



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 Abuse
- Transportation

Draft to be approved October 25, 2023

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 3:30 p.m.
Human Services Conference Room I
And via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>EX-OFFICIO</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>GUESTS</u>	<u>COUNTY DIV. REPS.</u>
S. Elliot	M. Eichorn	F. Peters	E. Ramirez	S. Becker
S. Cohen	F. Leddy		L. Bivona	M. O'Reilly
R. Horoschak	M. LaQuaglia		S. Lax	K. Burghardt
J. Cassano	M. Moore		M. Scherer	
J. Gorman			E. Kesler	
L. Case			J. Paruda	
L. Piazza-Long			K. Fullerton	

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 published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobby of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services; the first floor on the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street, Flemington, NJ; the Route 12 County Complex, Building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ; and the County Clerk’s Office.”

The Council allows time for comments from the public at the end of each meeting. Public comments are limited to three (3) minutes per person per meeting, in order to ensure that all attendees have an opportunity to be heard. Brief written comments may also be submitted for distribution during the meeting.

PURPOSE:

The Hunterdon County Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) is a county-based planning, advisory, and advocacy organization dedicated to helping the community meet its human service needs. The HSAC seeks to facilitate, coordinate, and enhance the delivery of human services

through collaborative relationships within the county, and between the counties and private and State agencies.

II. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by M. Moore and seconded S. Elliot to approve the meeting minutes of July 26, 2023. All members were in favor, no abstentions and no one opposed. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

III. PRESENTATION: United Way of Hunterdon County Latino Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS): Presentation by Brenda Esler and Gabriella Bonnavent.

B. Esler presented that United Way has been administering a Latino BRFSS since 2007. This is the only Latino BRFSS that is administered in the State of New Jersey. The purpose of the Survey is to identify health disparities in comparison to the Hunterdon County population. The Survey was first administered in 2007, then 2011, 2016 and 2022. Throughout the history of administering the survey, it had begun as a collaborative project that was funded by a few different partners. The 2022 survey was made possible by a grant received from the New Jersey Department of Health Division of Multicultural Health. The grant has shifted its focus from health and wellness specifically to Covid-19 and is now coming to an end in January 2024. The United Way believes in the value of this survey continuing every 3-5 years so we can see trends over time. The Latino Coalition that is connected to the United Way and the Hunterdon Partnership for Health is a group that will help to further some of the recommendations that have come out of this report.

- In the 2020 New Jersey State Health Assessment Data (SHAD), 5.8% of Hunterdon County residents rated their health as “fair” to “poor”.
- In contrast, 26.75% of the Hispanics/Latinos residing in Hunterdon County in 2022 rated their health as “fair” to “poor”.
- Overall, 75.1% of the BRFSS participants reported not having health care insurance coverage. This is a slight increase for those without health insurance in 2016.
- In contrast the overall Hunterdon County rate of individuals who are uninsured is 5.1%

Mental Health:

- While the 7% of the participants reported mental health problems (in line with the County’s rate of 8.8%), the barriers of not having health insurance, cost, and not finding a health care professional who spoke Spanish was noted.

Sun Safety:

- Overall, approximately 28.1% of the Latino participants reported never using sunscreen.
- This percentage has substantially improved from the 50% who reported never using sunscreen in the 2016 Latino assessment.
- Hispanic/Latina females within the County use sunscreen and/or sun block more so than Hispanic/Latino men.

Oral Health:

- While improved, 39.5% of Latinos have visited the dentist in the past year vs the overall Hunterdon County rate of 76.9%.
- The Partnership should consider the impact of having a Zufall Dental Office has had on these results.
- The primary reason for Hispanics/Latinos not receiving Dental Services was cost (32.9%), which is improved from the 67% figure reported in the 2016 Latino assessment.

Hypertension:

- Overall, 15.5% of the Survey Participants reported having been told they have hypertension, a slight increase in comparison to 2016 (12.7%).
- In contrast the overall Hunterdon County rate of individuals who are hypertensive is 23.6%

Blood Cholesterol:

- Overall, 22% of the survey participants reported having been told they have high cholesterol.
- In contrast the overall Hunterdon County rate of individuals who have high cholesterol is 30.1%

Diabetes:

- The percentage of Latinos being told they have pre-diabetes (17.7%) is slightly higher than the Hunterdon County rate of 15.6%.
- However, the overall percentage of Latinos being told they have diabetes (11%) is more than double the Hunterdon County rate of 5.3%.

Smoking:

- Overall, very few Latinos in Hunterdon County report smoking tobacco. Only 3.1% reported smoking daily, with another 2% indicating they smoked some days.
- The Hunterdon County rate is 11.7% of individuals who have smoked.
- Also, very few Latinos in Hunterdon County reported smoking electronic cigarettes.

Alcohol Consumption:

- Overall, 57.3% of participants reported they don't drink alcohol compared to the Hunterdon County rate of 29.7%, suggesting that Latinos are drinking less frequently than the general population.

○ **Breast Health:**

- For Women 44.2% reported having a mammogram. While this type of Cancer screening has witnessed a significant improvement in the Latino community, it still lags the 79.6% of Hunterdon County Women that reported having had a mammogram in the past 2 years.

Prostate Health:

- For men older than 40 years of age, 37.5% reported yes to having had a PSA Test.
- This figure is higher than the 31% of 40+ men assessed to have a PSA test in the 2016 assessment.
- In this and the previous Latino assessment, several men refused to answer this question, suggesting PSAs are a stigmatized health screening among Latino men. Continued work is needed to improve attitudes and adherence regarding PSA screens for Prostate Cancer.
- Similar responses were found when asking about colonoscopies.

Colorectal Screening:

- Only 28.1% of men aged 45 and older reported having a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy.
- This percentage is lower than the 55% indication on the 2016 assessment.
- Significant improvements are needed in assuring the 45+ Latino Community has access to this important Colorectal Cancer prevention services.

Food Insecurity:

- Food insecurity was reported in nearly half of all respondents (45.8%) as compared to the

Hunterdon County rate of 5.5%.

Physical Activity

- Nearly half of all respondents (46.7%) reported not engaging in any physical activity and another 45.9% reported moderate physical activity every week.
- There were no statistically significant differences among men and women in respect to physical activity.

Education

- When we consider education as a social determinant of health, it is important to note that Hunterdon County reports 95.7% attained a high school diploma or higher level of education whereas the Latino community reports 34.34% have achieved this level of education.

Questions for 2022

In Reference to Covid:

- Among respondents, 79.2% reported having received the COVID-19 Vaccine, with men and women both reporting similar proportions of vaccination.
- Among those reporting COVID-19 Vaccinations, the majority (62.2%) reported having received two doses.

Gender Based Violence

- Among those who reported experiencing abuse in the past year, 5 of the 7 (71%) were Women.
- Among those who reported being Raped or Forced to Engage in a Sexual Act by their partner, 2/2 (100%) were men.
- Among those who reported being physically injured by their partner or ex-partner in the past year, 4/5 (80%) were men.

4 Key Recommendations

- 1. Increase access to cancer screenings Men and women reported less frequently receiving basic Cancer Screening Prevention methods (Mammograms, PSAs, and Colonoscopies)
- 2. Increase Access to Dental Health Services
Dental Health Services were the least frequently reported health services utilized by respondents.
- 3. Increase Access to Health Education and Literacy on Sun Safety
Given the high risk of exposure, efforts are needed to communicate the importance of proper Sun Safety.
- 4. Increase Access to Health Promotion. High rates of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) were reported, particularly Diabetes.

Logic Model

Lack of Access to Health Services

- Collaborate with stakeholders to enroll uninsured Latinos in Health Insurance and Hospital Assistance Programs. Host enrollment events at the United Way Volunteer Center and other partner locations.
- Increased awareness of Local and State resources: Hospital Assistance Programs, free Cancer Screening Services, Affordable Health Insurance, Health and Wellness Programs and Education, Substance Misuse Interventions, Mental Health Services, ESL/Spanish classes and

increased enrollment in Health Insurance.

Lower Rates of Preventative Screenings

- Collaborate with stakeholders to engage Latinos in free Preventive Screening Services such as NJ CEED, Screen New Jersey, and Zufall Dental Services.
- Host Health Screening at the United Way Volunteer Center and other partner locations.

Social Determinates of Health

- Reduce Food Insecurity. Increased participation among Latinx Youth and Adults in career exploration opportunities for the potential leading to a greater sense of financial stability.
- Increase awareness of local resources: WIC, SNAP, Food Pantries, Produce Distribution, etc.
- Coordinate visits to RVCC and HMC to explore career options and educational pathways. Host job fairs.

Stigma and Feelings of Discomfort

- Collaborate with Public Health, Behavioral Health Partners to provide Stigma Free education services.
- Promote awareness of Behavioral Health Services available in Spanish.

The Presentation and Report will be shared with HSAC.

Discussion Ensued.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. 2023 Point in Time Count Results: M. O'Reilly reported that the annual Point in Time (PIT) Count was held in January 2023. Monarch Housing Associates compiles the information for the entire state of New Jersey. Within the last two years Monarch has released an informative document to summarize the results. M. O'Reilly shared the PIT Summary on Monarch Housing's website and described the highlights for the group. For 2023, in Hunterdon County, there were 176 individuals experiencing homelessness on the night of January 24, 2023. Two (2) of those individuals were unsheltered. 174 individuals were sheltered in places such as a motel, hotel, warming center, or another sheltered situation. The numbers generated for gender did not vary much from 2022 PIT count. The victims of Domestic Violence rose significantly in Hunterdon County. In 2022 there 17 households that listed their cause of homelessness as Domestic Violence versus 57 households for 2023. The number of Veterans has increased and the number of chronically homeless remained the same between 2022-2023. There was a 4 percent decrease in overall homelessness between 2022 and 2023. There have been challenges connecting with individuals who were unsheltered on the night of the count and subsequently when we were completing the survey.

S. Lax asked if there was any data from 2022 to compare to? M. O'Reilly responded with the data from prior PIT counts in 2022 there were 8 individuals were unsheltered, in 2021 there were 8, in 2020 there were 24 and in 2019 there were 9.

J. Paruda asked what the reason was for the drastic change in the domestic violence numbers?

M. O'Reilly asked if L. Bivona could assist with the answer to this question. L. Bivona conveyed in addition to the problem increasing, directly linked to the Covid pandemic, people may have been trapped with their abuser with no alternative to leave. Safe In Hunterdon's services have increased as they are doing more outreach, responding to Police Departments and Hospitals. Safe in Hunterdon is helping bring individuals into services, they are starting to see individuals being

counted that were not counted previously. The number reflects the ability for individuals to start seeking assistance whereas previously they were unable to.

Discussion Ensued.

R. Horoschak asked how the numbers were counted from January 24, 2023?

M. O'Reilly responded that they were counted in a few different ways. She conveyed that some agencies enter their data into the Homeless Management Information System and in Hunterdon Counties case, the data was also entered through Survey Monkey. The data that is in the HMIS system is pulled when Monarch is doing their system data analysis, they can see the specifics of each county and each HMIS program that is pulled. Agencies in Hunterdon County that enter HMIS are asked to submit a form each year to confirm the census in their program for the night of the point in time to make sure the numbers match.

Discussion Ensued.

R. Horoschak asked that since we are getting Domestic Violence numbers for those attending services, the Homeless do not seem to be counted however the Domestic Violence numbers have increased, was there a reporting issue with those statistics?

K. Burghardt explained to the committee that where the information originates from, the survey asks for the primary cause of homelessness. Domestic Violence is listed as one of the causes of Homelessness. With the 2023 survey, there was an increase in individuals who marked domestic violence while being homeless versus in previous years.

K. Burghardt reported regarding homelessness, there are 109 individuals out of 500 on his current housing waiting list that have reported being homeless.

Discussion Ensued.

M. O'Reilly stated the committee will be preparing for the 2024 Point in Time survey soon. For 2024, the CEAS committee is looking to have another CARES event to coincide with the PIT count.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. **Housing Social Worker:** K. Burghardt introduced F. Peters, the Housing Social worker who started on August 21, 2023. F. Peters is working with the Mainstream Voucher Program.

VI. REPORTS:

- A. County Department of Human Services (CDHS):** M. O'Reilly reported the Housing Voucher Waiting list has closed. There are approximately 500 households on the waiting list. Notification has been sent out regarding placement on the waiting list. Regarding the Foster Youth Initiative Voucher Program (FYI), if there are any youth that qualify for the program, please contact Housing. Currently there have been 6 referrals for that program. The 3-year Hunterdon County Human Services Request for Proposal (RFP) was released. There was a technical assistance session held on September 21, 2023. If anyone needs the RFP documents, you may contact Ray Rule. The county is requesting letters of intent for your agency and amount that you are applying for by October 10, 2023. The completed RFP is due to be dropped off at 71 Main Street before 3:00pm on October 18, 2023.
- B. NJ Department of Human Services (DHS):** No Report.
- C. NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P):** M. Scherer reported for the Hunterdon Local Office that they are working with 189 Youth. 9 Youth are in placement, and we have received 39 referrals. 189 Youth has remained average, 9 Youth in placement has decreased from previous months and 39 referrals has increased from previous months.

D. HSAC Committee Reports:

Housing Report: R. Horoschak reported the bylaws have been modified over the last 6 years and will be monitored for the time being.

R. Horoschak also reported on the Housing Committee that they are trying to learn about national trends in housing and create a database with that information and at some point, be able to share that with the public.

Regarding trends in other States, many places are dealing auxiliary housing issues.

Discussion ensued regarding national housing trends.

S. Elliot reported that the Legislative Committee will not have a report until Elections occur.

VII. GOALS & ACTION: None.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT AND QUESTIONS PERIOD: Public comments are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes per person. Brief written comments may be submitted prior to the meeting for distribution during the meeting.

IX. *MOTION TO ADJOURN: There being no further business M. Scherer made a motion to adjourn the meeting of September 27, 2023. K. Burghardt seconded the motion. All members were in favor, the motion carried. The next meeting will be held October 25, 2023.

*** = Item Requires Action**

Note to Council Members: If members are unable to attend the meeting, please notify the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services at 908-788-1253.