

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

August 28, 2024

10:00 a.m.

Region V Systems, 1645 N Street

MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Janak, Corrie Kielty, Sarah Krenke, Jill Kuzelka, Rebecca Meinders, Rachel Mulcahy, Laura Osborne, Gale Pohlmann, Kelsey Schwab, Michele Vana, Evette Watts

MEMBERS ABSENT: Renee Duffek, Melissa Ripley, Kim Schroeder

OTHERS PRESENT: Megan Leikam, Danielle Bugay, Associates in Counseling and Treatment; Tami DeShon, Renee' Dozier, Theresa Henning, Trina Janis, Patrick Kreifels, Kim Michael, Sandy Morrissey, Erin Rourke and Marti Rabe, Region V Systems

HOUSEKEEPING / ANNOUNCEMENTS / INTRODUCTIONS

Kuzelka called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. followed by announcements and rollcall. A quorum was present.

OPEN MEETING ACT INFORMATION

Kuzelka noted that Open Meeting Act information is posted at Region V Systems as required by the Open Meetings Act. Notification of this meeting and information regarding availability of the agenda was provided through a legal notice in the Lincoln Journal Star, published August 14, 2024.

ADDITIONS / CHANGES TO AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

NETWORK PROVIDER PRESENTATION – MEGAN LEIKAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATES IN COUNSELING AND TREATMENT (ACT)

- Leikam has been the Executive Director for ACT since 2020. Leikam and Bugay provided information regarding the various services available at ACT which include outpatient, intensive outpatient (IOP), domestic violence classes, anger management classes, alcohol / DUI education, aftercare and alcohol and drug evaluation. For individuals with co-occurring disorders, ACT has dually licensed therapists available. Services are available for individuals eighteen and older.
- ACT provides six evaluations weekly at Lancaster County Corrections which helps individuals get released and into therapy. Evaluations are also provided onsite at The Bridge, Matt Talbott, Drug Court, and Diversion Services.
- Kreifels commented that ACT has been focused on eliminating barriers and increasing access to treatment. During Covid ACT was able to maintain their utilization and as a result of their innovation and proactivity, the Region has more than doubled funding for the agency.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Pohlmann made a motion, seconded by Vana, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented (Minutes – May 29, 2024, Year-end FY 23-24 Compliance Management Report, RGB Report). There was no further discussion. Voting aye were: Janak, Kielty, Krenke, Kuzelka, Meinders, Mulcahy, Osborne, Pohlmann, Schwab, Vana and Watts; absent: Duffek, Ripley, and Schroeder. Motion carried.

ACTION / PRIORITY ITEMS

FY 24-25 Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP):

- Rourke presented the FY 24-25 PIP explaining that this was the Region's internal improvement plan. There are forty-two indicators, i.e., areas where the Region is monitoring performance.

- The layout is new for this year and has been simplified for clarity. Kreifels thanked Rourke for her efforts to make the report more appealing. A new indicator, driven by the recent CARF survey report, relates to how stakeholders view the Region. Regarding the new indicator, attendees were asked for suggestions identifying various groups to be surveyed to monitor this indicator.
- Mulcahy made a motion, seconded by Kielty, to recommend the Board approve the FY 24-25 Annual Performance Improvement Plan as presented. Voting aye were: Janak, Kielty, Krenke, Kuzelka, Meinders, Mulcahy, Osborne, Pohlmann, Schwab, Vana and Watts; absent: Duffek, Ripley, and Schroeder. Motion carried.

FY 24-25 Risk Management Plan:

- Michael reviewed the FY 24-25 Risk Management report, noting that this document is a CARF requirement, but is also a best practice. Michael explained that the organizational goals are written in the negative, explained the various assessment headings, and reviewed all new action steps to be taken to reduce/eliminate loss/risk exposure to the Region.
- To hold the Region accountable and ensure timeliness, the Risk Management Plan is a standing agenda item for the Corporate Compliance Team to ensure the Region is meeting contract deliverables. Kreifels noted that the Risk Management Plan is interrelated with the PIP discussed above. The Management Summary and the Annual Report are other documents used to publish outcomes.
- Osborne made a motion, seconded by Mulcahy, to recommend that the Board approve the FY 24-25 Risk Management Plan as presented. Voting aye were: Janak, Kielty, Krenke, Kuzelka, Meinders, Mulcahy, Osborne, Pohlmann, Schwab, Vana and Watts; absent: Duffek, Ripley, and Schroeder. Motion carried.

OTHER UPDATES/INFORMATION:

Behavioral Health/Legislative Updates: Kreifels provided updates and information on the following:

- The recent Legislative special session was held to address the Governor's priority of property tax relief. Kreifels explained that funding not used in the first year of the biennium is carried over until the second year; after that leftover dollars are considered to be "lapsed funding" and are returned to the state General Fund. Currently there are between 17-18 million dollars in unspent funding for the biennium. Corsi and Green, DHHS, presented information asking for an additional reduction of behavioral health funds by eight million dollars. The Region has been working with NABHO and Dubas testified to the Appropriations Committee regarding the impact of such an act. Senator Wishart and others pushed back with the result that the funding was not removed.
- Initially the Governor had been looking for eight hundred forty million dollars to provide tax relief. A new process for the school tax credit was explained. The Treasurer will deduct that credit ahead of time rather than individuals applying for it after taxes have been paid. Efforts to reduce cost and provide funding for tax relief included the elimination of two positions at DHHS, the Deputy DBH Fiscal Director and the Deputy DD Finance Director.
- Several BHAC members expressed sentiments on this issue. BHAC members did not want to see local control of schools removed nor did they want to see caps set for schools, cities, or counties. BHAC members also noted that the townhalls conducted by the Governor did not provide a transparent plan for property tax relief, and in general many were opposed to the process.
- Kreifels reported that he has been meeting with senators in various counties as well as candidates. The Regions are in alignment with NABHO as priorities are being readied. The importance of education for current and incoming senators was noted.

ACH / Direct Deposit: DeShon explained that the fiscal department is using new software and is moving toward direct deposit for all expenditures. Kreifels commented that this updated system is a result of the strategic plan goal to become more efficient.

Medicare Reimbursement: Kreifels discussed the recent Medicare expansion which has opened Medicare reimbursement to licensed mental health practitioners. Medicare rates are significantly lower than either Medicaid or Region V rates. While the intent was to increase access to services, an unintended consequence is that some providers are seeing a significant loss of income, and providers have limited the number of Medicare-eligible persons they can afford to treat. Blue Valley Behavioral Health, providing services in thirteen rural counties, has been impacted the most by this practice.

Coordinated Specialty Care – Treatment of First Episode Psychosis: Research supports the perception that early intervention following a first episode psychotic break produces better outcomes. This treatment modality is considered an evidence-based practice. \$118,000 dollars are currently with the Division that are not being utilized to serve this

population. Regions 6 and 2 are currently serving this population and are using the Navigate Model. An RFP will be issued with the goal to get the final award on the Board agenda in November.

Medicaid Unwind: The dashboard as of June 30 indicates that 96 percent of Medicaid re-evaluations have taken place. Overall, there was a fourteen percent decline in persons enrolled statewide, which equates to approximately 118,000 individuals. The Region has seen a four percent increase in utilization from last fiscal year. These numbers will continue to be monitored moving through FY 25.

Opioid Remediation Settlement Funds Update: Janis provided the following information:

- Opioid Flex Funds have been released. Allowable uses include transportation, housing, phones, food, legal identification, adaptive equipment, and others as deemed eligible. These funds are an effort to remove barriers to treatment. Only \$50,000 are available, and it is anticipated that the funds will be requested quickly as a large gap in the service continuum has been identified. Flex Fund Guidelines and the Reimbursement Request Form will be emailed to BHAC members.
- Funding for PhysLab, which will allow PhysLab to provide transports for suspected overdose cases at no charge to counties has been released including the initial letter and Reimbursement Request Form.
- The Steering Committee anticipates releasing another grant cycle in the current fiscal year following review of outcomes from the initial release.

Department of Justice (DOJ) Investigation Update: Kreifels reported the following:

- The DOJ has been conducting a multi-year investigation and has determined that Nebraska is in violation of the Americans with Disability Act. The focus is centered around individuals not having options to move forward through treatment. A significant number of people with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) are living in a congregate setting that does not provide adequate programming to meet their needs.
- The DOJ and DHHS are negotiating an agreement. DHHS would prefer that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be put in place rather than being subject to court oversight which can be complex and burdensome.
- There are between 25-30 such assisted living facilities across the state, with most of them being located in Region V. The Division is considering applying for a 1915(i) Medicaid waiver which serves people with serious mental illness. The waivers offer Medicaid services to support independence at home or in the community and includes targeted case management.
- Moving forward, the importance of employment for persons in recovery was noted and training for voc rehab may be considered. Another consideration is therapeutic group homes which expand supports and focus on community integration.
- Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) have removed the cap on Community Support authorizations. At one point, PIER had the highest fidelity rating in the nation. Medicaid made it difficult to continue to serve these individuals by adhering to strict guidelines regarding the length of services provided. Changes have been made to authorizations for PIER as well.

SquareOne:

- Dozier reported that staff training is taking place as SquareOne begins to serve people. To date there have been nine referrals; it is anticipated that there may be as many as twenty referrals per month from schools now that school is in session. The current focus is on marketing and preparing policies and procedures.
- In order to access SquareOne services, the participant must be involved in a behavioral health crisis. An assessment is used to determine whether or not that person is eligible to access the continuum of care. Law enforcement does not need to be involved in the process of accessing these services.
- Lancaster County is collaborating with an architect and remodeling will take place in the building directly east of Region V. Once that remodeling is completed, Crisis Respite, the fourth core service, will be available to complete the service continuum. Currently three of the four core services are being provided on the CenterPointe campus. This service is for persons up to age 19 and is available to families from all Region V counties, not just Lancaster County.

Voluntary Crisis Response Center (VCRC): Nelson and Baumeister are working with Integrated Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) to develop policies and procedures and refine the referral process. Construction continues with an anticipated completion date by December.

Stepping Up Initiative: Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) training took place recently with more than fifty people in attendance. Four priorities were identified by attendees. They are:

1. Development of a housing continuum offering low barrier shelter / transitional living after treatment; permanent housing with independent units, and housing supports with med management, treatment, basic needs, intellectual or developmental disability (IDD) model for people with SPMI;
2. A data dashboard / centralized hub for behavioral health and criminal justice data sharing;
3. More beds/locations for Emergency Protective Custody placements; and
4. Intensive Care Transition Interventionist / Forensic ACT team

Zero Suicide: Morrissey reported that seventeen providers have gone through the Zero Suicide Academy and become certified. Outcomes are being reviewed with all staff to determine what is working and what is not. Funding is limited for training through the Academy; however, CenterPointe has taken the lead and provides training and leadership. The value of peer support was noted; peer support workers are able to spend more time and interact more regularly with persons who may be experiencing suicidal ideation. Mental Health Association's Keya House is one such support available to persons who are struggling.

Emergency System Update: Nelson is continuing to work with Lincoln Regional Center (LRC) to facilitate discharge for persons LRC has deemed as discharge ready. The Region has tapped into some Program 38 funds for "plan for ones" to facilitate the transition to the community for persons who are not appropriate for any current Region funded services.

Regional Prevention Coalition System Update: Morrissey reported the following:

- Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey: Morrissey commented that participation in the survey has been down since Covid which makes it difficult to collect good data. There were also a number of leadership changes following Covid and Prevention is working to get people invested.
- The report shows results for Region V vs. the State of Nebraska. Morrissey reviewed a number of the survey responses and noted trends regarding vaping, Delta 8, alcohol use, driving while impaired or distracted, use of seatbelts, bullying, depression, suicidal ideation, and others.

Network Continuous Quality Improvement:

- FY 23-24 Network CQI Q4 Synopsis: The final data reports are not completed and will be sent out when all data analysis for FY 23-24 has been finalized.
- Evaluation of Dialectical Behavior Therapy Implementation: Page one of this document provides an overview / executive summary and highlights of the DBT Implementation.
- Evaluation of Motivational Interviewing Implementation: Page four of this document provides an overview / executive summary of MI implementation.
- Overall results demonstrated that the training increased capacity of resources. The Region will be reviewing recommendations, one of which relates to the training structure.

Training Plan: No comment.

Other Business: Kreifels commented that the Region made progress with utilization this year. For the current FY, the Region was required to cut three million dollars from the budget. Kreifels has communicated to Green his concerns that the Region will run out of funding in the spring.

ADJOURN

- There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

IMPORTANT DATES

- September 9 – 10:15 a.m. – Regional Governing Board Meeting at Apace
- September 12 – 9:00 a.m. – Regional Prevention Coalition
- September 16 – Network Provider Meeting / Teams
- November 6 – 10:00 a.m. – BHAC Meeting