

**Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment Committee**

**March 14, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Gudrun Parmer, Marc Strange, Kay Sanford, Arthur Payne, Carlyle Johnson, Fred Johnson, Quanesha Archer, Cpt. McKinney, Tammy Vaughan, Tremaine Sawyer, Kristen Patterson, Linda Cuttler, Lawrence Greenblatt, Eric Morse, Wendi Watson, Kimberly Chansen, Michele Easter, Lacie Scofield, Jesse Battle, Helen Tripp, Amy O’Regan, Dave Crispell, Claire Bigham, Pablo Silva, Ana Bonilla, Kelley Waggy, Keith Gibson, Carolynn Crowder, Ronald Gary, Sheriff Birkhead

**Welcome & Introductions:** Co-Chair Gudrun Parmer called the meeting to order, welcomed all present and began introductions.

**Review of February Minutes:** The minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Reluctance to Seek Treatment in the Hispanic Population**

Lacie Scofield stated she had reached out to Ana Bonilla, Public Health’s interpreter, for insight on the Spanish Guide to Treatment Services. Ana shared information about the barriers the Hispanic community experiences and explained the community felt most comfortable with El Futuro.

Ana Bonilla shared that she has been interpreting in the medical field since 2007 and she has seen/experienced the issues connecting to programs. Many individuals in Durham’s Hispanic community are extremely poor and looking for the American dream. Barriers for this community are vast, ranging from individuals not knowing their birthdates or being illiterate to trusting providers. Ana shared that while the brochure is great, many in the community do not read and as such it would benefit the community for this information to be disseminated via Hispanic radio stations or Univision. Most Latinos are unable to visit during business hours and lack insurance. Extended schedules in clinics and facilities would be highly beneficial. Ana shared that many in the community work jobs that require hard physical labor leading to severe injury. These individuals are often prescribed opioids for the pain, possibly contributing to the growing number of addictions. Additionally, this is a group where there is a language barrier within the home itself.

Pablo Silva, SUD Counselor at El Futuro, shared that the main issue he sees is the lack of places members of the Hispanic community can garner safe advocacy. At El Futuro they see clients come in with substance abuse issues, but the agency provides only outpatient services and is left with nowhere to send their clients. Pablo shared that fear of deportation prevents Hispanic individuals from seeking treatment. Forming trusting relationships and better communication is greatly needed within the community. El Futuro is currently seeing the highest abuse with alcohol but, they also see opioid and stimulant abuse. They currently have more clients than they can provide with services. El Futuro stays open until 6:30-7:00pm as needed and they are not open on the weekends. El Futuro accepts Medicare, Medicaid, and they have some grants that can be utilized for individuals who do not have the ability to pay.

Carlyle Johnson asked what barriers El Futuro faces with retaining or adding staff. Pablo responded that they are always looking to grow, the only barriers they face are finding staff that speak Spanish fluently and finding appropriate in-patient treatment. Their hope is to offer suboxone in the future.

Lacie asked if El Futuro is open to referring their clients to providers represented in MHSUD. Pablo shared that they were not opposed to referring clients, the issue comes with creating trusting relationships.

Ana shared that clients relay to her there is an extensive delay in establishing treatment at Lincoln. Carolynn shared that the only time there is a delay is when clients are looking to establish with a primary care provider. If they are looking for addiction treatment there should be no delay and if there are any issues, Carolynn requested she be called directly.

Arthur Payne shared that Morse Clinic is open to the Hispanic community with opioid use disorder, they also have extended hours starting at 6:00am.

Gudrun confirmed that both Lincoln and Morse clinic can serve undocumented individuals. Pablo and Ana were both thanked for their time, information, and guidance.

**Program Updates**

**Community Linkages to Care** Lacie shared they have a new peer support specialist in place. They have 18 new participants, 11 were enrolled, and they distributed 4 naloxone kits. Lacie recently learned that Duke Providers are now able to distribute naloxone kits to SUD diagnosed patients upon discharge.

**SMART Program** Tammy Vaughan introduced their new community support worker, Ronald Gary. Ronald will be working as Peer Support alongside Tammy. They had served 176 individuals with suboxone and 92 with Methadone in Phase 1, 90 with suboxone and 0 with Methadone in Phase 2.

**EMS** Helen Tripp stated that the first round of EMTs were trained 03/13/2023 and the second round will begin training 04/04/2023. Helen shared that a total of 19 Paramedics will be trained. Once trained the following protocol will be in place: When the overdose call is received, EMS will treat as usual, once the person is awake and has the capacity to make decisions, the trained responder will start the MAT conversation. Once the individual agrees to treatment, buprenorphine will be administered in the field. After they have been cleared, EMS will provide doses daily to provide a bridge until the person is connected with a community provider. They currently have a variety of providers that patients can be referred to and are also in the process of hiring a peer support specialist.

**Alliance** Carlyle Johnson shared that they are still in the process of preparing for the Tailored Plan which has been delayed until October and are also working with all counties in regard to opioid settlements.

**Opioid Settlement** Gudrun shared at this point there was no new information and decisions were still a few months away. She reminded everyone about the Community Event on March 20th.

Meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled for 04/11/2023 at 4:00pm