



COUNTY OF HUNTERDON NEW JERSEY

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MENTAL HEALTH BOARD



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REFERENCE:

- Council
- Mental Health
- Youth
- Disability Services
- Substance Use Disorder
- Transportation

Approved March 2, 2023.

MENTAL HEALTH BOARD

Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 5, 2023 5:30 p.m.
Via Microsoft Teams

MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Dudzinski
L. Cartwright

MEMBERS ABSENT

M. Deo
L. Hartman
R. Walker

EX-OFFICIO

STAFF

M. O'Reilly
S. Nekola

GUESTS

D. Schappert
A. Bassetti
A. Villano
K. Merson
E. Santiago
J. Hunt
L. Oramas

I. CONVENE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT:

“This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobbies of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, the first floor of the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street Building #1, Flemington, NJ; the first floor of the Route 12 County Complex, Building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ and County Clerk’s Office.”

ROLL CALL:

The regular public meeting was opened at 5:30 p.m. Introductions were made.

Due to the public health crisis, COVID-19, this meeting was held virtually ONLY

M. O'Reilly stated she is the Administrator for Hunterdon County Department of Human Services.

A. Bassetti stated he is with Hunterdon Screening.

L. Cartwright stated he is with NAMI Hunterdon.

W. Dudzinski stated he is the Chairman of the Mental Health Board and CFO of NewBridge

Services, Inc.

A. Villano stated she is the Senior Director of Recovery Services at Acenda Integrated Health.

J. Hunt stated he was previously the Student Assistant Coordinator at Voorhees High School and is interested in learning more about the Mental Health Board.

E. Santiago stated she is with Norwescap.

D. Schappert stated she is attending on behalf of Norwescap and Broadstep Behavioral Health.

K. Merson stated she is with Rutgers Early Intervention Support Services (EISS) for Hunterdon County.

L. Oramas stated she is the Director for Rutgers Early Intervention Support Services (EISS).

S. Nekola stated she is the Division Head of Social Work Services for Hunterdon County.

II. *A. MINUTES: Due to a lack of a quorum, the meeting minutes of December 1, 2022 will be tabled at the February 2, 2023 Meeting.

B. CORRESPONDENCE: No correspondence at this time.

III. REPORTS:

A. County Update: M. O'Reilly reported the County of Hunterdon has a new Commissioner Director for 2023, Commissioner Zach Rich and the new Commissioner Deputy Director is Jeff Kuhl who will remain the Commissioner Liaison for the Department of Human Services.

B. State Update: No report.

C. NAMI Hunterdon Update: W. Dudzinski reported NAMI Hunterdon had its monthly board meeting, and they are continuing with their family support groups. L. Cartwright added the support groups will be held in person rather than via Zoom. L. Cartwright conveyed the family support group is held on the third Thursday of the month from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm at the Getting Together Center located at 52 East Main Street in Flemington.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None at this time.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Hunterdon County EISS Presentation: K. Merson conveyed Early Intervention Support Services is often referred to as EISS.

Goal and Purpose: The goal of EISS is to reduce the number of referrals to Screening and local emergency rooms. The primary purpose of the program is to identify individuals at risk for referral to Screening and to intervene with immediate short-term, intensive services and appropriate referrals.

Target Population:

- Individuals seeking services from the Screening Center presenting with urgent concerns as opposed to emergent concerns.
- Individuals discharged from emergency rooms or Screening Center who need immediate services to maintain stabilization.
- Individuals engaged in other services such as case management, supportive housing or the Community Wellness Center who have stopped their involvement in treatment and are at risk for referral to Screening.
- Individuals with psychiatric disorders who are released from jail and have no mental health services.

Not the Target Population:

- 17 years of age and younger.
- Enrolled with PACT
- Primary substance abuse or developmental disability without a psychiatric disorder diagnosis. Individual will need to identify some type of mental health disorder.

Program Design

- 24/7 availability to take initial referrals
- Seven day a week availability for initial face-to-face assessments.
- Person-centered, strength-based approach
- No wait list, appointments are offered within 24 hours of referral
- An average length of stay of about 30 days with discharge to further treatment (if appropriate)

Direct Care Staffing

- Clinician Supervisor
- One full-time APN
- Five full-time Mental Health Clinicians
- One full-time case manager
- One full-time peer support specialist

Program Components

- Assessment which includes clinical evaluation as well as appraisal of quality-of-life elements (medical, housing, income, social and family supports, vocational goals and needs)
- Person-centered Treatment Planning based on consumer's expressed goals.
- Medication management and education

- Emergency assistance to purchase medication
- Intensive individual therapy
- Treatment for substance abuse difficulties
- Case management
- Assistance with transportation to EISS appointments if necessary
- On-call clinician for crisis calls and referrals
- Outreach
- Linkages to the following: longer-term mental health treatment, medical treatment, entitlements, housing support, substance abuse treatment, employment support, educational support, socialization resources

Contact Information

Luz Oramas, LCSW- Program Director 973-289-0982

Greg Fitzpatrick, LCSW – Director of Emergency Services - 732-235-5150

W. Dudzinski asked where Rutgers EISS is located and how many individuals have used their services so far. K. Merson conveyed the Hunterdon County EISS is located at 8 Main Street in Flemington. K. Merson reported they have only received one (1) enrollment. She stated she just recently met with Catholic Charities and will be meeting with Al Bassetti from Hunterdon Medical Center next week.

W. Dudzinski asked if those individuals being served by EISS were individuals with severe problems or individuals experiencing first time problems. K. Merson conveyed EISS does not define what a crisis is for any individual and they are flexible with who they help. The only requirements Hunterdon EISS has is that the client must be over the age of eighteen (18) and a County resident reporting mental health. M. Merson presented the example that clients can enroll in the EISS program if their case gets closed and they are put on a wait list because they missed appointments with their provider. EISS is able to provide the interim services while they wait for their appointment.

W. Dudzinski asked how many employees Hunterdon EISS has. K. Merson stated the staff included herself and Luz Oramas, as well as two on-site clinicians, and an on-site Advance Practice Nurse (APN). They are in the process of hiring a peer support specialist and a case manager, with the possibility of hiring another clinician. Discussion ensued.

D. Schappert conveyed she works with a lot of clients in Sussex and Warren Counties and asked if there was a general information number for those who are not Hunterdon County residents or those who might be homeless. K. Merson reported every county has an EISS program and their own phone number. L. Oramas confirmed there was not a general EISS contact number, but they can share a list of what agencies cover each county. L. Oramas conveyed referrals for homeless individuals is based off what county they are permanently homeless in or where they stay. A permanent address is not required.

A. Villano asked what hours they are open on-site. K. Merson conveyed individuals are able to walk-in Monday through Friday from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. K. Merson advises individuals

to call if they are unsure of the location or hours. L. Oramas added once fully staffed, they will be open from 9:00 am – 7:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. W. Dudzinski asked when the doors of EISS opened for business. K. Merson stated they opened the week of Thanksgiving.

W. Dudzinski asked how long it took other counties to increase their client base and when they think Hunterdon EISS will be fully utilized. L. Oramas conveyed Essex County's client base increased rapidly because University Hospital is close by and referred clients. Within two months, Essex County EISS was fully functioning. Somerset County's EISS Program opened on November 1, 2023 and L. Oramas reported they receive approximately one referral a day. L. Oramas conveyed she is continuing to market and continuing to meet with providers in Hunterdon County.

A. Villano stated Acenda Integrated Health was awarded the EISS for Cape May and Gloucester County. She conveyed they opened around the same time in November and are also experiencing a slow start. A. Villano conveyed some clients may be reluctant because they are concerned, they will be treated as a crisis patient.

L. Cartwright asked if there are any organizations in the County that Hunterdon EISS is connected to. K. Merson conveyed she made a call to Easter Seals and is waiting to connect with them. She stated she met with IOC, will be meeting with A. Bassetti and his staff, and she has already met with Catholic Charities. K. Merson is opened to any suggestions.

W. Dudzinski asked A. Bassetti if Hunterdon Medical Center had a wait list. A. Bassetti responded that some programs have waitlists while other programs do not. He added there are delays with scheduling a psychiatry appointment and outpatient programs in a timely manner. A. Bassetti stated one problem Hunterdon Medical Center has is the population of adolescents with mental health needs, which is not something EISS will service. Discussion ensued.

D. Schappert asked about the length of service Hunterdon EISS is able to provide. K. Merson conveyed ideally, they do not want to hold the case from month to month, but the limit depends on the availability of the client to schedule an appointment.

W. Dudzinski asked how payment and billing worked for the Hunterdon EISS Program. K. Merson stated the program is grant funded and they do try to bill for services, however, the ability to pay is not a determinate if they can receive services. She added Somerset County has received a handful of clients who are uninsured as well as undocumented and they still provide services to them.

E. Santiago asked about Emergent care for adolescents under the age of five (5). K. Merson and L. Oramas were unaware of any services in Hunterdon County.

B. Stigma Update: M. O'Reilly conveyed the County has been working on becoming Stigma free by 2023, she believes the one municipality that had not declared themselves stigma free, now has. However, she will have to double check to confirm that information.

C. Agency News:

Norwescap: E. Santiago from Norwescap reported on a new program that will be coming to

Hunterdon County. The Flemington Food Pantry was awarded the regional ACE's Collaborative Award through Norwescap and will be offered to seventy-five (75) families of four (4) or more who will be bonding through cooking together. E. Santiago stated there is not a start date set but she will share the information when available.

Acenda Integrated Health: A. Villano stated Acenda has openings and prescriber availability for adolescents with mental health and substance abuse disorders. The appointments will continue to be virtually, but they have prescribers available.

L. Cartwright made a motion and W. Dudzinski seconded to adjourn the meeting of January 5, 2023. All were in favor. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m. The next meeting will be on February 2, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.