



Macon County Mental Health Task Force

May 17, 2013

Minutes

Members present: Ronnie Beale, Jim Bottomley, Tammy Keezer, Jane Kimsey, Paula Ledford, Kathy McGaha, Mike Neidig and Andy Shields

Guests: Tabatha Brafford w/ACS, Nancy Chastain w/Smoky Mountain Center, George Edmonds w/Youth Villages, Joe Ferrara w/Meridian, Greg Hess w/Long Center for Psychology, Martha Lind w/Smoky Mountain Center, Greta Metcalf w/Jackson County Psych., Ann Nandrea w/NAMI, Candace Rawlinson w/Barium Springs, Duncan Sumpter w/ACS, and Raymond Turpin w/Macon Psych.

Jane Kimsey welcomed everyone to the meeting and officially called the meeting to order at 8:42.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Mike Neidig and seconded by Andy Shields to approve the minutes of February 8, 2013, as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

Sheriff's Department – Andy Shields reported that there is an increase in the number (5) of commitments this year compared to the same time frame last year. He also stated that the hours tied up in the commitment process for 2013 is 2,865. This is compared to 1,679 hours for the same time period in 2012. Mr. Shields stressed that transport issues are taxing available resources. The County has acquired another vehicle to help cover transport and have also increased personnel. The average time for an involuntary commitment case for this year is January-32 hours, February-47 hours, March-49 hours and April-29 hours. The longer the commitment case runs the more likely it is to be broken. Of the last 72 cases, 9 have been broken. Mr. Shields said lack of available beds is the biggest contributor to the length of time.

Mr. Beale thanked Angel Medical Center for their help in dealing with these cases while they are in the Emergency Room.

Mr. Shields stated that mental health issues are also taxing the Detention Department. Mr. Shields said dealing with mental health issues while inmates are in the detention area has drastically increased the need for more personnel which contributes to causing a budget deficient for that department. These issues include attempted suicides and the high cost of psych medicines.

There was also a recent Magistrate Training on February 22nd, that specifically discussed involuntary commitments. Mr. Beale said the average age for Magistrates in Macon County is 26. Ms. Brafford with ACS, said they are working on a pre-screening process. Ms. Brafford said after evaluation this process needs to be simplified. Ms. Brafford also agrees that local magistrates need more training in dealing with mental health issues.

Schools – Ms. Ledford said looking back over the past 2 to 3 years, mental health issues in the schools are being dealt with and the school system is in a better place. But Ms. Ledford said there are still many mental health issues to be dealt with. Ms. Ledford said that mental health issues are showing up in much younger children and more difficult issues are being diagnosed. Ms. Metcalf said that part of the problem for the children is that their home life is a mess.

Mr. Turpin said funding is the biggest obstacle in dealing with these issues. And with the current recession, these issues will probably only get worse. Mr. Turpin said that roughly 47% of the children they are currently seeing are being served free of charge.

Ms. Ledford said with possible future school budget funding issues; other factors might come in play. Some examples are bigger number of students in a classroom, fewer teachers and fewer teacher assistants. All of these factors could lead to more problems with students in the classrooms.

Ms. Nandrea explained that NAMI conducted a program that it would be offered at no charge. It is Parents and Teachers as Allies. Ms. Nandrea offered to meet with school representatives to discuss this program as a possible resource.

Mr. Hess said that Safety Risk Assessments showed three areas of concerns for young people:

1. Cutting
2. Threats against populations

3. Substance Abuse

Macon Psych – Macon Psych has seen over 500 children and parents in the last two years. Macon Psych currently have 14 on staff; of which, seven are psychologists. Their outpatient wait list is currently at 15. This year the hope is to decrease that number. One thing that is helping with the students is the Judicial Attendance Council.

Walk-In Clinic – Ms. Brafford passed around a Mobile Crisis ED County Report which included Macon Data for March and April of this year. The second part of the report covered the numbers for the whole Mobile Crisis ED Region. This report reviewed the following consumer data:

- By Population
- Primary Disability
- Location of Assessment
- Outcomes
- Referral Source
- Commitment Status
- Funding Source
- Gender

Mr. Sumpter explained that there is enough business in volume of patient numbers but not enough payments coming in. If this doesn't change, there will be a decrease in the number of services they will be able to offer. Some of the changes that might be made are limiting the number of Walk-In Clinics and limiting the hours of the clinics.

DSS – Ms. Kimsey said 13 children are currently with the Intercept Program. Most of these children have already been through Intensive In-Home Family Preservation Services.

LME – Mr. Beale stated that he would like to attend the next meeting of the LME providers.

Mental Health Providers

Youth Villages – George Edmonds, with Youth Villages, was welcomed to today's meeting and invited back for future meetings. Mr. Edmonds said he is based in Asheville. He also stated that Youth Villages wants to be a good partner with this task force.

Long Center for Psychology – Mr. Hess said he was concerned about the possibility of the Walk-In Clinics possibly closing or reducing hours. He stated that this would be a huge

determent in the caring for our local mental health clients. He explained that he has also used local doctors as resources when he has had trouble accessing services.

Community Partners

NAMI – Ann Nandrea

- CIT Conference – Ms. Nandrea said that the recent CIT Training was held in Haywood County with 10 graduating. The next training will be held in Macon County in October.
- Peer to Peer Classes – The next Peer to Peer Class will be held in the fall.
- NAMI Western Regional Conference – Ms. Nandrea said that 94 people attended the NAMI Western Regional Conference.
- Family to Family Classes – Ms. Nandrea said 18 graduated from the last class
- In Our Own Voice – Ms. Nandrea explained that this is a program where at least two trained consumer speakers share their personal stories of living with mental illness and achieving recovery. Ms. Nandrea said this program could be offered locally and it is free of charge.

NA – No Report

JCPC – No Report

Community Representative – Mr. Bottomley stated that he would like to see a repeat of the newspaper article that was done in the past listing all the contact information for mental health services. He offered to contact The Franklin Press about doing this.

Legislative Update

Budget Cuts – Mr. Beale said that there has been at least 42 million dollars cut in mental health services in the last two years. He stated that he would not be surprised of another cut of 12 to 15 million dollars. Mr. Beale also stated that he looked for more mental health costs to be put on the counties.

Board Make-Up – As stated at the last meeting, the LME Board is going to change drastically. Eleven of the 21 positions are mandated. Mr. Beale stated that he did not expect to retain his position on the Smoky Mountain Center Board with these changes.

Western Highlands – Mr. Beale explained that the state Department of Health and Human Services moved to terminate Western Highlands Medicaid contract. He stated that the board of Western Highlands Network has agreed to transition into a partnership with Smoky

Mountain Center to oversee management of mental health services in the area. He explained that ultimately this move must be approved by the state. Local counties would also have to approve the change.

Smoky Mountain Center covers the 15 counties to the west and east of the Western Highlands service area. Western Highlands Network was over the state-paid and Medicaid-paid mental health services in eight WNC counties.

Work First – Mr. Beale briefly mentioned the proposed Senate Bill 594. This bill would require people who apply for and receive cash assistance through North Carolina’s Work First program to undergo drug testing. The bill was introduced by Sen. Jim Davis (R-50).

Other Business – Ms. Kimsey stated that the central idea of forming this task force was to meet the mental health needs of consumers and family members in our county. Ms. Kimsey complimented everyone present for working together to solve problems and issues that have come up. Ms. Kimsey stressed that funding issues will be the biggest problem currently and in the future. Ms. Kimsey asked task force members to identify everyone and every agency that deals with our county (if not present today) and get their information to her. Ms. Kimsey said at the next meeting an open dialogue and problem-solving discussion could be conducted.

The Next Meeting Date will be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rhonda Blanton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rhonda Blanton