State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
June 26, 2024
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present online: Dr. Allen, Rebecca Allen, Jennifer Buckley, Thomas Burr, Sharon Castelli, Angela Duhaime, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Holly Hackett, Pamela Maute, Giovanna Mozzo, Allyson Nadeau, Denise Paley

DMHAS Staff: Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Cheryl Arora, Marilyn Duran, Liz Feder, Michael Girlamo, Amy Marracino, Chris McClure, Lady Mendoza, Sarju Shah, Kelly Sinko

Excused: Manuel Paris

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:30 PM by Pam Maute

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of previous meeting review and action

The minutes from the May 15th meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

Budget – Cheryl announced that books open on Monday and as soon as funds are in place we will start up with the first quarter payments for FY25.

Other – Commr. Navarretta announced DMHAS has a new communication person, Public Information Officer Krystin DeLucia. She's delightful and she's very responsive, so if there are things that the RBHAO's or PNP's want posted on the DMHAS website, that is a DMHAS funded program for example, feel free to reach out to Chris McClure or Krystin DeLucia.

Commr. Navarretta attended a roundtable this morning on social connection and men's mental health and healthcare in general. She stated DMHAS likes to show up for any kind of opportunity that is going to help reduce stigma and discrimination and get some information out there around mental health and how to access services. She continues to co-chair ADPC, OSAC and the Connecticut Father Hood initiative that is in collaboration with DSS, and Sarju is very involved in that initiative as well. OSAC and ADPC are working together, addressing DMHAS priorities, which include increasing access to MOUD, and have approved getting money out to DOC to finalize their methadone dispensing equipment across the state so that everyone has access. DMHAS presented at NASADAD, which is the national organization representing state substance use authorities, and we continue in Connecticut to be a leader in recovery. The group presented on recovery friendly workplaces, campuses, and communities. Sarju and others were very helpful and pulling together that presentation.

The mobile OTPs has been approved and that RFP should be coming out soon. The focus is on harm reduction and naloxone saturation. DMHAS has been approved for money for the syringe exchange program, since utilization of their services is up, and they were out of supplies. Also looking at things like vending machines as a possible recommendation and as well as messaging around harm reduction and anti-stigma, potentially through Live Loud or other campaigns.

DMHAS has some system and leadership changes across the state, so the system continues to evolve and some real long-time advocates and partners like Patty Walker in New Haven Continuum has retired. Jim F. will be taking on that role; Judith Stonger from Wheeler has retired. There's a new facility opening in New Haven, Recovery and Wellness at Cornell Scott Hill Health Center. They are going to have shelter beds for men and women, IOP outpatient services, medical and alternative healing services available.

The showcase of our client's artwork was done at OOC and it was a wonderful event and all of the hallways now look beautiful and are adorned with contributions from folks that we serve across the state.

Agenda Item 4: Young Adult Services (YAS) – Amy Marracino

Amy started the conversation by providing some history on the young adult services division. So back in 1997, there was a collaboration between several state agencies that included DMHAS, DCF, DDS, DOC and OPM because there was an identified need for young adults who were aging out of the DCF system of care, and they were ending up in either homeless shelters or in correctional facilities or in psychiatric hospitals. And so they gave some state operated and private nonprofit agencies funding to provide a program called the Special Populations Project to serve some of these high risk young adults aging out of DCF, some of them have history of problem sexual behaviors, some of them had diagnosis on the autism spectrum and at the time it was referred to as pervasive developmental disorders. And then in 2000 DMHAS was given another pot of money for a program called the transitioning Youth program, and this was for young people aging out of the DCF system of care who needed some assistance with substance use, teaching independent living skills. The YAS program evolved into focusing on treating clients with high risk needs as well as very significant trauma histories and really to tailor the programs to meet the needs of those individuals. So over the years, the folks that YAS is serving are youth who are 18-25. They present with very different psychiatric diagnosis, developmental disorders, multiple co-morbid conditions that result in some severe behavioral challenges; high risk behaviors, histories of problem sexual behavior and lots of complex trauma histories of abuse and neglect; they may present with attention disorders, psychotic disorders, and they also may have histories of legal involvement. Many of them come with histories of multiple hospitalizations and a few out of home placements prior to the age of 16 and complex attachment disorders as a result, which can at times make it challenging to engage in treatment. And so the group of folks being served really require lots of ongoing supports to provide them with the necessary skills to cope with daily challenges and emotional regulation. In fiscal year 2023 DMHAS served approximately 9,994 young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, and approximately 1,500 young adults are served in YAS.

Some of the different service components of YAS are a team out of OOC, the administrative team is located on the campus of CVH Shew Hall. There is a memorandum of agreement with DCF as well as with Carelon and with CSSD and YAS can receive those referrals as early as 16 and then use that time to really get to know them, determine eligibility for these young people, conduct assessments as needed and help to try to engage them and plan for their transition to come into the program at the age of 18. Now DMHAS has a team of psychologists that can provide assessment and evaluation of our young adults, both as they are transitioning into services as well as to provide consultation to young people when they are living in the communities. They can provide positive behavioral support plans as needed, or different types of assessments. There is a YAS funded program in every one of our DMHAS state operated and private, nonprofit, local mental health authorities. The programs consist of clinicians and case managers, occupational therapists, recovery support specialists, psychiatrist nursing and employment and educational staff. YAS also contract with some private nonprofit agencies that provide transition sites or supervised housing programs that really focus on very heavily on life skills development. The goal is to teach them the skills that they need to be able to live as independently as possible in the community, and work on reducing risk behaviors. YAS also contract with several private nonprofit agencies to provide specialized residential programs or mental health intensive residential programs for different specialized cohorts of young people. There are some programs for young women with significant trauma histories and programs for young men who are diagnosed on the autism spectrum who also have major mental health diagnosis. At CVH Merritt Hall they have a 17-bed inpatient unit for young adults. Nursing services are provided as well as different types of group therapy, clinical groups, and psycho Ed groups. Clinical Director Dr. Dan Brockett is a neuropsychologist, and he has offered a statewide training for all of the YAS staff and a trauma framework called the ARC model, which stands for attachment, self-regulation and competency. They do a lot of work with peers and peer mentoring. They provide crisis management rehabilitative services. They contract with an agency called Street Smart Ventures that provide some entrepreneurial opportunities, and they will do a YAS marketplace event throughout the year where young people can showcase businesses that they have developed and sell their products. And helping individuals meet goals around housing needs because there are lots of life skills needed to be able to live independently in the community. There is also a program for young parents.

YAS was awarded a federal grant on the Connecticut Stay Strong. It is in the fifth year of this, it is a $5 million five-year grant. They are entering year 5 and that was awarded to intercommunity and CMHA.

Agenda Item 5: RBHAO Report – Pamela Mautte

The RBHAOs all continued to do QPR and Narcan training and many have been training some town employees and clerks. Staff have been participating in the NAMI Connect Postvention training this week. There's been postvention suicide efforts in multiple communities throughout the regions as well. Many of the RBHAO's have hired and are onboarding new staff, many of which are starting in July and some that have started the last week. Also collaboratively, they have all worked to host a data training through Connecticut Data Collaborative. The first training was held last week, and they had very positive reviews from their coordinators who attended with the second workshop happening sometime between July and August. They have their cannabis vaping folks that have been hired in going into place, and their LPC's are turning in their final reports and getting ready for planning for the upcoming year. The Western Connecticut Coalition and their youth mental health art project, with their neighbor in Watertown, Our Light in Art Therapy are going to have the gallery showing for September. Lastly, they submitted a proposal to OSAC for consideration in May.

Agenda Item 6: General Updates/Announcements

CCAR opened their New London Recovery Community Center last month. Now there are eight community centers across the state. These centers are places where people can come and seek services as well as seek community. They are accessible and have an open-door policy. Everyone is invited to stop in at any of the centers at any time. They are also doing the Multiple Pathways of Recovery conference in August 13-15, in New Haven at the Omni Hotel. CCARR is also planning a retirement party for our executive director, Phil Valentine. CCAR's Recovery Walk will be on September 28th at Bushnell Park in Hartford.

Sarju announced that with the partners partnering with the RBHAO's and with other resource links, they are having their first Annual Prevention Summit on October 17th this year in West Hartford. This is for prevention support for all prevention professionals and all those that are adjacent and would like to learn more.

Agenda Item 7: Potential Future Topics (need for Presenters):

- Access to Beds or Lack of for Mental Health and Substance Use – Denise Paley
- Cannabis recommendations – Allison Fulton

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, **September 18, 2024**, beginning at 2:30 PM.