Local Advisory Council (LAC) North

St. Louis County

October 21, 2021 4:30 – 6:00 Via Teams

**Present**: Melanie Smith, Tod Swenson, Daniel Triestman, Ann Marie Lubovich, Jennifer Rich, Nicole Stone, Marjorie Holmstrom-Sabo.

**Absent**: Claudia Skalko (tech difficulties), Lacy Podlogar (tech difficulties), Michelle Long (connection issue), Jeff McNickle.

**Guest Speakers**: Guest Speakers: Gena Bossert, Behavioral Health Director; Kelly Sather Adult Mental Health Supervisor; Brandie Webb, Supervisor Children and Family Services; Laura Birnbaum Supervisor Housing and Homelessness

* Marjorie read the values of the LAC. Minutes from September are approved.
* Marjorie thanks Ann Marie for sending over survey answers.
* Group talked about going to original list to invite other applicants to fill empty seats.
* Reach out to Michele and see if she still wants to participate. Has missed last two meetings.
* Marjorie shares her own life experience with daughter being gay and having a hard time the last month. She recently moved up here and these discussions, with this group, has helped her find new providers. Marjorie explained Northhome’s program and how it works.
* **Guest speakers started at 5:00**
  + Gena Bossert asks everyone to introduce themselves. Gena introduces herself first followed by Laura Birnbaum. Kelly Sather was having problems with getting her microphone to connect. Kelly came back on and introduced herself, thanking everyone for being on the board. Brandy Webb filled everyone in on her role with the county.
  + Gena asked the board to introduce themselves. Marjorie introduced herself first and stated that she originally found a tweet about the group and wanted to join due to the situation she is experiencing with her daughter. Marjorie said she was excited to be picked to participate. Todd Swenson went next. Todd shared that he is in the masters program at St Scholastica. Ann Marie Lubovich said that she is a teacher and comes into this group as an educator who sees the need for these services. Ann Marie feels we have come up with some really great recommendations. Nichole Stone is a RN coordinator in Hibbing and is getting her nursing degree in mental health. Nichole stated she wanted to do her part in st louis county. Jennifer is a pier support specialist and shared that she lives with a mental illness and has a passion for this. Daniel Triestman has been working as a Chaplin in Virginia hospital and in mental health for the past 20 years.
  + Gena took over thanking the board for their recommendations. She states the county wanted to get questions from the board regarding these points. Marjorie asked what the highlights were.
  + Gena said they are very excited to work with Range Mental Health. Janice, from RMH, is looking at expanded hours and how the shortage of employees is affecting services.
  + First call 211. Starting to do crisis response forms in Duluth in December. Starting with the south first to make sure it works well. Talks about how RMH had to close Merit house due to staffing issues.
  + Brandie talked about the Check and Connect program, in the school district, with children that are struggling. Truancy is a sign they are struggling, and children can have a voice. Exciting. This person’s job, in each school, will be to have a relationship with the child and find out what their needs are. Brandie shared that she is excited about the wrap around service model in Children’s mental health. Will provide contracted services with this funding. This will help to make sure children are connected with the correct services. Expand networks. Lots going on in children’s services.
  + Gena asked Laura to talk about housing. Laura shared how they are looking at how we are trying to serve whole people. We have shelters and housing providers that come together with county staff. Providing seamless services for people and finding out where are the gaps are critical. What are the barriers? Sometimes it may be simple but makes a huge difference. Ex. Reminders for patients that miss too many appts, not just cutting them off after missing some. Building trust with clients by going TO people instead of them having to come to the county. Often there is trauma that affects their wellbeing. We have fantastic partners like Bills house, which is remolding currently. Hotel vouchers are great for the winter. The county is working with AEOA to help people that are fleeing domestic violence. 5 unites have been developed but working on more. There is a new Racial Equity Accommodation program to address the racial disparities in our county. We are committed to working together to help people and families. Gena talked about increasing the bed capacity. How to expand services and provide more. It’s hard around the region with the staffing shortage.
  + Gena shared that she is excited that Todd will have the letters behind his name to help with this mental health crisis. We agree with you about needing more services and more beds.
  + Todd asks if the goal is going to be county wide and not just the north. Gena said she doesn’t think it will be possible to add people to every jurisdiction. We have to figure out a way to use the staff we have. We need to learn from law enforcement, and they need to learn from us. There has been a ton of training across the country after the unfortunate situation with George Floyd. Trying to figure out the right response to the situation. Kelly Sather spoke about having an imbedded professional in the department to help. Hope is that maybe that one position can do a net of services. Feels it is potentially doable. Todd spoke about talking to police chief of Grand Rapids and he said that the impeded person did not work for them. Money is needed for beefing up crt teams. Gena said they talked to Linea Mirsh about getting some funding from the budget. Told Janice Allen, let them work out the kinks in Duluth for the crisis line first.
  + Marjorie said we still have some more recommendations and thanked speaker for being there.
  + Guest speakers exited the meeting at 5:45
* Ann Marie shared responses via Google doc. She sent out questionnaires, last spring, to smaller schools, and waited till this fall for the big schools. Sent out almost 30 surveys. Tried to get a mixed view. Responses were anonymous. Believe they are mostly from last spring. Pretty good mix. Looks like RMH is doing a lot through adapt. They are pretty busy. Accessing insurance is a problem. Some of the kids who are slipping through the cracks are the ones with a mental disabilities but are not getting the help because it is not an educational deficit. Parental permission is another hurdle. Mandated reporting made it hard for children having to deal with irritated parents at home. Training could be more across the board. Not enough resources in the schools or communities. Dream to have a full time professional in each school but not likely. This is great to finding out the gaps in services. Thank you, Ann Marie. We will table this till next month
* 5:55 Meeting adjourned.