



## **MENTAL HEALTH LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

January 8, 2024

12:00 - 1:30 PM

Gallatin County Courthouse Community Room and Via Zoom

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Voting Members Present-** Commissioner Zach Brown, Erin Taylor, Andrea Lower, Lori Christenson, Melaney Swenson, Nicole Madden, Anthea George, Roper Green, Yvonne Rudman, Eric Szemes, Susan Gregory, Tom Peluso, Steve Nash

**Non-Voting Members Present-** Chad Berg, Rick Gale, Ben Frentsos

**Voting Members Absent-** Ryan Mattson, Jennifer Madgic, John Kudrna

**Guests-** Mikaela Diberardinis, Kirsten Smith, Ellie Martin

**Staff-** Missy Fleming

- Call to Order- Erin Taylor welcomed the group.
- Roll Call- Missy Fleming took attendance.
- Approval of Minutes: December 2023 minutes- Erin Taylor approved the minutes as distributed.
- Public Comment:
  - Mikaela Diberardinis – She is a doula and has noticed that there isn't a lot of support or resources available for prenatal care (on a mental health level). She is asking to join the board and help bring light to mothers who may be experiencing mental stress and crisis. Anthea had spoken with her before the meeting and says she would support Mikaela joining the MHLAC.
  - Rick Gale would like to acknowledge the local teachers. Many are experiencing the effect of mental health issues both in themselves and with the students. They deserve thanks for the work they do.
- Officer and Committee Reports
  - Strategic Planning Committee- Erin said they have been following the plan well but hopes to start focusing more on future planning soon.
  - Outreach Committee- This will be covered in new business.
  - Membership Committee- Anthea welcomed Mikaela, who she reiterated would be a great addition to the MHLAC. There is another candidate (not here this week due to COVID) who would be wonderful. Anthea is putting it out to members again that we have 5 vacancies for the Family/Consumer openings. She would like the MHLAC to help fill those positions, so please keep looking and talking to people.
  - Accounting- Tom has no updates on the budget.

- Central Service Area Authority- Eric Szemes: We are eligible for a ‘fast track’ grant, but the pathway takes a little longer and a CSAA agent could help facilitate it. His experience with them has been fantastic. He attended a conference, and they have great resources, support, etc that is available. It is going to be a great opportunity for us to learn from other LACs throughout the state. The channels for funding are a bit of a web, so he is hoping to have help with that. Eric also offered a generic introduction about research he has been doing about what are the other means we can provide accessible services in a timely fashion – for our LAC and maybe the community as well. State funded free Tel-Health could be made accessible to all Montanans. There is even texting mental health avenues available. He is going to research which of them could be best. MSU uses a similar system. Anthea thanked Eric and agreed we need to find a way to better channel information. Maybe his report (and others that come along) should be in the form of a written report everyone can digest. Also, maybe that can be something we discuss as new business at a later meeting. Eric suggested a website that would have all that information and visible to the general public. Erin agreed that it could be part of the Strategic Planning.
- Unfinished Business
  - None
- New Business
  - Gallatin Mobile Crisis (Update) – Commissioner Zach Brown provided an update. A year into having Mobile Crisis, it has been a windy, rocky road to figure out financially due to Medicaid and the State of Montana as far as who is going to fund what and when. Unfortunately, we are still in a sort of purgatory for that funding. Everyone involved has praised the addition of the mobile crisis, however. Medicaid is still figuring out what they cover and/or what they will reimburse for. In the interim they have made funds available in the form of a grant to Gallatin County. It’s been a short-term backstop while we wait. Gallatin County is putting the final touches on a 12-month contract and hopefully over that time the state sends its rules for Medicaid reimbursements. Commissioner Brown mentioned that the total cost of service for one year \$642,000, which is approximately \$53,000 per month. One thing in the contract he wants to share with this group is a goal of 12/7. This means 12 hours a day operation, 7 days a week. The optimal numbers are 24/7, but as of now with staffing and funding 12/7 is what we can do. Future Generations could offer some additional funding that they are allotting statewide. If Medicaid and this Future Generations assistance falls through, the Marijuana Tax fund is a possible solution to use for mental health services. It could cover the contract if needed. The City of Bozeman has allocated \$150,000 in their budgets pledged for this service and Belgrade has agreed to pay \$20,000 a year. Once the contract is finalized and passes in a public meeting it will retroactively cover from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

Susan Gregory said that GMC (Gallatin Mobile Crisis) has been great helping out with some individuals who have come into Bozeman Public Library and needed assistance.

Eric Szemes asked if the \$642,000 is a flat rate cost? Or per use? Will Medicaid reimburse per user? And how will that reflect the total cost. Commissioner Brown explained the cost is for the program as a whole but Medicaid would be reimbursing on an individual basis. Commissioner Brown doesn't expect the reimbursement to be a windfall. Essentially, until we know what they are going to do, we are in the dark about how that will affect the cost.

Anthea asked who oversees the contract. Commissioner Brown said Gallatin County Contract Compliance. She says no one was focused on the people in regard to Hope House and that the County and the MHLAC needs to make sure Connections doesn't overlook the human element of this project. Commissioner Brown said we will rely on our community partners to give us feedback on how it is going. It's informal, but it exists. It was never Connections' intention to come to Montana and run one mobile crisis service and he is surprised pleasantly that they are still involved.

- LAC Support for Bozeman Health inpatient psych unit - Erin would like to write a letter of support but wants to get feedback from board members. Are we in favor of drafting a letter of support? Commissioner Brown said the Commission is excited about what Bozeman Health is bringing to the table, such as the Emergency Detainment ward. Yvonne thinks it is great that hospital is building a 14-bed unit which was planned to be available this spring, but she heard it was pushed back to 2025 now. Is it delayed because 2 psychiatrists left? Nicole Madden said no, it was due to the scale of the project. Bozeman Health has 2 inpatient psychiatrist letters of intent to start in August, so it isn't due to staffing. She has heard end of 2024 as a finish date because of construction and supply chain. Steve Nash thinks a letter of support should be sent. It will help our law enforcement and our community to have a fully staffed psych ward. Erin asked Yvonne to help him create the document and she agreed.
- Salons and Saloons Event – This is a community event to bring awareness to mental health using people like hairdressers and bartenders or school janitors and cafeteria workers – people who are in the position to be having the important conversations. Ella (who is with the Behavioral Health Coalition) wanted to update what they are working on and figure out how the two boards can work together building a vision of community connectors, a structure of support around those people (training and ongoing support). Salons and Saloons is a great way to partner and give support to each other. Anthea answered that she sees both boards working together but how are final decisions made? Regardless, she feels comfortable participating. Yvonne thinks this is an important first event to work together on and build a network of connectors. An event like this would get MHLAC more in the public eye too. She is on board. Kirsten Smith gave an example of Yellowstone Community Club Foundation efforts to cultivate a team of 'navigators' who can support individuals who are challenged in some way behavioral health-wise. They currently have 30 navigators who have been trained over the last couple years. They can engage with someone who is in need. It's about building skills as community members who can step in. She would love to hear from anyone who would like to work on the committee for the event.
  - Seems there are two lines of discussion happening. Event and Connector. But they are related. The discussion dipped in and out of both often. Anthea pointed that out.

- Elle – This event is a pilot that would roll out a method of reaching out to and training connectors. Mini-trainings available during that event and providing resources. And get input from them on how they could do this in the best way. Like a launching pad for the future.
  - Rick Gale mentioned there are some resources/training that can be shared from the CMT that are already in place.
  - Kirsten, email Erin with your interested and she will come up with a plan to meet.
- Announcements
  - Anthea – A great resource for potential connectors is NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness), a support group for those who have loved ones with mental illness. They meet the second Monday of every month at 5:30 at Christ the King Lutheran Church.
- Adjournment- Erin Taylor adjourned the meeting.
- Next Meeting is February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

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Erin Taylor, Board Chair