



# Macon County

## Mental Health Task Force

8/4/2016

### Minutes

Members Present: Commissioner Ronnie Beale, Jim Bruckner, Tammy Keezer, Mike Neidig

Guests: Michael O'Donnell, Full Circle Recovery, Stephanie Almeida, Full Circle Recovery, Amy Barnes, Smoky Mountain LME/MCO, Jim Hartye, Memorial Mission, Brenda Thomas, Youth Villages, Howard Dowdle, ACS, Lisa Hilliard, Macon County DSS

Absent: Kathy McGaha, Andy Shields, Patrick Betancourt, Marty Wadewitz, Robbie Holland,

Vote to add Board member: None

Approval of Minutes: None

Current Issues: Mr. Beale gave an overview of the National Association of Counties (NACo) meeting. At the meeting various funding matters were discussed. Macon County asked for 30 million dollars in reoccurring monies, but received 10 million dollars in reoccurring monies and 10 million in non-reoccurring monies. There was also discussion on LME/MCO's across the state, legislation changes that are currently taking place and how it will affect the LME/MCO's.

Senate Bill 734 (overdose prevention bill) has passed. Narcon (overdose prevention drug) can now be purchased over the counter at most pharmacies across the state.

Macon County received a \$30,000 grant from Evergreen Foundation to be used along with county funds for the Macon County Medication Assistance program. The program is designed to allow Macon County to assist families who need help managing their prescriptions. So far the families are very responsive and appreciative of the assistance.

Stepping Up Program – This program is designed to send people for behavioral health treatment instead of jail. Many counties across the state already have this program in place. Macon County will be working

on a regional model. We are meeting in Winston Salem on August 14th with people from Washington to begin discussions. Currently we are able to identify those that would benefit from treatment as opposed to jail, but we don't have anywhere to put them. There is no state funding for this program, so we will be asking LME/MCO's for financial assistance.

Mr. Beale discussed substance abuse statistics in Macon County and in North Carolina. He referenced various alcohol abuse statistics and specifically mentioned that Opioid and heroine deaths are up 400% in the state.

Clinician retention – There is a high turn-over rate for clinicians and we would like to begin discussions on how we can alleviate this problem. Some of the reasons for the high turnover rate are that pay is low and the work load is high. Dr. Hartye talked in depth on this situation and all the facets of the problem. Mr. Beale asked if there are any support programs that would help clinicians. Ms. Almeida said the only program she knows of is in Buncombe County.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested conducting exit interviews when clinicians leave their job.

Howard Dowdle – We have started doing a behavioral health group in the jail again. Tuesday we had 13 attendees. We have a doctor who will be seeing patients for medical needs and psych needs. He will be doing Syboxin treatment beginning in September.

Stephanie Almeida – We are working with Julia on opioid treatment. She will be working on treating patients in Macon County by September. Counseling Solutions in Brasstown should be opening soon.

Ronnie Beale- Teen Challenge will be opening soon with 15 beds. They have a %74 success rate around the country.

Brenda Youth Villages - Brenda would like to be a part of the clinician retention conversation when it begins. She said Youth Villages works mainly with kids at most risk for leaving the home or those coming back into the home. She said they have to work with the entire family not just the child. YV Life Set is coming to Macon County soon. It is case management for ages 16-22. Mr. Beale asked for her to email information on YV Life Set.

There was discussion on the billing differences for behavioral health services between private insurance vs Medicaid.

Lisa Hilliard DSS – Number of referrals vary from week to week. In one of the past months we had close to 100 CPS reports. We have 41 children in protective custody in Macon County.

Stephanie Almeida said ages 25-55 are most of the opioid deaths.

Amy Barnes, Smoky Mountain LME/MCO - Amy is a care coordinator for Medicaid and State Funded patients. She follows patients to make sure they get linked up to a provider and services are provided.

She communicates with providers to keep track of patients. Mr. Beale asked if she would like to be put in contact with Macon county EMS director Warren Cabe. She said yes.

Jim Hartye, Mission Hospital – He said he is now responsible for high utilizer usage. It may be good to look at hospital data.

Mr. Bruckner, MCPH – The Needle Exchange Bill has passed. Rural county health departments are expected to manage this program. The bill states that no public money may be spent on needles/syringes, which creates a funding issue. The Harm Reduction Coalition is doing some work to try to help with funding.

MCPH is now providing Primary Care services. The sliding fee scale only slides to 80%, which means we have a lot of people who still can't afford the program. Many of patients we are seeing through Primary Care also need behavioral health services. This has created a need for MCPH to look into hiring an LCSW. There will be more discussion on this in the future.

Other Business: None

Next meeting: TBD

Meeting adjourned: 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darice Davis