

Mental Health Sub-Committee
June 17, 2020

Present: Brian Hart, Dina O’Herron, Jennifer Emery, Johanna Webster, Lori Murphy, Christina Sirois, Rebecca Robertshaw, Ellen Toppings, Laurie Wert, Heather Holmes, Patti DiNardo, Dayle-Lynne Williams-Fedoriw, Sarah Briggs, Michelle Nicholas

Excused:

Minutes:

Approved without changes.

Introductions:

- **ApireHopeNY Presentation (OLP Support Services, CPST, and PSR services EZ-PAR)** – They have been providing family support services since the 1990’s. They have maintained services through COVID-19 remotely. They have a Family PEER Advocate for Chemung County that provides services for individuals 21 years old and younger and their families. They provide resources, refer them to additional providers, and are currently providing virtual group meetings. The parents are struggling with these meetings as they are continuing to live their lives during the sessions, instead of focusing only on the session. They are looking forward to having group meetings face to face again, so that the parents are able to focus only on the session. They do see that more parents are keeping their appointments virtually, than when they were only doing face to face. As for the billing aspect, they are utilizing AWARDS Electronic Health Services. It allows them to have service plans created with goals and objectives. This system has helped prevent double billing, and provides accurate service records. It also allows them to use Billing Builder, which has direct service documentation to use for billing services. The Electronic MTC system is used to track what they are doing and the hours they are spending on it. They were lucky to have used funding they received to upgrade their electronic systems. Brian stated that the State did this backwards and did not follow regulations. They certified certain providers, and then told them to go to their local LGU. This has created some difficulty with Brian, as he is a rule follower. He does not want to end up with services that our County does not need. He does not want to see staff hired and trained, only to turn around and have to fire them when their services are not needed. Brian also pointed out that the rates have decreased for 2020. The question is, should they continue to provide services in Chemung County. Is it sustainable with the amount of people that need the service? What are the budget numbers? It was stated that they are working on utilizing a mechanism to look at costs. Rates are low, so it is difficult to utilize these services alone. Because we get other funding, we can offset some of the costs. Our overhead is low, our salaries are low, and we are a Not-for-Profit, and we provide the services because we believe in it. We provide services to Medicaid families. We also take advantage of any opportunity and grants that are available to offset the costs. If the numbers go up, we should be able to support this service. Last

year they received 28 referrals from Chemung County. Presently they have slowed down due to COVID-19. Brian reminded them that they need to go to MHPD and enter an EZ-PAR. Three other agencies have been certified and submitted for formal approval. There are two agencies from outside the area (Hillside and Venture Forthe), and two local agencies (Pathways and Glove House) looking to provide these services. The numbers are a big part of the question, is this service sustainable. Brian stated that when you submit a proposal to the LGU, you need to determine a need, but showing data on how many people actually need this service in our community. The question by AspireHopeNY was "How do we proceed"? Brian explained that they need to present to the Community Services Board at 1pm today. They also need to go to EZ-PAR and enter in their information.

- **Catholic Charities – Presentation (PEER Supports)** – PEER professionals are people who have lived experience in recover from either mental illness, substance use, or both in some cases. They support others through their own recovery and help them build support networks in their communities. In 2019 six agencies collaborated to start the Chemung Peer Network and were granted funding through FLPPS (Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler – Lead Agency, AIM, AspireHopeNY, Capabilities, Inc., Family Services of Chemung County, and CASA-Trinity). 12 PEERS were hired, trained and obtained professional certifications. Today 11 of these PEERS are still employed at their respective agencies. They all have dual certifications in mental illness and substance abuse because at some point, they would work with individuals who were experiencing both. FLPPS funding for this project ends on 7/31/2020. Several agencies intended to seek HCBS designation to provide PEER Supports through this mechanism, however were all denied. Chemung County currently has only one provider designated to deliver this service through HCBS, which is Family Services of Chemung County, and they will continue to provide this service. The other agencies have adjusted the PEER position, and in some cases folded their PEERS into other parts of their organization to keep them employed. At Catholic Charities, one PEER was promoted to a Case Manager position. Two other PEERS have been reassigned to the Community Residence due to the challenges presented by COVID, and they do not have any funding source to provide PEER Supports in the long-term. Catholic Charities would like the support from the Mental Health Committee and the CSB to continue to pursue HCBS designation for this purpose. The two PEERS would remain employed at the Community Residence as their primary location, with their schedules being readjusted as referrals are received. This will allow the PEERS to be employed and allow the agency to slowly begin providing the support to the community, offering another choice in providers. We do know that since February of 2019, more than 500 unduplicated individuals have been supported the Chemung PEER Network's 11 PEERS. We believe there is a need out there, but that community is not fully aware of the availability. Through the Chemung PEER Network budget, each agency was allotted funding to pursue marketing activities. They are currently planning a virtual behavioral health conference in September. They will be targeting people who could benefit from PEER Supports, and their support networks. They would also highlight Care Management as the vehicle through which PEER Supports can be accessed.

A committee member asked what the numbers were at Family Services. At this time they have two PEERs. They originally had three but one was promoted to another position. One has 17 individuals on their caseload and the other one they are aren't sure how many are actually on their caseload as the person is not just a PEER but doing a mixed bag of things so that the person is being fully utilized.

The question is, how many do we really need in our community. Family Services stated that they do not want to lay them off. COVID-19 has highlighted the need. Folks are struggling without support systems. We need to get the information out there so that people know it is there to help them. It is also nice to give people options (other agencies).

A committee member stated that it is important to meet people, engage with them so you can get to know them and help them understand. They have heard positive feedback when the PEERS were going into the homes.

Suicide Prevention Updates – Brian Hart:

- **Updates on the Walk:** They had their ZOOM committee meeting. Brian stated that the Walk has been postponed to Saturday September 26, 2020. They are not sure how they can promote social distancing in an appropriate way. Things are kind of up in the air right now. There are still 160 people registered and they received a donation from Phoenix Academy from BOCES in memory of someone. Brian struggled with Lowe's (and their plant vendor) for plants to put in the garden at Eldridge Park. The day they went to plant them the weather was not very good as it was raining. The committee decided to hire a professional landscaper to replant the flowers each year, as they have enough money to cover the cost.

Director of Community Services report - Brian Hart:

- **COVID-19** – Brian asked if anyone had any updates.

Catholic Charities – They are having a difficult time finding cleaning supplies. If anyone has any suggestions or connections they would appreciate it. A committee member stated to go online and use "Thieves".

- **Local Plan** – Brian sent everyone he draft to look over before the meeting. The deadline for the plan was delayed because of COVID-19. He stated that he had not written an executive summary, but will do so before he submits the plan. Brian asked if any changes needed to be made before submitting the plan. A committee member saw a grammatical error that needed to be fixed. Brian then asked the committee members if they wanted him to present the entire local plan to the Community Services Board. They all agreed to allow the local plan to move forward to the CSB. There were no objections.

Sharing by Community Members:

- **Brian** – This is our last ZOOM Meeting. We will meet in person in July here at DSS in room 319.

The St. Joe's ER is no longer in service. Everyone will need to go to Arnot to be evaluated. Arnot will then transport, at their cost, to St. Joe's if they need services. This went into effect on June 1, 2020.

- **Family Services** - To update everyone on their waitlist issue that they had a few months ago because of staffing issues – They have “zero” on the wait list for Adult services and they have a very minimal waitlist at their Water Street Clinic. They still have staffing issues, but they have worked very hard at making sure everyone receives services. They are still looking to hire staff.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2020.