

Mental Health Sub-Committee
September 16, 2020

Present: Brian Hart, Lori Murphy, Christina Sirois, Rebecca Robertshaw, Melissa Streeter, Dayle-Lynne, Williams-Fedoriw, Johanna Webster, Diana Durfee, Jennifer Emery

Excused: Dina O'Herron, Kellie Traugott-Knoll

Minutes:

Approved without changes.

Introductions:

Suicide Prevention Updates – Brian Hart:

- **Updates on the Walk:** Based on the fact that the epidemic is in full force, the committee decided to to a “Virtual Walk” instead of an in-person walk. The “Virtual Walk” will be Saturday September 26, 2020 at 11am. You can find information on the Website and the Facebook page. Everyone is encouraged to post pictures on the Facebook page of their walk and share “Positive” messages via the hashtag **#chemungsuicideprevention2020**. The Journey Center put together a video loop of video/photos from previous years, and you can find it on the website and the Facebook page. They did a great job at capturing the essence of the event. There will be no registration, registration fee, or t-shirts. They will utilize the t-shirts that were ordered for the May 1, 2021 scheduled in-person Walk-A-Mile Event. The Virtual Walk is being picked-up regionally and by the State, as this is Suicide Prevention Month.

Earlier this week there was a suicide. Crisis was not involved. They are following up with Law Enforcement to make sure they contact and give support to family/friends of this individual.

Director of Community Services report - Brian Hart:

- **State Aid Reductions – Update (Housing) –** The State is still saying they are doing withholds, which means that this is temporary and not a state funding cut. They will be withholding 20% of the funds determined by the LGU. This means it is a \$650,000.00 reduction for Chemung County. Brian met with the field office and walked them through his spreadsheet. Apparently, the field office really did not give it any thought and assumed we should just do a 20% across the board cut to all the programs. Brian stated he looked all of the programs and cut funding to underutilized programs (such as the Breath Program) to lessen the impact on utilized programs that need the funding. Brian was questioned by the field office, to make sure he understood how things were funded. Brian reminded them that he fully understands the funding of all the programs, and that is why he chose this plan. There has been communication to all Counties that Housing is protected in this round of withholds. If the Federal Stimulus comes through then the funds will be added back in.

- **Forensic Cases** – Historically, if someone goes to court on a criminal matter, the Attorney can ask for a competency exam, which is a 730 Evaluation. Once the Judge orders this, the County covers 100% of the cost for two Doctors to do the evaluations. The evaluation is to determine if the individual can assist in his or her own defense, or if the individual has some mental illness/developmental disability, which will impede that process. The Judge as the final say even after the doctors do their evaluations. Once a decision is made by the Judge that the individual is incompetent, the person is ordered to be in the care and custody of the State (Commissioner of Mental Health). It costs 1,200.00 a day for a person to be in a Forensic Center (Psychiatric Center with a wing that has Correctional Officers). In prior years, the County only had to cover 50% of the cost, but this year we now have to cover 100% of the cost. The issue is that Brian does not receive any communication from the Forensic Center on the individuals' progress while he/she is in their custody, and if the County is paying 100% of the bill, he would like updates on the individual. Brian stated that he works with the Judges and the District Attorney's office to discourage these kinds of placements as much as possible. In a recent case here in Chemung County, an individual was in County Court on burglary related charges, and after the 730 Evaluation, the Judge ordered the individual in the care and custody of the State for no more than 90 days. When the Court Ordered 90 days were up, and the individual was not indicted, they released the person to EPC on a 2PC, as the individual needed continued care. This case has set a precedent for the entire State with the Judge's order. The State has to abide by the Judge's order, and now the County will no longer have to cover the cost. The individual was transferred from the Forensic Center to the BSU. This saves the County a lot of money. The charges are still out there for this individual, and they have a legal time frame to decide what to do with those charges. The current plan for this individual is that EPC will communicate when the person will be released and Brian will contact the District Attorney. We do not have a Mental Health Court in Chemung County. The DA could drop the charges; it just depends on how well the individual is restored. They could order the individual to be evaluated again. Brian hopes that this was not a fluke and has shared it with his DCS counterparts. OPWDD has a tendency to restore individuals quickly but Mental Health does not. Brian has spoken to the Medical Director for OMH Forensic Services, and they will try to improve communication on these cases. Brian stated that he communicates with Judge's and the District Attorney on these types of cases and the highest the County has had to pay was 80,000 a year, but typically they are around 25,000 (This was before the Counties had to start paying 100% of the cost).
- **Arnot Residency Presentation** – Brian put together a power-point presentation for the Residents of Arnot. It was about 1 ½ hours and there were many good questions, especially around pick-up orders. They would like this presentation done annually. Brian went over all the Mental Health services provided in Chemung County as well as discussed Substance Abuse and Developmental Disability services.

A committee member mentioned that they discussed doing something similar to this at EPC with the residents, but it never materialized. Maybe this is something to bring to the table again and see if it could be done. Any kind of information that we can provide to the residents will be very helpful.

Sharing by Community Members:

- **Glove House** – The funding for Care Compass has ended. This was for a respite bed that could be utilized by anyone with a child in crisis who receives Medicaid. The child could stay for up to 7 days. Now that the funding for this program has ended, the respite bed can be utilized for up to 21 days.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2020.