

Minutes

Human Services Advisory Board held February 11, 2024

Members present: Beth Eden, Theresa Chemnick, Diana Porter and Amy Ray.

Staff present: Richard Uri and Jami Mitchell

Guests: Melissa Hope, Director of Services, San Juan Island Resource Center

Ryan O'Donnell, Clinical Director for Outpatient Services, Compass Health, Skagit, Island and San Juan Counties

Valerie Mitchell, Program Manager for Outpatient Programs, Compass Health, San Juan Islands

No one from the public was in attendance.

Ray called meeting to order at 1:30pm and made the public service announcement. All attendees introduced themselves.

Agenda: Board approved the agenda.

Minutes: Board approved the January meeting minutes.

Mitchell added to her report:

- North Sound Behavioral Health ASO has a new director, Jan Rose. Margaret Rojas is still the assistant director. Cindy Wolf is the County Council Liaison to the HSAB.
- Mark Thomkins is stand-in head of community planning and interim county manager. This likely will last for several months until people can be hired and get up to speed.
- Senior services: hiring is in process for a fourth senior specialist to increase resiliency. Powerful Tools for Caregivers, a 6-week course for unpaid caregivers, started in February.
- Mitchell and Uri will give a presentation to the Board of Health next week. It will cover some of the highlights and achievements for the Human Services Division in 2023.

Uri added to his report:

- He attended the winter virtual meeting of the Montana Institute, which enables him to stay on top of nationwide trends in Prevention.
- Community members are creating a transportation option similar to water taxi for when ferry service is interrupted. In addition to accepting transportation vouchers, the service may be able to be set up as a community partnership. Uri is exploring this with WashDOT.
- The guests and Richard talked about the goal of collaboration, including working with district court. Collaborating on the few tough cases has a big impact on the community.

Melissa Hope presented an update on the Community Wellness Program on San Juan Island.

- CWP has seen high utilization increasing each year since Covid. By getting creative with funding and putting people on wait lists, they have been able to serve all who have asked to access the program.
- Now there are 67 people seeing therapists and 11 are on the waitlist. In the last 6 months of 2023, 12 people per month were interested in the program. Some don't follow up to get

treatment, or they are referred to Compass substance use treatment, so actual enrollment is less.

- 80% are underinsured or uninsured. Some have access to only out-of-network providers on the island. Hope appreciates that CWP has a low barrier to serve people. Uri explained underinsured further: each island has a different percentage of people who are uninsured, but there is an overall problem. Taxes are paying for MCO's who have the responsibility to provide behavioral health. However, the coverage has a high deductible, a loophole where they do not pay.
- Hope sees more seniors, as well as adolescents and young adults interested in CWP. It started with the isolation of Covid and has been continuing. Spanish-speakers who need services have been able to access Consejo telehealth, but now there is a long wait.
- Two providers were added in 2023, both with family specialization. Now there are 3 providers trained in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, a trauma therapy).
- The top needs that people are wanting to address are #1 Depression and anxiety, and #2 PTSD/trauma history. People usually complete 8-10 sessions out of the 14 assigned. Many have complicated situations that include medical issues, employment, and/or housing instability. Getting help as early as possible is critical. Recent shifts in needs are: increase in substance use, and mental health that is not a new condition, i.e. it is at a later stage with bigger consequences.
- The resource center is well known in the community, and people trust it. Publicity about the recovery café, hearing about good experiences with Compass
- Mitchell responded to the increase in senior interest. For complicated supports like housing, aging in place, two aging and family case coordinators Tyler Cornell serves San Juan and Lopez, and Heidi Bruce serves Orcas. Mitchell is also trying to regain a social worker for seniors, ideally a Spanish speaker.

Valerie Mitchell presented on Compass outpatient services in San Juan County.

- Medicaid enrollees access outpatient mental health on San Juan, Orcas, and via telehealth. An intensive mental health position has been posted.
- Other services are the Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (Paul Berry and Teresa Tilton), Recovery Navigator (Paul Lewis), WISE. Two staff are in the Friday Harbor office, and the Orcas office is staffed one day per week. Access can be by walk-in, sheriff, recovery café, resource center referral. School-based access is available in Friday Harbor.
- O'Donnell added that school-based mental health can also be non-Medicaid. Youth confidentiality can be maintained.

Discussion post-presentations:

- Jami Mitchell added that the intention and the reality is that there is no wrong door. The purpose is to help everyone by finding opportunity and creative funding.
- Ray added that as a CWP provider, support is wraparound and changes people's lives. Eden expressed how hopeful this is. It is frustrating that institutions don't step up who should.
- O'Donnell said she would like to see more community activities and more visibility for Compass Health. Uri and Hope emphasized that also trust has been built and needs to be maintained.
- Uri also stressed that peer support is a backbone of success. Paperwork frustration is a barrier peers can help with. They can coordinate and help be the community interface.
- Valerie Mitchell mentioned the recovery navigator can eliminate, overcome barriers. Uri mentioned the next step kits. Valerie Mitchell added that local crisis team answers calls, either two people or the DCR on call.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45pm