

Minutes

Human Services Advisory Board held February 10, 2025

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

Staff present: Richard Uri and Jami Mitchell

Guests: Teresa Ward and Tamela Bresler, board member applicants; Justin Paulsen, San Juan County Councilmember; Jennifer Armstrong and Yubi Shollmeyer, SafeCare Program.

No one from the public was in attendance.

Ray called meeting to order at 1:35pm and made the public service announcement. Introductions were made.

Agenda: Board approved the agenda.

Minutes: The minutes from the January meeting were approved with changes.

Mitchell added to her report:

- Reviewed the language in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) about where to spend the 1/10 of 1% tax funds.
- Summarized the current fiscal situation of the fund: approximately \$200K available due to spending less than the allotted amounts. This amount has variabilities. It's not necessarily available for ongoing programs because in the future the allotted funds could be fully spent and/or tax revenue could increase or decrease unpredictably. However, pilot programs are welcome.

Chemical Dependency & Mental Health 1/10th money. Needs, Gaps, and Projects:

- Uri mentioned that these funds are local and do not have a lot of restrictive rules that state and federal money may have. A portion of the money has been used for people who should be covered by the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) contracted with the state. State oversight is lacking per representative Lauren Davis, and the MCOs should be paying more of their share, according to the contracts.
- Porter encouraged putting more funds toward what is working, e.g., peer support and recovery cafes. A place that is warm and includes meals and encouragement makes a huge difference.
- Mitchell clarified that 'evidence-based' is not a critical requirement.
- Uri noted that evidence-based is a top-down approach. On-the-ground and up can be much more effective, especially in smaller communities where large programs may be cumbersome for the lower number of utilizers.
- Eden agreed that augmenting and supporting what we have is important.

SafeCare Presentation by Jennifer Armstrong and Yubi Shollmeyer:

- 2016 was first year offered in the county. Program is for families of young children ages 0-5. Comprehensive, includes up to 20 home visits. All materials are bilingual. Includes material about behavioral health, not just physical and developmental.
- At first, 12 providers. Now just Shollmeyer. 42 families have been served so far.

- Armstrong continued: other models promote first relationships. The state Department of Children Youth and Families has a perinatal mental health initiative and does screening for depression and anxiety. They see a lot of anxiety. See the Perinatal Support Washington online resource for new parents.
- Armstrong explained the goal for SafeCare in the county. Provide SafeCare but decide individually how to meet each family's needs. Shollmeyer added that each family is different and doesn't need to be offered the same script. Peer support is also important.

Uri added to his report:

- Compass Health outpatient treatment status. One Mental Health Professional has been on leave for months. Teletherapy is considered to have parity with in-person therapy by Compass, but it should be used as a last resort only. Porter added that Recovery Café people were being helped, but then were dropped. He will be meeting with the manager and will report to the board next month.
- Emergency Ferry Fund. Foot passenger ferry service planning has an issue: passengers under 18 without an adult who need to get home. Legal advice may be needed. Paulsen noted that the laws and rules throughout public transportation should be applied. Providers are already required to pass background checks.

Other discussion:

Mitchell said community members are asking, do the sudden changes in federal funding affect our county? The county is monitoring the situation closely. No funding or programming has changed so far. She will keep everyone informed.

Uri said that regarding prevention, the state still is sustaining its strong support. The Health Care Authority (HCA) is asking all Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organizations (BHASOs) in the state to pay back some of the funds that the HCA believes to be in reserve. Our own North Sound BHASO is building the case that the funds the HCA wants back are not 'reserves' and are already committed to contracts and/or necessary for the functioning of the NS BHASO.

Next meeting March 10 at 1:30pm

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm