

MINUTES
Task Force Concerning the Treatment of Persons with
Mental Illness in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems
Thursday, April 16, 2015
10:00 a.m. to 12:30 pm
Legislative Hearing Room B

I. Call to Order

- *Susan Walton, Park County Department of Human Services*

II. Introductions and Welcome

- *Susan Walton, Park County Department of Human Services*

III. Approval of Minutes

- **March 19, 2015**

Minutes from the April meeting are still being edited. Vote on approval will be tabled until next month.

IV. Housing Update

- *Pat Coyle, Division of Housing*
- *Susan Niner, Division of Housing, Housing Choice Voucher Program Manager*

Mr. Coyle and Ms. Niner distributed a handout to provide a broad view of how housing resources are being channeled. The handout shows Mr. Coyle's priority of getting those people with the greatest needs (disabled, homeless, those who may not have a voice) served.

Mr. Coyle noted that the Division of Housing manages just under 7,000 Section 8 vouchers in the state. He presented figures about how Colorado's housing program compares with the rest of the US. He said that 75% of Colorado aid goes to someone with a disability compared to 29% nationally. Since Housing and Department of Health and Human Services merged, they are able to help the homeless population and persons with disabilities. The number of people served by the Division of Housing increases to 83% when the homeless population is included in the figures.

Mr. Coyle went on to describe the various levels of service provided by the Division of Housing. The Permanent Supportive Housing program helps people with disabilities. Through the state housing voucher program rental assistance is provided for the transition from mental health institutions. These programs distributed 140 vouchers last year. Most of these programs are targeted for people coming out of institutions such as hospitals or behavioral health facilities.

A fourth layer of funding that has just been awarded is the Section 811 Program, which was historically a HUD program for persons with severe physical disabilities. Since it was recreated at the national level, the Section 811 Program awarded Colorado \$7.6 million over five years for vouchers – the second largest number of vouchers awarded in the country. Mr. Coyle hopes to add state resources to that funding in order to maximize the service provided through the vouchers. A request for proposals will be sent late this summer for "project-based" vouchers under Section 811. "Project-based" means the voucher will stay with the property awarded them. Twenty-five percent of the units in any one property can have these vouchers. Mr. Coyle said this income aids in the

feasibility of sustaining a property. ***Mr. Coyle expressed his view that the Section 811 Program provides an opportunity for the Task Force and Housing to align priorities for housing for persons with mental illness in the criminal justice system.***

The Division of Housing and Department of Corrections have been successful in the past four years in obtaining a grant from the Department of Justice for people discharged with acute mental illness. They are competing for a 3rd grant toward this effort and are in the process of issuing a request for proposals to evaluate this program's successes and challenges. Mr. Coyle said that the rate of recidivism is around 27% for people with housing and acute mental illness. This compares to the recidivism rate in Department of Corrections, which is approximately 50%.

Ashley Tunstall asked Mr. Coyle if there is an opportunity to discuss the eligibility for those coming out of Division of Youth Corrections, based on age, not the institution from which they are discharging. Mr. Coyle responded that there is a small allocation from HUD for family unification and at-risk youth. Mr. Coyle said it is a small program, but it provides a portal for young people to find resources.

Mr. Coyle also mentioned that former Representative Claire Levy is working with the legislature for additional spending for housing not out of the state budget, but out of the unclaimed assets of the State Treasurer as a possible source. This may arise as a late bill.

Mr. Coyle said that the Division of Housing is proud of the program at Fort Lyon. The Division contracts with Colorado Coalition for the Homeless to provide services to approximately 175-210 men and women weekly. It has graduated 40 people, and is on target to secure permanent housing for another 30 people in 90 days. Most of the Ft. Lyon individuals are Medicaid eligible and are referred out to community mental health treatment centers. On site, there are case managers to help with mental health issues. People are linked with psychiatric services through Southstreet Health Center via tele-mental health, which is funded through Medicaid. All of the therapy is client-centered, and participants can go to treatment facilities in the surrounding communities. The facility provides substance abuse treatment and off campus in Las Animas. This is more peer support for substance use services. It is not considered a treatment, so this is not billed to Medicaid. In addition, Health and Human Services has approved a federally qualified clinic for medical services on site. For anyone who wants to leave campus for treatment, transportation is provided. Two-thirds of the residents of Ft. Lyon are in community college, and the program also offers vocational training. The Division is looking at alternatives to transitional housing ("gateway housing") to respond in a very short period of time for the homeless. It is all voluntary and the drop-out rate is around 28%, in comparison to Housing First, which is upwards of 30%. In addition, Mr. Coyle noted, a lot of people choose to stay in southwest Colorado when they graduate because they prefer a rural lifestyle to an urban setting. Some of the unique offerings Ft. Lyon provides are inviting artists in residence to help the residents tell their stories, which makes them feel a connection and part of the community. In addition, Ft. Lyon boasts the country's only American Legion post for homeless veterans.

Karen Knickerbocker noted that she reached out to Ft. Lyon to see if they accepted dual diagnosis or individuals on probation supervision, but the facility doesn't provide court-ordered treatment. They will accept a dual diagnosis as long as the symptoms are manageable. She noted that many in the criminal justice system are likely not being served at Ft. Lyon because they are required to report back about court-ordered treatments.

Mr. Coyle was enthusiastic about helping coordinate a field trip to the facility for members of the Task Force in the summer.

Working with HCPF on question of whether Ft. Lyon is housing or an institution, as it is no different than the CCH property next to the cathedral, or St. Francis Cornerstone Project, or housing in Grand Junction, but it is a type of housing that does not exist anywhere else in the country.

Mr. Coyle also outlined the new construction and acquisition rehab services provided through the Permanent Supportive Housing toolkit. He said this has been quite successful in generating more community gathering places, not just housing. There is no formal application or selection process, but if someone is interested they should contact the Division of Housing.

Members of the Task Force, Mr. Coyle, and Ms. Niner discussed some of the challenges facing Colorado's homeless population. Ms. Niner noted that the need for housing is overwhelming and that Denver Housing Authority receives over 20,000 applications (not for new vouchers – for already existing vouchers) when the application period opens. Because the housing market is very competitive right now, it is very difficult to provide services to the great number of people who need them.

Issues concerning federal funding for the disabled were discussed by the group. One particular area of need, according to Mr. Coyle, is funding for new construction. The Home Modification Program allows about \$10,000 in Medicaid money to be applied to property for needed modifications for the Medicaid client. The Division of Housing is working with Healthcare Policy and Financing (HCPF) to apply this to new construction by identifying tenants ahead of time and using the Medicaid benefits to pay for new construction for that tenant. HCPF and the Division of Housing will meet after this meeting to discuss HCPF programs that offer home modification benefits and how that might align with Division of Housing priorities.

Discussion of housing issues continued, and it was determined that a follow-up conversation with representatives from the Division of Housing would be helpful to determine if there are concrete ways that the Task Force for Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System can help get traction for some of these issues. Mr. Coyle said that the Division of Housing would welcome any legislative efforts, but is unable to sponsor a bill.

V. Possible Intern—Stevie Lynne Koehler—MD/MPH Intern

Ms. Koehler, a fourth-year medical student, proposed serving on the Task Force as part of her practicum, which requires a total of 120 hours and can be a mixture of tasks and meetings. Members of the Task Force were supportive in finding ways Ms. Koehler could help with some of the efforts underway, especially in the data and information sharing initiatives.

VI. Data and Information Sharing Update

- *Camille Harding, Health Care Policy and Financing*
- *Peggy Heil, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice*

Ms. Harding provided some ideas for projects that Ms. Koehler could work on for the Task Force surrounding database building and information gathering.

As part of the grant proposal she presented at the last Task Force meeting, Peggy Heil proposed a number of tasks that a subcommittee could start on. Namely, the definitions of “serious mental illness” and “recidivism.” In the grant proposal, the Department of Corrections definitions were

used, but there may be different definitions in jails. Ms. Heil feels that these tasks could be undertaken soon, and it would benefit the Task Force if they were already underway when the award announcement would take place (around September 2015). Ms. Heil gave a brief summary of the grant proposal and what the award would entail.

The Information Exchange Subcommittee was established for these efforts. Ashley Tunstall expressed her interest in participating on the subcommittee.

Next steps:

-Subcommittee members will be determined, a charter will be drawn up to solidify tasks that need to be tackled, and Ms. Heil and Ms. Harding will bring a summary of activities to the May Task Force meeting.

VII. Affordable Care Act Update

• Camille Harding, Health Care Policy and Financing

The Affordable Care Act Update will now be changed to a HCPF/Medicaid update on the Task Force agenda. Ms. Harding provided a brief overview of the Colorado Opportunity Project, which is a collaboration between HCPF, Department Public Health and Environment and Department of Human Services to identify data sources concerning specific topics of interest and publish various reports on their findings. The Behavioral Health report has been released to the Task Force, the Child Welfare report will be released, and the Adult Healthcare report is being developed. Project members are trying to find evidence-based programs that could align with efforts to provide Medicaid dollars and ensure that those eligible for the program are connected to the services needed. A request for information will be released in the next several weeks.

Next step:

-Ms. Harding will bring the Colorado Indicator handout on Colorado Opportunity Project to next meeting

VIII. Behavioral Health Transformation Council Update

• Dr. Richard Martinez

Ms. Heil provided an update in the absence of Dr. Martinez. She noted that the Behavioral Health Transformation Council is refocusing its work groups to three priorities: workforce development, new crisis services, and one other. All mental health centers have seen a significant increase since January of people coming in to access services. The private sector is starting to narrow networks as a “cost control” mechanism for billings per month, which creates an “artificial” workforce shift. It was suggested that the Task Force invite someone from the Division of Insurance to give feedback on what members think about the shortage of advisors. The draft medication formulary has been developed.

Next steps:

-Moe Keller will provide data from Mental Health Colorado from a 2011-12 publication on behavioral health in State of Colorado that breaks out workforce by licensure by county. She will forward to this information to Ms. Heil and Ms. Walton for dissemination to the Task Force.

-Ms. Keller will invite a presenter from the Division of Insurance for May meeting.

- Ms. Tunstall will get in touch with Ms. Walton when the formulary is developed to determine best method of distribution to stakeholders.

IX. Other Updates

- *Safety of Staff*
- *JBC Questions/DOC Answers*
- *Task Force Membership Booklet*
- *Juvenile Competency Legislation—Next Steps*

Task Force members discussed the reason behind the “safety of staff” topic on meeting agendas, as well as why it might have been included in the topics of study outlined for the Task Force. Ms. Walton said she feels the topic may be taken off of the agenda and she is awaiting information from the Oversight Committee to fill the Task Force’s law enforcement vacancy.

It was suggested that the Task Force’s strategic plan be revisited once the new Oversight Committee is on board. It was also suggested that the Task Force hear a presentation of the Sanctuary Model of Division of Youth Corrections sometime in the fall.

Related to this topic, Ms. Keller noted there is currently a bill in the legislature that adds de-escalation to POST training.

Since the Task Force member who showed the most interest in the Joint Budget Committee’s questions to the Department of Corrections was not in attendance at the meeting, discussion of this topic was tabled, as was discussion of the Juvenile Competency legislation’s next steps.

Next step:

- *Ms. Keller will send information about the de-escalation bill to Ms. Walton*
- *Susie will speak with Gina about the DOC/JBC questions and answers*

X. What’s Happening at Your Agency?

Task Force members made various updates from their respective offices. The following are highlights:

- May is Mental Health Month. Governor Hickenlooper is set to sign a proclamation on May 1. Mental Health America is sponsoring 8 students who have formed a group called Climb Out of the Darkness, which will bring awareness to mental health through climbing Colorado’s 14ers.
- April is National Child Abuse prevention month. The state has launched a public awareness campaign promoting the statewide child abuse hotline 1-844-CO-4-KIDS.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:13