needs. ADAPT has benefits since they have been long standing but also has some challenges at time with dealing with the State rules and billing.

ADAPT has mental health staff based out of the area schools on the Iron Range. Hibbing School District is no longer going to be using RMHC for ADAPT and will be using a new provider at the beginning of next school year.

ADAPT Staff are hired through Range Mental Health and RMHC coordinates with the area schools on the amount of staff and hours the staff are needed in each schools. It is hard to have enough providers at the school as there is a lack of mental health providers to hire for these positions. Schools don’t need to pay for the ADAPT staff as the funding comes from MA or private insurances.

ADAPT staff are not always able to see all kids that are wanting or needing a referral due to being in the school sometimes only 2 days a week.

ADAPT staff connect and do treatment plans. They don’t always get to the referral as sometimes they are unable to connect with the parents as the parents need to sign a release before the counselors are able to work with these children. Frustrating for all involved when they cannot connect with the parents. Sometimes if it becomes a medical neglect issue, ADAPT can reach out to the County and if a CPS worker gets involved, the CPS worker could request the child get the help through ADAPT while in school.

ADAPT is an MA billable service and also some private insurances are able to billed also. Sometimes if a child doesn’t have insurance to bill, there are some grants available to use so these children can be seen. Due to funding cuts or the funding spread out through the different school, this can be an issue to get these kids the help needed.

In order to qualify for ADAPT, a referral needs to be completed and then ADAPT will take a look to see if they meet criteria with a diagnosis and insurance. Parents have to then give consent for the ADAPT worker to start working with them.

Sometimes parents and kids decide to do outpatient services due to the stigma they sometime encounter at school when they are pulled out of class to see a counselor. Younger kids seem to like seeing the counselor, but the older children don’t want their classmates knowing they are seeing someone.

There is a benefit with some children doing outpatient services as the counselor can then communicate with the parent and the child on how things are going at home and school and then also give both of them the skills needed to improve their lives. ADAPT doesn’t always get the time to speak with the parents and give them the skills as there is not enough time to do this.

There is a mix of some children needing long term assistance with ADAPT workers and other children sometimes just need a little guidance and skills to move on and not continue with the services.

School counselors are not always able to help children with mental health issues as they are usually helping kids with academic things and have hundreds of kids for one counselor.

ADAPT tries to work with teachers, school counselors and other staff, but sometimes due to HIPPA, there are some time barriers on what they can share, but they try to get releases signed so they can work with these other professionals.

More funding is needed in the schools for more education and to reach more children. RMHC does have regular meetings internally and externally to go over the challenges that every school in MN is facing.

Anne Marie and Sara said that if the LAC had further questions, to reach out to them and they will be happy to answer their questions.

LAC moved on to Anne Marie Lubovich talking about getting the surveys sent out to the schools about gaps in services. She did send out the surveys to the Chisholm School as a test run and she did get some responses back. She does have a google form for people to fill out. She will let everyone know this is an anonymous survey so more people would be willing to share their feelings on the gaps that they are seeing in their schools.

It was decided that Anne Marie will send out surveys now to the smaller schools and then in the fall, she will send out the surveys to the bigger school districts. She will need to work on getting emails to all those in the bigger schools. She will then have time over the summer to get this done.

It was discussed about doing a different survey for families and children where the ADAPT workers could give to families and have the families send them back and these would also be anonymous to get their feedback on how things are going with the services the kids are receiving.

Over the summer break, then the LAC members can just send out an email to let everyone if they have any updates to share. Sandy will send an email in July to come up with a date to go over applications.

Next Meeting will be August 19, 2021 and the guest speaker will be Commissioner Jugovich. Hopefully we will be meeting in person and Sandy and Melanie will both be in attendance for Melanie then to take over in September for being the note taker. Stay tuned on if we will be able to meet in person for August. Have a great summer everyone!!