

State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
January 16, 2019
Connecticut Valley Hospital

Present: Chairman John Hamilton, Paul Acker, J. Craig Allen, Janice Andersen, Michael Askew, Sharon Castelli, Michele Devine, Marcia DuFore, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Ingrid Gillespie, Jennifer Henry, Pam Mautte, Marcus McKinney, Bob Painter, Ismene Petrakis, Larry Pittinger, Brian Reignier, Janine Sullivan-Wiley, Kate Travis

Excused: Samuel Ball, Manuel Paris, Kevin Sevarino

DMHAS Staff: Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Deputy Commissioner Nancy Navarretta, Hal Smith, Marlene Jacques, Diana Lejardi, Marilyn Duran

Agenda Item 1: Call to order and introductions

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:30 PM by Chairman John Hamilton.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of previous meeting review and action

The minutes from the November 28, 2019 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

- **Quarterly Report – Whiting Forensic Hospital (WFH) – Hal Smith, CEO:** Hal Smith reported three articles regarding the issues that happened in 2017 at WFH came out yesterday. The 2017 event continues to be a challenge and we are making positive improvements.
 - A number of new positions have been filled and the executive team is now in place. In addition, a director for advocacy services and 2 recovery support specialist have been hired to work in WFH and the Dutcher building.
 - The census at WFH continues to be bumping around 94 to 95 percent.
 - Four employee workgroups by employees continue to meet on a weekly basis. The employee workgroups are on education and training, safety, and policy. These workgroups help bring grassroots suggestions up to the appropriate committee chair.
 - The commissioner continues to support the Program for Recovery and Community Health (PRCH), who have done a lot of work and continue to work with WFH and Dutcher. They conduct focus groups for patients and for staff; which generate ideas and as a result have helped us to change some policies.
 - A new dress code policy is in place for professionalism and safety purposes.
 - Computer classes for the patients have started, in both WFH and Dutcher transitional programs, with accelerated access to computers in a supervised fashion.
 - Whiting Forensic has always and continues to have an affiliation with Yale University Medical School Department of Psychiatry and Psychiatry Law Program, with six rotating forensic fellows a year. An affiliation with the Yale University Nursing Program has started and 36 nursing students are working with WFH. A clinical affiliation within all the departments of WFH will help us to have a robust academic and treatment environment.
 - WFH is officially a member of the Connecticut Hospital Association.
 - There have always been two patient steering committees, which is sort of a patient government, and the leadership team meets weekly with them. This has now been combined into one patient-steering committee.
 - Monthly town hall meetings have been instituted so anyone can attend.
 - Some of the new trainings that have been instituted are on LGBTQ issues, behavioral management training, and ground rounds have been re-instituted.
 - The last quarter monthly incidents trend continues to trend down, compared to last June where there was 123 incidents and now down to an average of 74 over the last three months; restraints continue to trend down as well with less than 5 restraints for the month of December; similarly seclusions continue to

trend down with 2 in September at WFH and Dutcher had no seclusions for the months of September through December; and aggressive acts of harm and constant observations are also trending down. Since October there has been one elopement.

- **Budget:** Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon announced that the governor's budget will come out soon. So we should have a more specific update on what the budget consists of at our next meeting.
- **Legislative Update:** Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon announced that DMHAS is still working on the legislative package and discussions with OPM. Some things that are anticipated and that we are going to see this session are likely on legalizing marijuana and legislation on sober homes.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation: Spiritual Counseling – Marcus McKinney, D.Min., LPC

Marcus McKinney did a presentation and discussion on spirituality, mental health and addiction. He shared stories about what people feel spirituality means to them. He also shared themes that describe spirituality using elements such as a sense of purpose, "connectedness" – to self, others, nature, "God" or other; a quest for wholeness; a search for hope or harmony; a belief in a higher being or beings; some level of transcendence, or the sense that there is more to life than the material or practical; and those activities that give meaning and value to people's lives.

The presentation was well received by the State Board.

Agenda Item 5: General Updates/Announcements

- **Region 1:** Janice Andersen announced that the merger is going well. The merger papers will be signed soon and the new name will be "The Hub" and located in Norwalk. The region has legalized sports gambling informational sessions in the boroughs.
- **Region 2:** Pam Mautte announced that the region is working with some volunteers in the Branford community and they are hosting their first recovery friendly community informational session on Tuesday night, 2/5/19. Narcan trainings are being done in the region.
- **Region 3:** Michele Devine announced that the region has some private funding as well as an epidemiologist on staff. A research project on the social determinants of opioid related deaths in the New London County was completed and a report will be disseminated soon.
- **Region 4:** Marcia Dufore handed out a copy of a proposal for recommendation to the State Board for use of funding generated through the Mental Health Community Investment Account to provide funding for pilot use of peers for crisis/hospital diversion. There was some discussion on the topic by the State Board.
- **Region 5:** Janine Sullivan-Wiley announced she attended the Waterbury Task Force and wanted to share some of the comments with the State Board. They would like to see CIT, DMHAS clinicians, able to respond when they go to an opiate overdose in a home. Janine will be retiring soon.
- **Advocacy Unlimited (AU):** Jennifer Henry announced that AU will hold a forum this Friday in New Britain. Paul Acker announced that on February 18th AU's most recent recovery university students will graduate. A new class will start in March during the evenings. TOIVO is offering a new workshop on mindful outdoor experiences and planning to be held one on 2/22/19 at 1pm.
- **CCAR:** Michael Askew announced that CCAR has been awarded the National Recovery Month's Rally for Recovery National Hub. On 3/7/19 CCAR will provide an event called "CCAR 20 Years Strong". CCAR's Legislative Day this year will be held on 4/15/19 at the LOB, Room 2A, 10:00 to 1PM. Starting on 3/26/19 CCAR's Statewide Recovery Advocacy meeting will be held at Western University. Legislative breakfasts will be held on 2/12/19 in Bridgeport; 2/13/19 in Hartford; and 2/14/19 in Willimantic.

- **CPN:** Ingrid Gillespie announced that CPN is doing a forum for elected officials in Hartford on vaping. “Ways to Building Connections” is an opioids packaging initiative CPN has been working on for 2 years now. CPN has had their first meeting with the FDA on this initiative.
- Diana Lejardi, DMHAS Public Information Officer, announced she met with the new administration and everything went really well. A “Live Loud” campaign is in the works to be launched. The campaign is for engaging people who are actively using heroin or misusing opioids into treatment. The campaign will hopefully be launched by the end of the month.
- Susan Craig, from Mental Health Connecticut (MHC), made an announcement that MHC has been getting ready for this new legislative session and submitted language that has been used for proposed bill no. HB 7033 AN ACT CONCERNING PARITY FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER BENEFITS. MHC is launching “Write On!” a writing class offered free of charge to young adults diagnosed with a mental health condition who want to become powerful storytellers and self-advocates. This is in collaboration with ConnectiCare.

Agenda Item 6: Items for future agenda:

1. *Focus on new provider innovations sharing (Standing agenda item through Board consensus)*
2. *Harm Reduction/Innovative Engagement – Dr. Robert Heimer from Yale University (4/17/19)*
3. *Data/Geo Maps on Diversion Programs Statewide- Loel Meckel (3-20-19)*
4. Discussion on Narcan training and distribution
5. *Bring Healing Meals to do a presentation on nutrition and mental health*
6. *Bring someone from Wooster Institution to do a presentation on the criteria and pros and cons of bed availability*

Agenda Item 7: Adjournment/next meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 beginning at 2:30 PM in room 217 of CVH Page Hall.