Mental Health Sub-Committee
October 13, 2021

Present: Brian Hart, Lori Murphy, Christina Sirois, Melissa Stafford, Laurie Wert, Anthony Alvernaz, Kellie Traugott-Knoll

Excused: Dina O’Herron, Kate Lewis

Minutes:

Approved without changes.

Introductions:

Suicide Prevention Updates – Brian Hart:

➢ safeTALK November 3rd: This will be open to the public and is a 3 ½ hour class. This is a gatekeeper kind of class that teaches the signs and symptoms and what to do. It will be at the Journey Center and they need to have at least 10 people registered and no more than 25 people in the class. Currently there are 19 people already registered. A committee member stated that on October 23rd they are having the Michelle Shaffer bowling tournament. They will be handing out a booklet that is focused on educating people to recognize the signs and how to respond.

➢ ISS Day November 20th: International Suicide Survivors Day. They will be providing Brunch, it will be from 10am until 12pm and they are working on a flyer for the event. Details of the plans will be posted on the website (walkamile.net) and on the FB page (Walk a Mile in My Shoes).

Director of Community Services report - Brian Hart:

➢ FQHC: Federally Qualified Health Center. There have been discussions about bringing this to the community. It’s a Primary Care Office that is federally funded for low income/indigenous population. There are two different discussions going on, no sure which one will be approved. The Federal government approves if we are allowed to have one in our community. The key components to this office is that they will provide primary health care, dental and a small amount of mental health. This is outside the federal funding cycle to apply, so they need to find alternative funding if they want to open up sooner, rather than later.

➢ Mandatory Vaccines: This has impacted several agencies (Arnot, EPC, Family Services Home Care, etc.). Some people have chosen to get vaccinated, some have not. Those who have not been vaccinated yet have been temporarily laid off until they get vaccinated in a time frame, and if they don’t then they will be terminated. New emergency regulations will be coming out soon for all OPWDD, OASAS, and OMH staff to be mandated to get the vaccine. A committee member stated that some of their contracted staff were not in a contact list and notified and were unaware that Family Services home
care were implementing this mandate. They have to show proof of getting the vaccine or have a health or religious exemption. A committee member said that in their agency they received an email last week and they have until November 1st for employees to have the 1st shot. A committee member said that EPC is looking at setting up a clinic to get staff vaccinated. For those staff that are choosing not to get vaccinated we have no idea who will be taking over those caseloads. There might be some delays in recovery goals due to the staffing changes. Brian stated that he was informed that the number of staff impacted at Family Services was minimal (8 to 9 People). The will be given a two-week layoff to think about getting the vaccine. More guidance should be coming out by the end of next week for the medical and religious exemptions. If there is no guidance then everyone will be doing it differently. Brian stated at some point everyone will be mandated to get the vaccine. A committee member stated that there is concern for a back-up and delay for services. They will be at their maximum capacity and have waitlists. It will be a huge impact on those seeking Rep Payees through Social Security. Brian stated that in regards to Social Security they are also dealing with staffing issues. Once someone is approved for a Rep Payee, if a one cannot be found then you need to reach out to APS (Adult Protective Services) at DSS. Brian asked if anyone has heard that Rep Payee funds are being delayed and not one has heard of any. A committee member stated that there is a delay when changing Rep Payees.

➢ **988 Starting July 2022:** This is the new suicide hotline system that is limited to just NYS, and does not align with the national system which includes the center in Ithaca NY. The center in Ithaca, NY only covers the 1st and 2nd shift, the overnight hours are covered by the next available center and that could be out of state. Details need to be worked out, because it could make things challenging with our mobile crisis program. We will have to see how things move forward, and hopefully in the best interest for all involved.

➢ **GRHHN HH Care Management:** They are looking to expand its services into Chemung County and the Finger Lakes. They will be contacting existing care management providers, as Brian has asked them to do that instead of trying to bring in new providers outside the area. Brian asked if anyone has heard from them yet and none of the committee members have heard anything.

**Sharing by Community Members:**

➢ **None**

The next meeting is scheduled for **December 15, 2021 via ZOOM.**