



Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council

Child/Adolescent Quality, Access & Policy Committee

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Co-Chairs: Steve Girelli & Jeff Vanderploeg

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Next Committee Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 2:00 PM via Zoom

Attendees: *Dr. Steve Girelli (Co-Chair), Dr. Jeff Vanderploeg (Co-Chair), Jennifer Abbatemarco, Dr. Lois Berkowitz (DCF), Maria Brereton, Jaya Daptarder, Melissa Deasy, Kim Davis (OHA), Stacey Forrest, Tammy Freeberg, Andrea Goetz (Beacon), Brenetta Henry, Dr. Irv Jennings, Ally Kernan, Mickey Kramer (OCA), Tanja Larsen, Valerie Lilley (OCA), Keri Lloyd (DSS), Kelly Phenix, Donyale Pina (DCF), Kathy Schiessl, Eric Schwartz, Erika Sharillo (Beacon), Dr. Stephney Springer (DCF), Rod Winstead (DSS), two others on the phone*

Introductions

Co-Chair Steve Girelli called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm. He reminded participants that the meeting was being recorded and will be posted to the CTBHP Website and asked participants to introduce themselves via the Zoom Chat function.

Consumer Family Advisory Council (CFAC) Update

Brenetta Henry discussed DPH presentations that have recently been delivered to CFAC members. CFAC has set a date for the iCAN conference for Sept. 23, 2021. More information about the CFAC conference will be available soon. Brenetta also added that CFAC was in the process of identifying a young adult to join CAQAP and also prepare that individual to serve as a tri-chair of this group.

Comments and Discussion from the March 2021 Meeting

There were no follow-up questions or comments on last month's presentation.

Presentation on Young Adult Services

A presentation on Young Adult Services (YAS) was delivered by Amy Marracino, LCSW, Director of Young Adult Services at Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS); Jennifer Abbatemarco, YAS Director of Operations at DMHAS; and Ally Kernan, Young Adult Coordinators with Positive Directions.

Transition aged youth programs were first developed in 1997 as a pilot project involving multiple state agencies. They were developed because many youth aging out of the DCF system were losing connections with treatment and support services and experiencing poor outcomes. Additional funding was provided in 2000 to expand services to young adults who were presenting with a complex array of diagnoses, system involvements, and needs. Today, YAS

participants must be 18 or older (although individuals may be identified for future YAS participation if involved with DCF prior to age 18), have a documented mental illness, and be willing to participate in YAS services. YAS referrals can be processed through DCF, Beacon, CSSD, or (for non-system-involved individuals) through a Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA). Around 50% of referrals are system-involved (DCF, CSSD, Beacon). YAS works with about 1,500 of the highest-need young adults in the state. Program components include inpatient hospitalization beds (at Connecticut Valley Hospital), specialized residential treatment, and community-based services and supports. Services include psychiatry, psychotherapy, case management, nursing, peer mentoring, parenting support, vocational counseling, housing support, and other services.

Outcomes in housing, employment, and education were shared from an evaluation study conducted by UConn. The study involved 292 youth discharged from YAS in FY 2020. About 55% of evaluation participants were non-white, and all three outcome domains were presented disaggregated by gender and by race/ethnicity (presentation slides, including outcomes, are available on the CTBHP website). A number of related initiatives were also shared. YAS is conducting a study on adverse childhood experiences, a project on addressing severe self-injury, and has also been collecting data on utilization management associated with a supervised community-based living and life skills initiative intended to promote housing stability. The presenters noted that relationships with team members and engagement in the YAS program drive recovery outcomes. DMHAS YAS was recently awarded a five-year grant from SAMHSA for CT Stay Strong, the focus of which will be to provide young adults with services to improve outcomes in the areas of housing, health, mental health, education, and employment. A member asked about the challenges for some youth associated with transitioning from the DCF to the DMHAS system, including that many youth tire of system involvement. YAS makes extensive efforts to maintain connections and ensure services are accessible if youth do re-engage.

Ally Kernan from Positive Directions screen shared the www.turningpointct.org website which includes a number of resources and information for young adults, as well as a section for individuals to share their personal stories of recovery, and even videos and information unrelated to mental health or substance use. A searchable directory of recovery and support groups is also available on the website. Ally shared her recovery story, how YAS has helped to support her, and how she has been able to use her experiences as a peer mentor and advocate to help many others across the state. Members expressed their gratitude to Ally for the courage and strength to share her inspiring story.

Other Business, Announcements, and Adjournment

Co-Chair Steve Girelli thanked everyone for their presentations and participation. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:31 p.m. The next meeting of the CAQAP will be on Wednesday, May 19 from 2:00 – 4:00 PM, via Zoom.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 19, 2021, 2:00 – 4:00 PM, via ZOOM