

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLK COUNTY REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AND
DISABILITY SERVICES GOVERNING BOARD
MARCH 9, 2021**

The Polk County Regional Mental Health & Disability Services Governing Board met March 9, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Hockensmith, Steve Van Oort, Angela Connolly, Matt McCoy, Mardi Deluhery, Steve Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Brownell, Chris Wilson, Brenda Lechner, Dr. Mishra

This meeting was conducted electronically pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.8. The current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor's proclamation directing that no more than ten individuals may meet in a public gathering and the CDC guidelines regarding social distancing, are of such circumstances where this meeting in person is impossible or impractical.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ITEMS:

Adult Advisory Committee – Pat Rogness

The committee discussed new core service and components that are already in place in Polk County. Majority of the discussion was around facility based sub-acute services and intensive residential services. The committee felt the best option for both was to develop MOU's with other regions. Sub-acute services are very expensive and the committee did not recommend trying to develop the service now, but to utilize services in other regions and take the next year to assess needs. For intensive residential services, Medicaid reimbursement rates are not established yet so we are partnering with other regions. The hope is that with other local services in place, we can divert these higher needs services to more local providers and decrease longer term need for this service. There was also concerns on taking persons out of the county, but these services are offered in Story and Warren Counties so family involvement could be easier and make for a smoother transition back in to Polk County. The cost of beds would be paid for as-needed and not a flat rate. Liz explained the Governing Board would adopt an MOU for sub-acute and intensive residential services for one year so that the region can meet requirements established by the State and the MOU would be a fee for service. We are providing access but would only pay if the resource was used. We still do not know what the fee would be. Most should be covered by Medicaid. The issue on the provider side is that Medicaid has not established a rate. These are very high need, intensive services and the current maximum rate is not sufficient to cover providers services. Providers are not establishing these services locally until a rate has been established. We think once the rate is established, we will have access to that service in our region. Adult Advisory is recommending we enter into an MOU for one year.

Child Advisory Committee – Nicole Beaman

Reviewed budget at their February meeting and suggested dollars be spread amongst as many services as possible to get a base of services established since most all services in children's are new. The plan would be dollars are allocated to all services except residential crisis. But we will have a plan for that if additional funding comes through. Next meeting will be to discuss Legislative requirements and individual service components of those core services as it relates to the options the committee looked at. Nicole explained that instead of only focusing on a couple pieces of the continuum of care services, they are looking to spread it across other existing services to keep them going versus stopping them altogether, due to large budget cut to children's services. Julie explained one of the examples is the community based crisis stabilization, where there has to be mental health services provided. We already offer out-patient therapy, looking at partnering that with skill building.

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Rather than putting all dollars in out-patient, we will spread those thinner and add in the skill building component. Another area of expansion is early intervention, which can be done in an out-patient therapy model or we can look at other models, which could be expensive. We already have funding in out-patient therapy and MCO's will pay for that when billed. Outpatient therapy and medication management is offered thru Orchard Place and Lutheran. So as we build out our children's services program, we're trying to establish a base and a model of these services, working with Medicaid and the children's reimbursable health care through MCO's and whatever we will be responsible for.

Joint Advisory Committee – Pat Rogness

The committee continues to meet, talking about recommendations being made and continuing the dialog. Both committees are committed and supportive of services being family based.

Moved by Hockensmith, Seconded by McCoy to approving the February 9, 2021 minutes.

VOTE YEA: Hockensmith, Van Oort, Connolly, McCoy, Deluhery.

ABSENT: Brownell, Wilson, Lechner.

Legislative Update – Amy Campbell

SF461 is at Senate today – this bill clarifies that only elected county officials will be voting on the actual expenditure of county tax dollars, which was the original intent of the regional system legislation.

The House passed the Mental Health Telehealth parity bill, clarifying that any insurance plan will have to pay equally for mental health services whether in person or virtually. This will go to the Senate now, probably with some resistance. Funding for the system - we're in a waiting period due to revenue estimating conference not meeting until next Friday the 19th. They will look at the budget, with the new Department of Management Director that will be involved. Once we know those numbers, the Legislature is required by law to take the lower of the two numbers (March or December) to base the budget on. Amy is meeting with Representative Fry on Polk County needs (\$15M). He doesn't believe the system needs the \$15M that the Governor recommended. We're also asking for a permanent fix to allow Polk County only, to be able to transfer dollars between funds, as we have in the past, including last fiscal year and this fiscal year. We ask every year, but will try to get that permanent. Supervisor McCoy asked if we make it permanent and fund out of the general budget, does it take the Legislature off the hook since Polk County finds money either way. Supervisor Hockensmith doesn't feel they care one way or another because they know Polk County always finds funding. Amy feels there will be challenges regardless, especially with the new services. Amy also mentioned that Senator Dawson has a big tax bill that could zero out mental health property tax dollars and replace with State dollars, which are one time funds. She is not sure how well that will go over in the House.

Brain Health Now – Deb Butler and Clair Sieverding Kapraun (power point)

Brain Health Now campaign works to change the stigma that goes along with the term "mental health" to "brain health." This is a grassroots organization that started with a billboard campaign in Dubuque, Iowa and now works with many partners in that city (hospitals, schools). After four years, many organizations in Dubuque are changing their language to reflect brain health wording. Clair went over statistics (researched from NAMI) - over 50 million Americans have a diagnosable brain health disorder each year. It impacts one in five adult Iowans. This impacts our community directly and in-directly. Work will continue to acknowledge the stigma, and end the stigma, by educating the public on this issue and that language does matter. There is a Federal level campaign that is also being looked at on this issue.

CARES Act Regional Transfer- Liz Cox

Funds were received from the region to the north of us (\$1.75M) and we are in the process of distributing those dollars to providers approved Dec 22nd. Supervisor Hockensmith asked if other schools have requested funds. Liz received information from the CFO of the district and others and shared information with them. There is an additional \$7M in the region and Liz expects leftovers and that we might be able to accept and distribute dollars.

Mardi Deluhery commented on an article in newspaper about the access center in Cedar Rapids and wondered if an ordinary person in Polk County would ask why we are not doing this in Polk County. She also asked about those persons that lost rent subsidies last month. Liz said the Legislature is talking about access centers and what they mean and what their function is. The intention of the law was that it was never intended for the money be spent on bricks and mortar for access centers. Some regions have built bricks and mortar but they don't have Broadlawns available, like we do. The access center is intended to be an array of services and that is what we have in Polk County.

New Core Mandate Access – Liz Cox

It was discussed at the last few meetings on what we have available, what we don't have available and what is required. Do we do nothing, do the best we can with money that we have or build new systems. Money was appropriated in two areas and the children's advisory said they don't want to do that. They want to spread the money to cover more bases. We are doing low cost/no cost, minimum requirements by DHS to cover what is required. Some of that is being done with adult services, with slight tweaks to programs we have in place and working in partnership with Broadlawns to fulfill some of the gaps so we'll have the majority of adult core mandated services met. Two that we won't have met is the sub-acute and intensive residential services. Broadlawns is investigating developing sub-acute beds for us. They just won't have it done by July 1st so it is recommended that we engage in an MOU with a neighboring region that does meet the requirement for sub-acute so we can say we are providing access. The intensive residential services component for adults we don't think we need. Those are Medicaid provided if available so someone could go out of the region for those services if they need them and it would be Medicaid covered. Steve Johnson spoke about sub-acute and they are figuring out where it fits in the menu of services so agrees with Adult Advisory to study this and it would be best to enter into an MOU. He feels the intensive residential is more of what we need in this community. Intensive residential and sub-acute will be MOU's. The other adult core, crisis stabilization, is being worked on to establish. Annie said they are working with Broadlawns Mobile Crisis Unit for Community Based Crisis Stabilization to add that as part of mobile crisis service. It probably won't take place for quite a while as they are currently working on expanding mobile crisis to 24 hours a day. Chairperson Connolly asked about the 25% cuts to core services. Liz explained (handout page 6-11) the budget approved in November will need to be amended in April. Decisions by Broadlawns changes their budget, which affords us in-kind and cash contributions from Broadlawns this year and next year. We are working on a contract with them to define how the in-kind services and cash will be used, for approval in April. Next month Liz will share information on how to back-fill the gap in reverse order to services until we run out of money. The \$15M has been spread to meet the minimum requirements for services in the regions. There will be contracts to approve next month for specific services. Liz thanked our community partners (Broadlawns, Orchard Place, YESS) because we could not do this without them. We will have an MOU with regions for sub-acute and intensive residential services and recommend we do the MOU for one year to evaluate need and capacity. All the regions are talking about these things. We will use a template from ISAC that all regions will use for MOU's.

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Nicole Beaman is resigning from Child Advisory committee. A replacement will be brought forward at next meeting and we will also have the contract with Broadlawns to approve.

BUDGET ACTIONS:

Resolution approving MH/ID/DD service expenditures.

VOTE YEA: Van Oort, McCoy, Hockensmith, Connolly. ABSENT: Brownell.

Resolution approving the FY 22 Annual Service Plan and Budget.

VOTE YEA: Van Oort, McCoy, Hockensmith, Connolly. ABSENT: Brownell.

Housing Support update – Annie Uetz

Last meeting there were 85 people who lost housing on 12/30/20 with 43 housed currently with no subsidy, 34 who became homeless, 3 moved out of county and 5 were housed at subsidy (IFA, Sec 8, and G.A.). There were also 59 individuals who would lose housing between end of December and end of October. Some of them have lost subsidies so we're anticipating them also being homeless. Annie ran the numbers and if we paid for housing for the 34 homeless and 59 who we anticipate being homeless, it would cost us approximately \$1,117,000 to reinstate housing support for one year. We did/do require individuals to get on a path and apply for SSI and move to on-going general assistance or get a job within the first three months and work 40 hours per month. Mardi asked about Federal programs and moratoriums on people being kicked out and if these people qualify for programs. Liz explained it comes down to the Section 8 waiting list, which is difficult to get in. We are fortunate in Polk County that we can provide housing. These issues could be addressed with appropriated dollars through Director's Exception. As needs come forward, Liz can approve with the Director's Exception, which would not require Governing Board to change policy. This would be on a case by case basis if resources are available. PCHS works in partnership with General Services, for on-going general assistance, depending on funds (Fund 1 General Basic and Fund 10 MHDS). Supervisor McCoy mentioned there might be a way to direct CARES Act dollars through general aid/assistance. We are working with Eric/CFYS on this issue and the new CARES Act dollars. Annie can contact these people and let them know to start looking for housing if we pay for it but there are strings attached to the housing, which is accepting and receiving services to get the help. Otherwise, it doesn't work. Liz said depending on funding, we could have an action plan in April. The Board would like solutions immediately and not wait until July 1st. The money will probably be put in Eric's budget vs. PCHS. Steve Johnson addressed the issue, from a provider's point of view, of case managers having to handle the administration of rent with clients, which could be a potential conflict of interest and is supportive of another agency handling rent payments.

Next meeting April 13, 2021.

Moved by Hockensmith, Seconded by Van Oort to adjourn.

VOTE YEA: Hockensmith, Van Oort, Connolly, McCoy, Deluhery. ABSENT: Brownell, Wilson, Lechner.

Meeting adjourned 11:15 a.m.
(audio on file in the Auditor's Office)