

REGIONAL GOVERNING BOARD

REGION V SYSTEMS MINUTES

March 11, 2024

Region V Systems
1645 N Street
Lincoln, NE
10:15 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kenny Harre, Fillmore County; Gale Pohlmann, Jefferson County; Les Agena, Johnson County; Christa Yoakum, Lancaster County; Dan Crownover, Otoe County; Jan Lang, Pawnee County; John Caverzagie, Richardson County; Janet Henning, Saline County; Bill Reece, Saunders County; Ken Schmieding, Seward County; Dean Krueger, Thayer County; Stan Boehr, York County

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ryan Svoboda, Butler County; Emily Haxby, Gage County; Michael Weiss, Nemaha County; Jerry Westring, Polk County

OTHERS PRESENT: Topher Hansen, CenterPointe; Darla Belflower, Catie Holmes, ORN (Zoom), Wendy Baumeister, Tami DeShon, Theresa Henning, Trina Janis, Patrick Kreifels, Kim Michael, Erin Rourke, Amanda Tyerman-Harper, Marti Rabe, Region V Systems

HOUSEKEEPING / CALL TO ORDER

Pohlmann called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

OPEN MEETINGS ACT INFORMATION

Pohlmann noted the Open Meetings Act information is posted in the meeting room and reminded Board members that the meetings are open to the public and are audiotaped. The agenda is posted for public viewing at region5systems.net. Notification of this meeting and information regarding availability of the agenda was provided through a legal notice in the Lincoln Journal Star, published March 3, 2024.

ROLL CALL / AGENDA

Roll call followed. A quorum was present.

Present: Fillmore County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Lancaster County, Otoe County, Pawnee County, Richardson County, Saline County, Saunders County, Seward County, Thayer County, York County

Absent: Butler County, Gage County, Nemaha County, Polk County

Henning made a motion, seconded by Lang, to approve the March 11, 2024, agenda as presented. Voting aye were Fillmore County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Lancaster County, Otoe County, Pawnee County, Richardson County, Saline County, Saunders County, Seward County, Thayer County, York County; nays none; absent: Butler County, Gage County, Nemaha County, Polk County. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

PROVIDER PRESENTATION – TOPHER HANSEN, PRESIDENT / CEO, CENTERPOINTE

- Hansen provided an overview of activities taking place at CenterPointe where the emphasis has shifted to a philosophical whole-health approach focused on building relationships to provide better outcomes. Persons served at CenterPointe are assessed across bio/psycho/social spheres and CenterPointe addresses all aspects as applicable. Individuals are also assessed for suicide risk and trauma as there is understanding that trauma underlies over 95 percent of mental health and substance use disorders.
- CenterPointe uses evidence-based practices, data driven decision making, person-centered language, focuses on harm reduction, provides individualized treatment planning, is strength based, offers non-judgmental consideration, and provides hope that recovery is possible.
- Hansen observed that CenterPointe believes in meeting people where they are, recognizing that most individuals present with complex disorders. CenterPointe offers a full continuum of care to meet those complex needs.
- Kreifels stated that CenterPointe is one of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) that have been discussed at these meetings and as such is playing a part in system transformation which will be required in 2026.

PRESENTATION – DARLA BELFLOWER – SAMHSA - OPIOID RESPONSE NETWORK

- Kreifels noted that Belflower had been invited to present to the Board to share information regarding the rise in substance use and behavioral health diagnoses. Belflower provided her contact information and explained that her role with the Opioid Response Network (ONR) is to provide education, technical assistance, and consultation.
- Belflower noted that the opioid epidemic actually began in the early 90s. The 500 percent increase in overdose deaths was driven by the recent introduction of synthetic chemicals, chiefly fentanyl, which is cheap to produce and has been cut into other drugs. Persons buying drugs have no way of knowing whether or not the product they are using contains fentanyl, which can be dangerous and lead to overdose.
- Belflower discussed the risk factors that can lead an individual to use substances and discussed the ACEs study and the impact of trauma. Belflower noted the risk associated with substance use before the age of 14 as a contributing factor to schizophrenia and other significant mental health disorders. There was discussion regarding the overuse of social media and how that contributes to feelings of isolation and inadequacy.
- Henning will provide the PowerPoint slideshow for complete information about the presentation.

PRESENTATION – WENDY BAUMEISTER, CRIMINAL JUSTICE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVES MANAGER

Baumeister's presentation has been postponed until the April meeting.

ACTION / PRIORITY ITEMS

November 13, 2023, Regional Governing Board Minutes: Henning made a motion, seconded by Krueger, to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2024, meeting as presented. Voting aye were Fillmore County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Lancaster County, Otoe County, Pawnee County, Richardson County, Saline County, Saunders County, Seward County, Thayer County, York County; nays none; absent: Butler County, Gage County, Nemaha County, Polk County. Motion carried.

Financial Report:

- DeShon presented the financial report through January 31, 2024, briefly reviewing income and expenditures for mental health, substance use disorder and other line items.
- There were no new highlighted areas and DeShon stated that these line items are generally paid annually. It is anticipated that almost all line items will fall within the budget for the fiscal year with the possible exceptions of telephone, travel expenses and vehicle maintenance. DeShon reported that with 58.33 percent of the fiscal year completed, total expenditures stand at 57.18 percent.
- Yoakum made a motion, seconded by Agena, to approve the financial report as presented. Voting aye were Fillmore County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Lancaster County, Otoe County, Pawnee

County, Richardson County, Saline County, Saunders County, Seward County, Thayer County, York County; nays none; absent: Butler County, Gage County, Nemaha County, Polk County. Motion carried.

Opioid Remediation Settlement Funds Update:

Blueprint (Draft):

- By way of introduction, Janis shared information from a recent article that stated that in 2022 67 percent of all overdose deaths in Nebraska involved opioids and that illegally made fentanyl was the top substance involved.
- The Blueprint was developed to help the steering committee and participants at the upcoming Summit to prioritize strategies to be implemented to address the opioid epidemic. Included in the Blueprint is the Tool which outlines approved uses of the abatement strategies as outlined in Exhibit E. All information gathered at the summit will be compiled and decisions will be made based on that input.
- Kreifels took a moment to commend Janis and Henning for their efforts. Since October they have worked diligently to pull together a steering committee and prepare for the upcoming Summit. Kreifels commented that while on a call with SAMHSA, he was told that the Blueprint is one of the best documents of its kind that has been developed to date.
- Yoakum made a motion, seconded by Schmieding, to approve the Blueprint as a working document to be used in the decision making process. Voting aye were Fillmore County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Lancaster County, Otoe County, Pawnee County, Richardson County, Saline County, Saunders County, Seward County, Thayer County, York County; nays none; absent: Butler County, Gage County, Nemaha County, Polk County. Motion carried.

Obvious Expenditures Recommendations:

- A harm-reduction / Narcan distribution two-year pilot program proposal was presented. The pilot project would purchase two indoor vending machines in Lincoln, purchase Narcan for those sites and also provide Narcan throughout the catchment area of Region V in strategically identified locations as determined by the health departments. Another obvious expenditure would be the provision of fentanyl testing strips contingent upon these harm reduction products becoming legal in Nebraska. Total cost for the project would be \$159,915. Kreifels stated that the BHAC had reviewed this proposal and recommended forwarding it to the Board for approval.
- Yoakum made a motion, seconded by Reese, to approve the Harm Reduction / Narcan Distribution Pilot Project as presented. Voting aye were Fillmore County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Lancaster County, Otoe County, Pawnee County, Richardson County, Saline County, Saunders County, Seward County, Thayer County, York County; nays none; absent: Butler County, Gage County, Nemaha County, Polk County. Motion carried.

National Opioid Settlements – Nebraska Payment Allocations:

- Nebraska is part of multistate settlements with 10 opioid manufacturers, distributors, pharmacies, and marketers with the state's share of payments projected to reach \$179.7 million over 18 years. Initially fifteen percent of those funds were to be distributed to counties and municipalities based on a formula using population as a determiner.
- Per the National Opioid Settlement document (pages 12-13) Region V has not received any redirected funds from Counties. Janis stated that seven of sixteen county clerks indicated that they did not wish to use the funds in their counties. Kreifels suggested that if a specific county did not wish to use the funds, they re-direct the funds to the Region where they would be assured of local control of those dollars.
- Kreifels commented that the Region has been in contact with the 16 counties in an effort to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts, and Regions funds can be used to enhance any efforts.
- There were questions about the formula used to determine how much each county received. The Region will investigate that question and provide more information at the April meeting.

BHAC Membership Recommendation: Pohlmann presented a brief bio regarding the BHAC applicant, Melissa Ripley. Henning made a motion, seconded by Lang, to approve Ripley as a member of the BHAC. Voting aye were Fillmore County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Lancaster County, Otoe County, Pawnee County, Richardson County, Saline County, Saunders County, Seward County, Thayer County,

York County; nays none; absent: Butler County, Gage County, Nemaha County, Polk County. Motion carried.

OTHER UPDATES / LEGISLATION / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Behavioral Health / Legislative Updates: Kreifels presented the following information:

- The Legislative Appropriations Committee released their mid-biennium budget which supports the Governor's recommendation to remove fifteen million dollars from the Behavioral Health Regions. This will be a permanent reduction. The dollars are being shifted to the Lincoln Regional Center (LRC) to increase capacity by hiring 110 additional staff members. Future reductions are being repurposed for other reasons as prioritized by Governor Pillen. There was discussion regarding the lengthy wait for individuals to get an inpatient commitment and also for individuals waiting for competency restoration. Given the staffing challenges LRC is currently experiencing, it was noted that it will be difficult to increase staff to fulfill the goal of staffing 225 beds.
- LB1355: The Division of Behavioral Health shared Law Enforcement has indicated that they wish to be removed from the bill, and the public health districts are also a part of this bill to receive funding. Given that feedback an amendment may occur that the bill will be rewritten to indicate that 20 percent of those funds will go to the Behavioral Health Regions.
- LB307: This harm-reduction bill introduced by Senator Dorn was passed by the Legislature and subsequently vetoed by the Governor.
- LB943: This bill introduced by Senator Dorn was not prioritized and did not move forward. The bill would have provided funding for the unfunded five percent rate increase for this biennium. Kreifels noted that over the last three years thirty-three million dollars have been removed from the Behavioral Health Regions.

Regional Budget Plan Process and Timeline: The Region has received an extension and the deadline for submission of the Regional Budget Plan is now March 29, 2024. The Region is meeting with the Division on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, to get more information regarding the impact of the removal of the 15 million dollars statewide. Providers will need to submit revised budget sheets based on the reduction in funding. Should the entire reduction of funding occur, the impact to services within Region V Systems would be 3.6 million.

Medicaid Unwind: As of January 31, Medicaid has completed 70 percent of the reviews / re-evaluations following the end of the pandemic emergency. The trend continues to indicate that 67 percent of those reviewed remain enrolled with 33 percent being disenrolled. There is a slight increase in the number of individuals being disenrolled for procedural reasons. The Region is monitoring this data in anticipation that a number of those disenrolled will become eligible for Region V / NBHS funding.

Square One and Voluntary Crisis Response Center:

- Square One: The County has approved the contract for the purchase of the building at 210 South 17th Street with closure anticipated in April. Renovations will begin, and until that building is ready, CenterPointe will begin offering programming for three of the four core services on the current campus.
- Voluntary Crisis Response Center: A former long-term care facility has been purchased near 14th and Cornhusker. Renovations will be taking place and funds are being drawn down to purchase equipment and staffing.
- Kreifels reiterated that 1.1 million dollars are obligated for each of these projects, and any other use of the funds that have been set aside would have to be one-time-only type expenditures.

Emergency System Update: There was discussion concerning challenges regarding individuals who are deemed discharge ready when they are clearly not appropriate for community-based services. Length of stay for individuals on a mental health board commitment has increased from six months to up to three years.

Prevention System Update: Prevention is working to draw down budgeted funds for prevention services based on identified prevention strategies. Prevention has submitted a Prevention Framework Partnership for Success Grant request. Results will be available in August 2024.

Network Continuous Quality (CQI) Improvement / FY 23-24 Q2 Regional Data Overview

- Rates of employment and stable living for Region V funded discharges continue to be positive, generally either at or above the state target and / or state performance.
- Supported Employment utilization has been low since Vocational Rehabilitation was identified as the gatekeeper for services. A statewide request to expand the scope of the service was denied by DHHS.
- Monitoring of the waitlist for short term residential services has increased. Data will be assessed to determine if providers could be referring individuals to other providers.
- With medication support service enhancement, Lutheran Family Services has been able to see 90 percent of individuals within two weeks for medication management. The average number of days people have been waiting for outpatient therapy appointments at Blue Valley has been under the target of 14 days.

FY 23-24 Capacity Utilization Summaries: Kreifels explained that the Region is currently 16 percent under capacity overall, noting again that funds have been obligated to Square One and the VCRC. Historically, the Region has drawn down over 95 percent of available funds; this year it is anticipated that drawdown will be between 77 to 85 percent as drawdown is trending up.

FY 23-24 Training Plan: Provided for informational purposes.

Surveys: Michael stated that the Employee, Network Provider Executive Director, BHAC and Board surveys will all be available for the April meeting.

IMPORTANT DATES

- March 11 – Executive Committee Meeting
- March 18 – Network Provider Meeting – 9:00 a.m.
- March 27 – BHAC Meeting – 10:00 a.m.
- April 8 – RGB Meeting – 10:15 a.m. – to be held at Region V Services, 1645 N Street

ADJOURN

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.