

Cayuga County Community Services Board

Laurie Piccolo, Chair

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Mental Health Subcommittee May 20, 2021

Members Present: Theresa Humennyj (Chair); Beth Dishaw, Jean Petrosino-Winne, Diane Schenck, Elizabeth Vuillemont

Members Excused: Katie Stott-Dennis

Members Absent: None

Staff/Guests: Ray Bizzari, Director, and Jennifer Coughlin, Deputy Director, CCCMHC; Amy Sargent, Angela Adams, and Latisha Burke, Liberty Resources Mobile Crisis; Cassie Flagler, CONTACT; Shannon Coccimiglio, Unity House; Lindsey McNeilly, PROs; Aaron Pascale, Hillside

- I. Theresa called the meeting to order at 12:03pm.
- II. Draft minutes of the April meeting were emailed to members. On a motion by Beth, seconded by Jean, the April 15, 2021 meeting minutes were approved as submitted; motion carried.
- III. **Public to be Heard** – None this week.
- IV. **Director's Report** – Moratorium on evictions extended until August 31. Emergency Rental Assistance Program available for people who are behind on rent due to COVID; will pay up to 12 months back rent and three months ahead; can cover some utility payments as well. Check cayugacounty.us for more information. Want to accelerate conversation regarding adding peers to Liberty Resources Mobile Crisis. Liberty Resources peer respite program is close to opening. Looking to have four beds. Busy at CCCMHC; blowing past monthly visit average recently. Walk-ins are back to in person. Discussions have taken place regarding meeting the mental health needs of PWDD clients. Want to talk regionally regarding crisis services for PWDD clients.
- V. **Local Services Plan** – You can still fill out the survey that went out. The state is requiring us to submit the COVID questionnaire. The structure of the plan with goals/objectives is not required. LSP is due July 1. One of the most identified needs is housing. Housing unavailable because there's no turnover due to no evictions; landlords are raising rent on other properties in an attempt to make up for what they're losing, which in turn makes housing unaffordable. Ray pointed out that there isn't a county in the US where minimum wage workers can afford the rent in that particular area; 20% of affordable housing in the entire country is mobile homes.
- VI. **Mental Health Task Force** – Met weekly over the past few weeks. Banner went up above Hunter's; #PaintCayugaGreen social media campaign; requested downtown businesses to paint their storefronts green; articles to be submitted to *The Citizen* from Jean and Tim; proclamation recognizing May as Mental Health Awareness Month was passed at recent legislature meeting. Theresa wanted to acknowledge the recent death by suicide of a high school student and discuss what is being done to support the community. Jean shared that the high school is organizing a peer-to-peer mentoring organization. A good number of students were interested in being involved, parameters/safety measures being discussed.
- VII. **Agency Reports** – (reports received prior to this meeting have been reviewed by members)
 - a. Behavioral Health Unit – Not discussed.
 - b. Cayuga Counseling Services – Not discussed.

- c. Contact Community Services – Seen an increase in call volume. Specific topics: people calling and discussing their mental health, COVID weighing on people. Looking to hire more overnight staff because most phone calls are occurring then. Theresa asked about continuity of care; Cassie said that Contact utilizes Links, ESRP follow-up, and 211 for this purpose.
- d. Evergreen – Not discussed.
- e. Hillside – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee meets monthly. Director of Community Based Services has been sending out informational emails on mental health awareness along with resources. Children’s Health Homes is referring families to family peer support services; there are openings for that service. Families are connected with other families with similar lived experiences to theirs. Engagement tends to increase. Aaron is involved in five different regions within CNY; all have seen an uptick in ER visits for mental health crises. More suicidal ideations the last couple months since this program has begun. One step that’s been taken in response to this is to create a process to have care managers share red flags so they’re able to elevate concerns up the ladder to access other programs/get insight from leaders. Also have a goal to identify at least three active supports for every family they work with; if a family doesn’t have those supports, more steps are taken.
- f. Liberty Resources – Not discussed.
- g. PROs/Unity House – Officially open and on-site for groups three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) all day. Accepting referrals and walk-ins for appts for intake. Groups are being conducted simultaneously on both Zoom and in person. Lindsey shared that she also runs groups in the BHU every weekend and they are consistently pretty full. Shannon Coccimiglio, Director of Employment Services through Unity House, introduced herself. She’s new to her role (four weeks into job); she’s replacing Ryan’s role but only on the employment side. All three offices (Auburn, Geneva, and Syracuse) are open and accepting referrals. Ryan is still with PROs part time in between work at the fire academy.

VIII. **Old Business** – None discussed.

IX. **New Business** – Discussion of moving to a hybrid meeting (some people in person, some people virtual). Will return to the discussion when an in-person meeting place is secured.

X. **Announcements** – None discussed.

XI. **Adjournment** – On a motion by Beth, seconded by Diane, the meeting adjourned at 1:02pm; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Kelsey R. Marquart, Senior Typist