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

September 7, 2023

COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD: Terry Alford, Victoria Brooks, Sharon Cavanaugh, Kathryne Coric, Max Donatelli, Maya Hu Morabito, Stephanie Orlando, Elizabeth Smith, Charles Syms, Erica Westphal

GUEST: Pastor George Nicholas, CSB Member Nominee

PRESENTER: Colleen Kristich, Senior Community Researcher at Partnership for the Public Good

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: Mark O’Brien, Shannon Stocker

EXCUSED: Daniel Antonius, Joan Baizer, BJ Stasio

**Colleen Kristich, Sr. Community Researcher at Partnership for the Public Good Presentation:**  
 - See Colleen’s slides attached here. Contact info: [colleen@ppgbuffalo.org](mailto:colleen@ppgbuffalo.org) 716-852-4191  
 

**Approval of Minutes:**  
 - May and June CSB Minutes were approved.

**MH Commissioner Updates:**

* Colleen has met with me, the Deputy County Executive, and the Legislature. She mainly discusses the CAHOTS model, Crisis Assistance Helping Out in The Street.
* We have a major project going on relating to various levels of crisis response, looking at the whole crisis continuum, from someone being in no distress, just wants to get information and find out who they call, all the way to needing CPEP. This will match up the levels of distress with various options people have. This roadmap will help the public and providers know what’s out there. Once we pull together what we have and what we need, we will develop a public education campaign to educate the public and providers.
* We had a meeting yesterday, there is a pilot that has been in place for 9-1-1 call diversion to send 9-1-1 behavioral health related calls directly to a Crisis Services hotline for someone to be dispatched. Paradoxically, a lot of callers have turned down other options, saying they want the police.
* Terry stated that in the Heritage Corridor, they experience the big problem of homeless folks, who often have mental illness and are addicted. It has gotten so bad, they are now looking into getting security. They would make sure the security is trained to be compassionate while dealing with situations.
* Mark responded, saying Terry can call Colleen or he can also call Endeavor Behavioral Health or Crisis Services to get CIT training (Crisis Intervention Training) for their security staff.
* Tori brought up that she is still worried that diversion efforts will be troubled by patients being intoxicated, for example, that they will still be brought to an emergency department, where they inevitably end up in CPEP. The current culture is to for patients to say they are suicidal to get what they want. How will the clinicians be able to engage individuals who have a higher level of need or when they are suicidal, will they be able to work with them in the community, or will they automatically still be brought to CPEP?
* Mark responded saying one of the things that will come online very early in 2024 is BestSelf’s Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center which will be open 24 hours where patients can stay up to 23 hours for mental health or acute intoxication. We want to keep the higher level interventions for the people who are truly in need of higher level care.
* Stephanie echoed the sense of looking at this in a multifaceted way because a lot of times, people are reaching crisis right now because they cannot access MH services with this work force crisis and shortage. If you have not already been engaged in the system, it can be very hard to get into the early stages, access to basic counseling. The more we approach this, the more community forums we can have to reach communities.
* We anticipate the Erie PATH App to be live in very early in October.
* Sarah Bonk will be withdrawing her involvement with the CSB because we have hired her to be our MH Emergency / Disaster Response Coordinator.

**Chairperson Update:**

* Introduced Pastor George Nicholas. Resume and bio have been emailed out to members. He was then excused from the meeting.
* Maya motioned to add Pastor Nicholas to the CSB as a member, Terry seconded, no one opposed. Motioned passed.

**Subcommittee Updates:**

* ASA Subcommittee (Elizabeth):
  + Last meeting was June 22nd. Minutes will be sent out.
  + Now called Prevention and Addiction Services and Supports Subcommittee, PASSS.
  + Next meeting will be September 28th.
* MH Subcommittee (Erica):
  + Last meeting was July 10th and Colleen Kristich presented at that meeting. Minutes will be sent out.
  + Next meeting will be September 11th and we will have Jeffrey Pirrone, Executive Director from NAMI join us, also as a potential member. He will talk about current challenges families face in navigating the system, particularly when they are new to the system.
* IDD Subcommittee (Max):
  + Last meeting was July 20th. Minutes will be sent out.
  + Workforce crisis is still clearly an issue.
  + Next meeting will be September 21st.

**Forensic Mental Health (Daniel):**

* No updates given

**NAMI Updates (Michele):**

* No updates given

**CPEP:**

* No updates given.

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

* No updates given

**Opiate Task Force (Mark):**

* No updates given.

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

* No updates given

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

* No updates given

**Veterans Administration (Katie):**

* No updates given

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

* No updates given

**Other Updates:**

* No updates given

**Next Meeting:**

* Thursday, October 5, 2023 @ 9:00am.
* If you have other ideas for speakers or topics you would like us to focus on, please let Max know.
* Also, we have an opening for a CSB member. If you know anyone interested, please let Max know.