



Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council

Child/Adolescent Quality, Access & Policy Committee

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Co-Chairs: Steve Girelli & Jeff Vanderploeg

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Next Committee Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 2:00 PM via Zoom

Attendees: *Dr. Steve Girelli (Co-Chair), Dr. Jeff Vanderploeg (Co-Chair), Dr. Lois Berkowitz (DCF), Elizabeth Garrigan (Beacon), Jessica Guite, Valerie Lilley (OCA), Kelly Phenix, Donyale Pina (DCF), Erika Sharillo (Beacon), Greg Simpson (Beacon), Dr. Stephney Springer (DCF), and Valerie Wzykowski (OHA)*

Introductions

Co-Chair Steve Girelli called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. He indicated that the meeting was being recorded by Beacon for future use. He then asked members if they suspected why the current meeting might have low provider/community attendance. Some thought it might relate to other similar discussions having already taken place in other forums.

Comments and Discussion from the April Meeting

Co-Chair Steve Girelli asked if there were any questions about last month's meeting, which featured a presentation on the behavioral health needs of youth who are LGBTQ. One member indicated that it was an excellent presentation and should be shared at a later date with the Child and Family Advisory Council (CFAC) and with the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council.

Plans for Re-Opening Clinical Services and Supports

Stephney Springer (DCF) indicated that they are looking at a multi-factored approach to ensuring health and safety for DCF personnel, and they plan to reach out to community based behavioral health personnel for their input on the gradual re-opening of clinical settings across the state. DCF has identified four Transition groups focusing on the areas of Physical Safety, Health and Medical, Psychological and Emotional safety and Personnel. These groups have a cross section of DCF staff from various regions and facilities as well as roles within the agency. The groups have met and the recommendations have been provided to the Commissioner and her Executive team. The next step is to solicit input from community partners in the same areas. Members indicated that there is still uncertainty among providers and others about what the new normal will look like. A provider indicated that some families are eager to return to face-to-face services, but even in that eagerness, they remain anxious about exposure to the coronavirus as clinical settings re-open.

Members indicated that advocates, providers, and families are interested in continuing to make tele behavioral health available long-term. One member talked about how different methods of accessing services (e.g., in person, telemedicine, audio only telemedicine) addresses the need for diverse approaches that match the style and preferences of those seeking services. The group talked about the need to advocate to DSS for continuation of telemedicine benefit in a variety of forms, including audio only. The group largely considered this an important strategy for improving access and addressing disparities in access to behavioral health care. One member noted that consumers can be challenged by their various healthcare providers using different apps and telemedicine platforms.

One member noted that the next call of the CAQAP could be a very practical and strategic discussion of how clinics are approaching the re-opening of face-to-face clinical services while balancing other strategies for reaching children and families such as telemedicine. There is likely to be ongoing need among providers and other interested parties for sharing learning and best practices in order to improve access to, and quality of, behavioral health services. It was noted that one or two provider representatives may be interested in presenting on this topic and facilitating the ensuing discussion.

Update from Consumer and Family Advisory Council (CFAC)

CFAC Report

Kelly Phenix reported that CFAC has had infrequent meetings recently due to COVID. She also indicated that the annual iCAN conference has been cancelled. Co-Chair Steve Girelli asked that Kelly connect with the conference planners and express that the CAQAP understands the difficulty of this decision and will look forward to when iCAN can next convene. Kelly asked that members let her know if there are family members (including grandparents) that are interested in testifying to the legislature regarding children's behavioral health.

New Business and Adjournment

Co-Chair Steve Girelli thanked everyone for their participation. A reminder was provided that the next meeting will be Wednesday, June 17, 2020, 2:00 – 3:00 PM via ZOOM. Steve then asked for any new business and hearing none, he wished everyone to stay safe and healthy and adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM.

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