

MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE
CORTLAND COUNTY
COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD MEETING

Meeting Minutes – February 8, 2021 – 3:00 P.M.
Room 302 – County Office Building

Chair: Elizabeth Larkin

Vice Chair: Ellen Wright

Director: Sharon MacDougall

Members Present: Elizabeth Larkin (Chair), Ellen Wright (Vice Chair), Christopher Driscoll, Susan Thomas and Leslie Wilkins

Members Absent: Cynthia Guy, Christopher Hyde and Julie Partigianoni

Others Present: Sharon MacDougall (Director), Tim Lockwood and Brittany Van Patten (CCOCC), Michele Gravel (JM Murray), Myriah Dolson (Guthrie Cortland Medical Center), Angela Adams (Liberty – Mobile Crisis Teams), Jeannette Dippe (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention), Christopher Bergene (Hutchings Psychiatric Center and future member), Teresa Van Heusen, Patty Schaap and intern for Patty, Haile Cutter (Cortland County Department of Mental Health)

Call to Order: 3:04 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Chair, Elizabeth (Betsy) Larkin called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending

Agenda Item: Introductions

Agenda Item: Approve Minutes October 19 and November 9, 2021 Chair, Elizabeth Larkin asked for a motion to approve the minutes

- ✓ Motion made by Ellen Wright and seconded by Leslie Wilkins – no further discussion and the minutes are unanimously approved

Agenda Item: ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING Conversation facilitated by Director Mark Thayer

Discussion election of officers – the current Chair offered, after consideration, to step down to allow someone else the opportunity to serve – group overwhelmingly agreed that Chair Larkin has led the group well through 2020 – Vice Chair, Ellen Wright said she enjoyed being the Vice Chair and would be willing to continue if no one else was interested

- ✓ Leslie Wilkins made a motion to nominate Betsy Larkin Chair and Ellen Wright as Vice Chair of the MH Subcommittee, seconded by Susan Thomas – unanimously approved by the membership

Chair Larkin introduced Christopher Bergene who will become a new member of this Subcommittee, pending the approval of the Legislature at the end of this month – Chris was with Hutchings Psychiatric and is currently working for OCFS Detention for Youth

*Meeting Day and Time – This day and time has been consistent for many years – discussion of alternate days/times – no other options were brought forth – members voted unanimously to maintain current day and time – second Monday and 3:00 P.M.

*Membership Discussion – Gail Spitzer – happy to introduction of Chris Bergene – he and Richard Shaw (SPOA coordinator in Thompkins County) – with full Legislative approval at the end of February, the two members will give this Subcommittee a full membership once again

Betsy Larkin asked Chris to introduce himself – currently work for Office of Children and Family Services – a therapist, working with incarcerated juvenile delinquents – with Hutchings Psychiatric Center prior – most of practice has been with adolescents; usually their involvement with the legal system – also have a private practice working with adolescents and young adults – mostly with anxiety and depression, increased over the last eight months / Betsy described the Justice League, the work, who is involved and suggested Chris may be interested in participating

Sharon explained the SIMS II reboot – in planning stages, to begin in late July or early August to meet quarterly – new purpose to improve legal involvement prevention and reduce recidivism

Agenda Item: Goals for 2021 – Presentations, speakers – Housing, Employment, Family Supports, Medical and Clinical Support – Other

Betsy Larkin: last year discussed the above topics and their effect on behavioral health – would like to have presenters or speakers to address the group and look for suggestions from anyone

Agenda Item: Covid 19 – Short and long term effects

This topic was discussed at the CD Subcommittee and would be similarly pertinent to the mental health world – how is MH effected due to the pandemic and what can be expected in the long term

Sharon MacDougall: at the Clinic there has been an increase in crisis cases, increasing symptoms in populations not traditionally served previously – Teresa Van Heusen, Clinical Director of Mental Health Programs and the County MH Clinic – seeing a daily uptick in crisis calls; not just clients but people in the community, not currently receiving services – seeing more children and an increase in number of daily intakes (new client registrations) / anxiety and depression most common with Covid as the reason / majority of clients are receiving teletherapy via video, some telephone, few come to Clinic for injections; will make arrangements for someone struggling and in need of face to face coming to the Clinic in crisis

Patty Schaap (Director Prevention Services for Youth and SPOA Coordinator. County MH Clinic) – large number of children not engaging in teletherapy as they also struggle with remote learning; found by NYS revealing survey results

Leslie Wilkins (F&CCS – Prevention Services) – rolling out a new program; SSET (Support for students exposed to trauma) working to get staff prepared – program for middle-schoolers – hoping to begin this in-person, in the Spring / Leslie – Family and Children’s Counseling Services experiencing the same circumstances as the County MH Clinic

Sharon asked Angela Adams from Liberty Mobile Crisis to reflect on the difference with the Mobile Crisis team during Covid / Angela Adams: definitely an increase in youth and family referrals – many who have never had prior contact with Mobile Crisis / many of the adults who utilize Mobile Crisis and using even more frequently – visits are both face to face or over the phone / many visits result in referrals to MH Clinic and F&CCS / some programs have had funding cuts or service cuts, Mobile Crisis stepping in to fill some gaps

Patty Schaap – have to resolve issues by looking at this differently; System of Care (SOC) facilitation utilizes all the different systems, including medical – starting with pieces missing with pediatricians – finding new ways to engage hard to reach youth

Sharon MacDougall: Going through this pandemic, surviving 2020 – first half of 2021, emphasize stabilization and the second half transition into recovery –

Christopher Driscoll (DSS) – had a statistic to share from DSS: last year 60 children placed in foster homes or to a higher level of care – this year there have been 84 / because of fewer in-person visits, by the time DSS is involved, things have progressed much farther (creating safety issues) and the needs are much higher than what they typically would be with earlier intervention -

Agenda Item Vaccinations – Availability, Access and Supply

Sharon: Numbers of available vaccines have been very low and problematic – vaccine supply from Federal level to NYS was the key problem – that issue being resolved should greatly increase availability – majority of vaccinations are Moderna with second dose potentially having short term uncomfortable side-affects; i.e., low grade fever, headache, etc.

Agenda Item: Agency/School Updates and Report

Christopher Driscoll (CCSI div. of DSS) – tomorrow will present the SOC facilitation, work done by Patty Schaap and Chris, at the Tier II meeting and to review the process

Michele Gravel (JM Murray) – move to Bennie Road has been delayed another month / Erika White providing services to approximately 23 individuals in the different OPWDD services / beginning to talk about in-person support groups in the near future

Susan Thomas (Racker Center) – Program Director of the Day Treatment Services located at the OCM BOCES Campus in Cortland / majority of children in Day Treatment are in-person school since September – attendance varies on a daily basis due to anxiety, families having to quarantine / teaching staff showing fatigue and exhaustion – trying to be creative and improve telehealth

Myriah Dolson (Guthrie Cortland Medical Center) – had to leave, wrote: Hospital no major updates. On the adult mental health unit, we are still capping at 6 patients due to staffing issues (we only have one nurse per shift). Seeing meth use again; a lot in the community, and a few folks have been on the unit for a while because they are waiting for adult beds at Hutchings/nursing home placement.

Teresa VanHeusen – medical and clinical staff working hard with high caseloads – being monitored and continuing to accept intakes

Jeanette Dippo (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention) – National Annual Chapter Leadership conference January 22 to 24 – they have done a lot because of the Covid circumstances – there are area directors willing to come and speak to the group to discuss Suicide Prevention during Covid – Jeanette will connect the speaker by email with Gail

Gail introduced Haile Cutter, intern for Patty Schaap – learning the SPOA and PSY world

Agenda Item: Director’s Report (copy emailed in advance) Sharon MacDougall

February 2021 Director’s Report to Mental Health Subcommittee
Sharon MacDougall

OMH Program Guidance:

- OMH COVID Guidance

<https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/covid-19-resources.html>

- Multiple Documents on this website:
 - <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/guidance/>

OMH Fiscal/Contract Guidance

- NYS Budget process has started and budget presentation is expected to be intense this year through March 2021. Please coordinate with your advocacy groups as this process plays out. CLMHD is helping to push for the needs of County MH, DD, & CD services.

OMH & OASAS

- OASAS & OMH are moving towards integration/merger of some type and it is included in various budget proposals. A Steering Committee has been established “Stakeholder Advisory Council Steering Committee” is meeting next – in follow up from the Fall 2020 listening sessions. This Steering Committee will help to “draw on the expertise and experience of key stakeholders and community agency staff providing mental health and/or addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery services to help “imagine” and shape the new agency”. Final recommendations are due April 1, 2021. **(Lisa Hoeschele will be on the Steering Committee representing Cortland County)**

**Betsy Larkin will provide names and addresses of all the NYS Assembly and Senate to write letters to advocate against any additional budget cuts or “withholds”

Agenda Item: Adjourn

- ✓ Chair Elizabeth Larkin thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m. **Next Regular Meeting – March 8, 2021**

Minutes submitted by Gail L. Spitzer
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Approved minutes available on County Website:
www.Cortland-Co.org/433/Mental-Health