



Macon County

Mental Health Task Force

August 9, 2013

Minutes

Members Present: Ronnie Beale, Jim Bruckner, Jane Kimsey, Jim Bottomley, Tammy Keezer, and Andy Shields

Absent: Paula Ledford, Kathy McGaha, Mike Neidig

Guests: Ann Nandrea w/NAMI, Tabatha Brafford w/ACS, George Edmonds & Annie Smith w/Youth Villages, Greta Metcalf w/Jackson County Psych., Candace Rawlinson w/Barium Springs, Duncan Sumpter w/ACS, Dianne Whitman w/Department of Juvenile Justice, Rhonda Cox & Amy Seay w/Smoky Mountain Center, Joe Ferrara w/Meridian, Corporal Scott Marion w/Macon County Sheriff's office, Sarah Altman w/Southwestern Community College, and Kevin Inabinet w/ Macon Psych

Co-Chairman Kimsey called the meeting to order at 8:30 and stated they were going to try to keep the time limit on the meeting to 90 minutes. Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Mr. Bruckner and seconded by Major Shields to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 17, 2013 as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Current Issues and Discussion: Ms. Kimsey indicated that after last month's meeting there seemed to be a sense that the problems discussed weren't really resolved. She reviewed what the original focus of the Mental Health Task Force was and listed some of the accomplishments. The committee members were originally appointed by the commissioners in January of 2008 to address community needs. Initial assessments of consumers at that time determined there was lack of information, cooperation and communication between agencies, lack of services primarily psychiatric care and lack of work force.

Accomplishments: Ms. Kimsey noted that the committee had had successes with access to care for inmates at the jail, clients at the schools, the DSS continuum, TFCBT, increasing provider availability, and meetings with providers. It was noted that the walk in clinics and recovery education centers were helping meet the communities' needs and that crisis response has improved. There is also more information available in the community and more cooperation between outside providers. The consensus is that the adult program is well established and will continue to be a strong program.

Commissioner Beale stated that he and Ms. Brafford from Appalachian have been working to help establish more funding for magistrates. They are also working on a program that will help get more information to the magistrates. NAMI has been offering education for CIT program. Southwestern Community College now has a team that assesses students that are having mental health problems. They are working with Appalachian to coordinate treatment. Commissioner Beale related an instance this week where an individual was in a crisis situation. Within an hour there was someone on site at this person's house to get them through the crisis.

The lack of beds continues to be a problem. They are trying to get folks in Bryson City to let us use some of their beds. Commissioner Beale has an appointment next week to discuss this possibility. We will need to work on a transportation system to move people to these beds.

Workable Items Within our Control: Telepsychiatry – we have a mobile robot at the hospital. The little robot is called IC4U and it is currently in use for stroke patients. Mission and Angel Medical Center are looking at this robot to access psychiatric care for mental health patients for stabilization in the ER. Other counties in NC have been successful in utilizing Telepsychiatry for some time.

Transportation: Mission offers a transportation contract for security officers to transport voluntary commitments which is available to AMC. Commissioners and the Sherriff in Wake County have signed an agreement for transportation to be provided by the same Mission transportation contract provider to transport involuntary commitments too. There may be an issue with the liability. There are different interpretations of the state statute.

Ms. Kimsey indicated that Smoky Mountain Center offers a smaller committee to focus on problem solving with the ER commitments. The mobile crisis teams have been focusing on working with the clients who are showing up at the ER. Need to work on trouble shooting with the ER's and hospitals with NCO staff to help work these cases to support the most at risk and difficult to place and to help determine the best placement. Need to work on communication issues, so people don't get diverted inappropriately. We would probably want to focus some of this team's resources into the crisis care and handling these specific cases. The placements are still not coming through. Commissioner Beale indicated that Amy Smiley, the person in Raleigh who was telling us where all the beds were in the area, has left and we are not sure who has taken her place. Mr. Beale indicated there is a meeting with their administration on August 21. The committee will need to work on the best way to clear out the emergency department and get the patients placed quickly and appropriately. This will help deal with the system issues as well as the patient level and look at how to improve on any issues that come up during this process. The work load of the agencies is heavier than it has ever been. The reimbursement is nowhere near the level of the work load. If a patient is in crisis and currently in the ER the agency rep comes to the ER every day they only get reimbursement for the visits done within the first 24 hours of the crisis. Genny Pugh from Smoky will be taking the lead on this smaller committee. In addition to Marty Wadewitz, Andy Shields, Tabitha Brafford, Nancy Chastain and NAMI rep, Jane asked for other individuals who want to be included in problem solving on a smaller committee. Major Shields asked that Corporal Scott Marion be placed on this committee. He feels very positive about the resulting communication between the Sherriff's office and the hospital. Service Providers and Amy Seay will also be invited.

The magistrates will get invites to all the meetings. Ms. Brafford noted that they have had meetings with the magistrates from Cherokee, Haywood, Caldwell counties and will be meeting with Swain & Jackson next week. Commissioner Beale asked her to call Graham County. They will be offering a forum on September 19 specific to law enforcement CEDI and catering to magistrates. It has been stressed to Mr. Beale by those in government that the county is responsible for Mental Health services.

Commissioner Beale asked if anyone has communicated with Mission about their process at this time. The response was not yet. Commissioner Beale said we would be inviting them to come to the Mental Health Task Force meetings and ask them to become a player in helping problem solve. Once the merger is totally completed he hopes they will be willing to help.

Other Concerns/Issues: Ms. Cox indicated that there are new definitions at schools and requirements for meeting acuity levels. As Smoky Mountain Center has been doing authorizations the value options are much more open and they are requiring proof of medical necessity. Day treatment has been utilized in certain cases. They have to demonstrate that there has been an IEP at the school level before they intervene; to make sure the family is involved and that there is a transition plan. This is not meant to be a long term intervention. One of the problems continues to be that once a child is put in a day treatment classroom and the authorization time runs out; there is no step down plan in place to determine where the child should go. The other problem in a lot of these cases is the lack of insurance. They continue to provide the care for these individuals at no charge.

The affordable care act will begin taking registrations October 1st. DSS will be providing kiosks in the county to help people get registered. DSS will be asking for volunteers to become Certified Application Counselors to

help people get signed up for the Affordable Care Act. Buncombe County has applied for grant money to get people trained as ACA Navigators. There was a question asking if we couldn't get some of the insurance carriers to give a presentation about how to apply for this coverage. Corporal Marion indicated he had some information on a Medicaid insurance plan for inmates in custody. Commissioner Beale asked Corporal Marion to send him the information.

Mr. Bottomley asked if there was a property owned by Macon County that could be used as a half-way house. Commissioner Beale indicated that there is nothing at this time. He suggested that this would be useful because some of the clients he talks with end up re-offending because they have nowhere to go when they are released from a re-hab program or from prison. Barium is facilitating and recommending places for them to go. There are none here in Macon County. There is a program for women called Clean Slate over in Jackson. There is a women's shelter in Clay County that Mr. Bottomley sits on the board for. Commissioner Beale asked Ms. Rawlinson to keep track of discharged patient's data for those patients that come through who have no place to go.

Other Business: Ann Nandrea from NAMI handed out a flyer for "Parents & Teachers as Allies" an In-Service Mental Health education program for school professionals. There is crisis intervention team training being offered October 21 in cooperation with Smoky Mountain. October 4th and 5th will be the annual NAMI conference in Raleigh. They are also bringing in speakers on Youth Suicide Prevention.

Sheriffs report: Major Shields reported that they are on track to be over 200 commitments by the end of the year. The department is currently providing 24/7 sheriffs presence at the ER. It is his understanding that when Angel breaks the commitment they are referring the patients to a provider. There was some discussion about the difference between voluntary and involuntary commitments. Major Shields said he is not aware that there is a voluntary commitment process. For the month of July they were down to 10 commitments. 103 hours was the average commitment processing time. Longest commitment was 525 hours in the ER. It took 297 officers to accomplish the transports of the commitments. This includes time sitting and waiting for treatment or a bed. The question was asked how many of these are first time commitments? Are they using the ER as the first contact instead of making contact with another facility first? These are questions that need to be addressed by the new committee. Ms. Bafford said she could provide this data for the first meeting of the new committee. Major Shields says they have noticed that the jail is now being used as a mental health facility. Corporal Marion stated they have had three inmates in the past two weeks that were on suicide watch. Two of them are still there. There are other county courts that are working on getting inmates seen in court so they can receive proper treatment. Inmates are the responsibility of the facility and the jails in other counties privately contract the mental health services.

Schedule Next Meeting: November 8 at 8:30 am at Angel Medical Center in the Video Conference Room on the Third Floor

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bellavance