



Tompkins County
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD

Tompkins County Whole Health
201 East Green Street
Ithaca, New York 14850-5635

Jan Lynch, Chair

Sheila McEnery, Vice Chair

Frank Kruppa; Commissioner

Harmony Ayers-Friedlander,
Deputy Commissioner/Director of Community Services

Larry Roberts, Chair,
Mental Health Subcommittee

James Beaumont and Jeff Boles, Co-Chairs
Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee

Marley Brooks and Jacob Parker Carver, Co-Chairs,
Substance Use Subcommittee

Tompkins County Community Mental Health Services Board
55 Brown Road, Ithaca NY 14850
Monday, May 6, 2024, 5:30 p.m. Meeting Minutes

Minutes Approved
6.3.2024

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkpJNVbpLLbEbhoDbTIEgSQ>

Present: Jan Lynch; Mary Hutchens; Sheila McEnery; Jessica Conner, Psyd; Dr. Auguste Duplan; Anna Tamis, Psyd; Howard Reid; Khaki Wunderlich; Nicole Zulu, PhD; Stu Bergman; Alaina Zapf, Psyd. ; and Larry Roberts (Zoom)

Excused: Travis Winter; Sally McConnell-Ginet; and Deb Barber

Legislature: Randy Brown

Guests: Alecia Sundsmo, Family & Children’s Service of Ithaca

Staff: Frank Kruppa, Commissioner; Harmony Ayers Friedlander; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Ms. Lynch. Introductions were made. Ms. McEnery moved to approve the April 1, 2024, minutes, seconded by Ms. Conner; all were in favor with one abstaining.

Privilege of the Floor & Announcements: Dr. Conner shared that Collaborative Solution Network which is Tompkins County’s System of Care (SOC) was awarded a \$10,000 OMH grant to hold focus groups this summer of youth, families, and caretakers at various locations, including libraries and summer camps to give their input on mental health supports and ideas/ways to continue to incorporate their voices to better fit the community.

Ms. McEnery shared that the Special Olympics Ithaca will be held June 14th – June 15th. More information can be found at www.specialolympics-ny.org. Mr. Kruppa was excited to announce that Dr. Lisa Crystal Wang was hired for a part-time psychiatrist position at the Mental Health Clinic and will start in late May.

Mr. Kruppa welcomed Alecia Sundsmo, the new Director of Clinical Services at Family and Children’s Service of Ithaca who will provide updates on their programs and services.

Family and Children’s Service (FCS) of Ithaca Updates – Alecia Sundsmo, Director of Clinical Services started in late 2023 and provided an overview and some highlights.

2023 Highlights

- Consistently high demand for clinical services caused a brief pause to offer services in Spring 2023 with 170 people currently on the waitlist (70 children under the age of 18 and 100 adults)
- Workforce Challenge - The clinic struggled with recruitment and staff retention due to salary competition and high turnovers. Recent hires at the management level allow reinvestment in the community
- Successful community events were held to build awareness across the community
- Funding for key initiatives – A \$1 million grant to support the mental health workforce; \$150,000 was received from the Patrick P. Lee Foundation to support FCS’s work; Investing in Cloud EMR software and strategic training

- A Strategic Plan Process is underway and includes values work, clinician recruitment and retention planning and equity work, inclusion and belonging initiatives work
- The Dispositional Alternatives Program (DAP) is a community-based, family-centered non-clinical program providing comprehensive support services to youth ages seven to 17 at risk of out-of-home placements and their families free of charge. In 2023, 10 out of 20 families completed the program
- Open Doors Program provides a variety of confidential trauma-informed support services from a non-clinical perspective for runaway youth experiencing homelessness or facing housing instability
- Reconceptualizing Zero to Five and Geriatric Mental Health Programs

FCS is reexamining its delivery model and redesigning the clinical model to better meet the needs of the community and decrease the waitlist. They still face financial challenges in the field including low salaries and inadequate funding for billable services. They continue to have conversations to be more competitive in salaries as they are much lower than what is needed to attract and retain qualified clinicians. It was acknowledged that there is a lack of clinicians willing to work in the area regardless of salaries. It was suggested to start an MSW program at the colleges. Mr. Kruppa acknowledged that conversations are being had to expand courses with Ithaca College.

Encampment Enforcement Discussion: Mr. Kruppa said that the County issued a Notice of Violation due to community concerns, complaints, legal lawlessness, and most importantly environmental contamination of the waterways making them unsanitary. The Environment Health Department inspected and documented the areas of concern and agreed that issuing a Notice of Violation was needed over unsanitary encampment conditions. The City and railroads are complying with addressing the issues around the encampment areas between Tabor Street and the railroads. Although the City must submit a plan for the County’s review, they have already posted signage and are cleaning up the areas of concern.

Mr. Roberts is interested in City Administration attending a CSB meeting and providing an update on the situation and future goals. Mr. Kruppa emphasized the importance of addressing encampments in a humane and sanitary manner and noted that the City is running the process around what is happening with the encampments as it is City-owned land. City and County leaders are working together to address the root causes of homelessness. Potential solutions have been discussed including a new shelter and long-term housing options. Even with new supportive housing beds created, the shelter population continues to grow. Ms. Lynch is interested in learning more about the new housing development staff providing support to individuals.

Discussion of Local Services Plan: Ms. Ayers-Friedlander stated that a meeting must be scheduled with the chairs of the subcommittees and Ms. Lynch in the next two weeks to review and update the plans. The CSB will provide input, recommendations, changes/revisions, and input at the June 3rd meeting on the progress and status of the goals and objectives submitted last year. The CSB will review the report before the meeting to vote on it. She feels modest changes can be made to housing, crisis services, workforce, non-clinical supports, and core system services.

She announced that the Office of Mental Health awarded two children’s programs to the community.

- Children’s Home of Wyoming (based out of Broome County) was awarded one of the home-based intervention and intensive case management support programs. RACKER was also awarded one specifically for children with developmental disabilities.
- Catholic Charities was awarded the Emergency Housing and Intensive Case Management Support Program via LGU Opioid dollars

Mr. Kruppa reported that the three RFPs that Graduate Public Fellow, Ross Milne crafted for the outpatient services (\$180,000), prevention programs (\$180,000), and detox stabilization facility operational funding (\$600,000) previously with ADC have all gone to OASAS for review, and after their approval, the RFPs will be posted for 30 days for organizations to apply. He is in communication with ADC’s Board of Directors as things get cleared out from the former spaces.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

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**The Next Community Mental Health Services Board Meeting is
Monday, June 3, 2024, at 5:30 pm.**