**ERIE COUNTY MENTAL HYGIENE COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD  
MINUTES**

April 6, 2023

COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD: Daniel Antonius, Joan Baizer, Sharon Cavanaugh, Kathryne Coric, Max Donatelli, Maya Hu Morabito, Stephanie Orlando, Dawn Skowronski, Elizabeth Smith, BJ Stasio, Charles Syms, Erica Westphal

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: Mark O’Brien, Shannon Stocker

EXCUSED: Terry Alford, Michele Brooks, Victoria Brooks

**Approval of Minutes:**  
 - March Minutes were approved

**MH Commissioner Updates:**

* Very optimistic about the way the CPEP meetings are going.
  + The steering committee is meeting once a month and groups are forming in between. We have involvement with families, peers, the WNY OMH Field Office, ECDMH, a couple of agencies, and ECMC’s clinical administration is strongly present, including Tori Brooks, Maria Clark, Ron Schoelerman, the Assistant VP, his boss, the VP, her boss, the Senior VP of Behavioral Health, and Dr. Bakhai.
  + There has been an invitation extended and accepted for family and peer representation at the CPEP Internal Operations Meetings which are every other week.
  + There is a commitment to re-starting a Family Peer Advisory group that will be separate from the family and peer folks who are going to the internal workings.
  + There will be a public education group that isn’t going to center just on CPEP, but looking at how do you get help in our area and what does that help look like, in terms of very low-level community-based help for MH issues all the way up to going to CPEP. They are working on who do you call, who can come, and where do you go.
  + We also have a diversion group focusing on what are all the services that we presently have in addition to what’s coming on-line this year, and tying that all together. This includes the BestSelf Intensive Supportive Facility on Niagara Street, Recovery Options Supportive Crisis Stabilization Center (even though that will be just outside of our boundary), and the Kirsten Vincent Center (the ribbon cutting is next week). They are working on taking what’s already on the map and doing an inventory and tying together communication processes.
* Re: the opioid funds, we contacted all the receiving providers that are in the first round of money. Every dime that’s coming from the Settlement that is coming through the LGU (ECDMH) is all going to the providers. As much as possible, it will be for workforce retention, recruitment, and replacement. They do not have to be OASAS contracted or funded agencies, but they have to either do or support opioid abatement activities like prevention, treatment, education, etc.
* Re: the Hopewell Site Initiative, that was from the indigenous partners. They were the ones that were going to put a new Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) over at Kensington and Eggert. There’s a lot of backlash with that. Initially, they were told by the Feds and State that they didn’t have to go through the OASAS process because they were under federal jurisdiction. The State changed their mind, so they changed the site over to Bailey to avoid backlash.
* The Buffalo United Resiliency Center is an organization that stood up after the May 14th mass shooting. Federal money comes in channeled through the State Office of Victim Assistance. Initially, there was at the Johnnie B Wiley Resource Counsel, then there was a lot of talk about where this was to be. We advocated for the Buffalo Urban League; the County Executive and Mayor agreed with that as well. However, it was placed over at the Resource Counsel over on the East Side. There are a lot of issues in terms of communication, coordination, etc. and it wasn’t going well. Not only did they have the funding coming down from the state and feds, but they had additional OMH funding (and thanks to Chris Marcello for doing a SAMHSA Serge Grant, which is a SAMHSA Emergency Response Grant, which is the OMH funding), and the Governor just kicked in $2.5 Million on top of that. They are moving the whole locus of that over to the Buffalo Urban League in conjunction with Community Health Center of Buffalo, which is a massive change. The Resource Counsel didn’t have the bandwidth for this type of thing, but it should go better now; Buffalo Urban League is better suited for that.
* We remain actively involved with the SMART Initiative, which is led by the Erie 1 BOCES, Erie 2 BOCES, and the Hamburg school superintendent. This has the potential to really improve the children’s system of care and making schools the locus for that.
* The Local Services Plan is now a multi-year plan. OASAS is changing that. They want to keep it simple and have less goals, but targeted, very measurable objectives and make it multi-year rollout with year-to-year objectives. Take things off the plan that have already been accomplished; it’s done and no longer part of the plan. Amy Rockwood from ECDMH is working on that in conjunction with the subcommittees and other stakeholders, so you should be seeing something very shortly.
* Erie PATH (Parents’ Access to Health) is the app for kids and families on how to get help. Part of it is if your loved one is having an issue, it will take you through the steps, asking you a series of questions in plain understandable English (with Google Translator, in 20 other languages). The other part is if you are looking for information on something, it gives you information. We are beta testing it now. The target release date is next month for MH awareness month. It exceeded any hopes we had.

**Chairperson Update:**

* Working on getting the last couple CSB member biographies. We will put these on the ECDMH website under the CSB unless anyone has a problem with it.
* Hopefully everyone has reviewed their priorities and have them working in concert with the Local Services Plan. We want to know what to focus on, know what’s being done here locally, who’s providing leadership in those particular areas, what the issues are, and what the needs are so we can make sure the County is aware of those and put some effort and resources where they need to be. The Budget deadline has been delayed, but hopefully it will pass within the next 10 days and the 8.5% cost of living increase passes.

**Bridges from Borders** – Maya Hu Morabito filling in for speaker Yan Liu who could not attend:

* <https://www.nonprofitpractice.org/applications/>
* Maya met Yan through a course Maya has been taking through the Institute for Nonprofit Practice, which is a relatively new resource to the WNY area, but the program has been established for years, originating out of Boston, MA. They have different strands of content, some for leaders that are earlier in their careers, some for leaders that are a little bit more established.
* Maya will email a flier out to the group.
* Yan is the CEO for Bridges from Borders, a non-profit organization founded by a group of immigrants and immigrant allies that focuses on culturally competent care as it pertains to MH.
* They have a free event open to the community to showcase some of their work on Friday, April 28th at the North Presbyterian Church in Williamsville called One World Community Concert. They want to encourage mental wellness across our community.
* Hopefully Yan can join us in the future to speak more about her program and the work they do.

**Personal Care Aid Issue** (BJ):

* There was an informatic that was sent out that was put together by a roundtable group with the WNY delegation that BJ helped to pull together for disabilities - all disabilities, not just developmental disabilities.
* The disability roundtable was the first of its kind in WNY. It was great to sit and discuss what the issues are. There were a lot of similarities in issues.
* BJ doesn’t have the personal care assistance that he needs right now mostly because of the amount of pay that the personal care assistants are getting. We all need to speak up together to improve their pay.
* Personal Care Aids do not get paid by OPWDD. They get paid by the Dept of Health.
* Max sent out a newspaper article that BJ wrote that was in the Buffalo News this week that included a video called *The Path Forward* that was showcased last week in Albany. It is the *Remembering Willowbrook* and the transition of Willowbrook to a City University of New York (CUNY) Campus and now the Willowbrook Mile.
* Max is hoping the Governor saw BJ’s article because it was very powerfully written and drove home the importance of increasing the budget to be able to increase the amount of funding that goes into the OPWDD as well as MH and ASA. The offices were asking for an 8.5% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment), but the Governor only has a 2.5% COLA. Without the proper funding, there is a danger of going backwards, back to when those in need were living in institutions instead of in the community.

**Subcommittee Updates:**

* IDD Subcommittee (BJ):
  + Last meeting was March 16th. Minutes will be sent out.
  + Amy Rockwood from the Erie County Department of Mental Health presented on the Local Services Plan – see minutes.
  + Discussed the workforce shortage as well as accessible and affordable housing for those with DDs.
  + The Self-Advocacy Association will be holding their first in-person Conference in 2 ½ - 3 years.
  + Next meeting will be May 18th.
* ASA Subcommittee (Elizabeth had to leave early):
  + Last meeting was February 23rd. Minutes will be sent out.
  + Next meeting will be March 23rd.
* MH Subcommittee (Erica):
  + Last meeting was March 13th. Minutes were sent out.
  + Dr. Steven Silverstein and Tricia Kilbourn presented on the INTERcept Program, based out of Rochester. It identifies individuals before their 1st episode of psychosis and provides supportive care to the families and individuals who may be experiencing some symptoms of psychosis, but haven’t actually had a full 1st episode of psychosis. It’s for those between 15-28 years old, identified through the SIPS (Structured Interview for Psychosis-Risk Syndromes), which is a 60-90-minute interview.
  + Amy Rockwood from the Erie County Department of Mental Health presented on the Local Services Plan – see minutes.
  + MH Subcommittee Priorities were discussed – see minutes.
  + Next meeting will be May 8th.

**Forensic Mental Health (Daniel):**

* We’ve joined a National Crisis of 730s, which are competency evaluations. Usually, the number of these evaluations goes down after the new year, but it has not. We are doing about 15 of these evaluations per week on average, which is a pretty high number for our group, and we are hoping it will slow down. We don’t know why it’s so high, but it is problematic throughout the state and the country. This has inundated our system and, unfortunately, has led to more findings of not competent, which leads to more hospitalizations for treatment, which is costly.
* We’re down one Nurse Practitioner, who is out with a pretty serious illness, but we have coverage for the time-being.

**NAMI Updates (Michele):**

* Information was emailed out.

**CPEP:**

* No updates given.
* Tori’s position at ECMC changed. Dr. John Improta is now the Director of CPEP Operations. They added this new role to assist Dr. Tori Brooks with CPEP management duties, and she will remain in a leadership role focused on community relations, faculty development, resident and student education.

**Building Careers in Human Services (Max):**

* We are not sure if this group is still meeting; Max is looking into it.
* ECDMH will be sponsoring a Job Fair again this year at the Convention Center on Wed, June 7th. Last year, we had 50 agencies participate. We expect this year’s to also go well.

**Opiate Task Force (Mark):**

* No updates given.

**Anti-Stigma Coalition (Max):**

* Having their monthly Facebook Live coming up and will be on Postpartum Depression.

**SANYS (Self-Advocates of NY State) (BJ):**

* We are looking forward to having everyone attend the conferences coming up.

**Veterans Administration (Katie):**

* No updates given

**Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor (Terry):**

* No updates given

**Other Updates:**

* Dawn with Endeavor – We have added Hamburg Police Dept to our list of Police Depts that we are currently co-located with. We have a clinician now working right in the Police Dept and going out on MH calls. Hamburg is in addition to Tonawanda, Cheektowaga, Buffalo, West Seneca, and the NFTA. It is being well received by the different municipalities.
* Sharon with OLV – She attended an OMH listening sessions that they had a couple weeks ago at the Hyatt with Director Chris Marcello. It was very interesting that the subcommittees that have identified workforce and housing as their priorities, because those came across in the listening sessions. We were able to get some questions answered to take back to Albany. We are hoping to start to be heard and get funding coming through.
* Stephanie with WNYIL – We recently had Chaunci Hinton and one of our staff come to a Leadership Meeting that Mark O’Brien had and do a presentation around our new Rapid Transition Housing Program (RTHP) that is for people that experience housing instability, chronic homelessness, and also have multiple disabilities, including a physical disability primarily. It is a very targeted population, but we’ve been doing presentations all over and are now seeing referrals come in. Right now, we are trying to find landlords. We also just launched the Peer Bridger Program out of ECMC, working with Value Network and a variety of their partners to provide a peer who helps bridge from in-patient at ECMC into the community and help them get to their follow up appointments within 7 days of discharge, and help problem-solve any barriers they experience within those 7 days of discharge.
* Maya with ROME – The Health Foundation of Western and Central NY is hosting a couple of listening sessions coming up that are covering anticipated changes to the 1115 Waiver, in relation to the HERO. Maya will have Shannon forward information.

**Next Meeting:**

* Thursday, May 4, 2023 @ 9:00am