

Children's Issues Committee, September 14, 2021, 1:00pm

Discussion regarding Meeting process and priorities

Connie stated that the meeting process and priorities needed to be discussed for moving forward. With COVID, workforce challenges, etc. the stress level in this field is off the charts. She would like to focus on keeping things positive, remembering focused guidelines, and seeking solutions. Group agreed but had no input.

ACMH Update – Jane Shank

Jane was not available to give an update.

DHHS Updates – Kim Batsche-McKenzie – MDHHS

Kim reported that there are some positions at MDHHS that are currently open. Justin Tate is covering for 3 different roles and DBT for adolescents is being covered by Mary Ludtke. If anyone is unsure who to contact, they can reach out to Kim to find out.

Kim stated that if the committee was interested in an update on My Kids Now (formerly referred to as the KB Lawsuit) Phil Kurdunowicz has a PowerPoint presentation on this that can be shared. She suggested inviting him to a future meeting of this group if the group is interested.

Kim reported that many in this group have been involved in discussions with Al Jansen on workforce challenges being experienced by this system for children's services. These discussions continue to take place.

ACT116 language is being discussed (restraint and seclusion) with St. Clair CMH. Kim stated this would be an alternative for kids boarding in ED's. Kim reported that she and Dr. Pinals have proposed alternative language for this.

Psychiatric In-patient continues to be a problem for children in ED's. The Department fully acknowledges that CMHs are experiencing this.

Kim then spoke about Block Grant funding, COVID Block Grant funding (to be used in a very specific way), and ARPA funding. She reported that the Department received approval for ARPA projects submitted by them as follows: TFCO staff, Crisis continuum staff, Children's Crisis Residential, Children's Crisis Training/Toolkit, and First Episode Psychosis.

Group asked Kim if she had seen the Governor's press release about funding which stated that \$335 Million was being earmarked for multiple areas. Connie listed where the funding was appropriated. Kim stated that she had not seen that yet. Connie will send the email to Kim for her to look at. Heidi Fogarty stated that it's great that the funding is there – the problem is finding staff to provide these services. Connie stated that she is involved in the discussions with Al Jansen that are taking place. The group recognizes the need to find funding to stabilize the system's workforce first. Group continued to discuss what will need to happen for CMHs to fulfill requirements that come out of the KB lawsuit prior to solving the workforce crisis issues, including Department flexibility. Group also discussed the level of burnout that the current workforce is experiencing.

Todd asked about mobile crisis units. Kim stated that this service is a priority of the MI Kids Now initiative and could be forthcoming.

The State is currently re-enrolling this service. Todd then asked about Peer Support Services. Kim stated that Parent Support Partner and Youth Peer Support are the 2 state services currently offered. Kim hopes to have these offered throughout the state in the future.

Legislative Update – Alan Bolter

Alan was not available to provide an update to the group.

Child Psychiatric Bed Crisis

Group discussed appropriate placement for children in ED's. Specific cases have arisen where local DHS offices have instructed children be placed with Hawthorn (moved to the top of the list) prior to others on the waiting list. The CMH felt one way, and CPS felt another, and CMH is unclear as to how to proceed in instances such as these. Should the CMH go to the State over the CPS offices heads? Kim clarified that these issues are not for her to handle, and she strives to make sure that communication is continuing to take place between all parties involved in these types of cases. She has had occasion to inform both CPS offices and CMH offices that certain cases have escalated to the State level, but beyond that she is not involved. She does agree that it can get dicey, but other clinical eyes need to be involved in these instances. Pat Weighman reminded everyone that CPS is going through deinstitutionalization, and this is one area that needs additional focus and work at the local level as well as the State level. Kim stated this was a great point. Julie Bayardo stated that she appreciated Kim's input. Kim stated that Dr. Pinals is working on an escalation process to be followed for instances such as these to keep agencies involved regarding placement. She stated that if this committee had any recommendations for that escalation process, she would be glad to bring that information back to Dr. Pinals for consideration. Kim recommended Dr. Petti or Dr. Pond be invited to future meetings.

Request for point in time data when Bed is not secured within 24 hours

Review state capacity of child beds

Create Advocacy plan and partnership with hospitals/state to admit CMH children

Address challenges of finding beds for children involved in DHS

Accountability to address service capacity needs like other services in the Medicaid Provider Manual, other strategies (PRTF, crisis stabilization, etc.) may reduce need but it is not the solution to this problem.

Nick Norcross from the State Hospital is now in charge of these plans. Kim stated that there are a lot of things that need to happen before these become Medicaid approved plans.

Children's Administrators Forum Update – Erin Nostrandt, CEI

Erin Nostrandt provided an update from the minutes of the September CAF meeting. DHS and Foster Care workers are asking to submit SED Waivers for all their kids. Also discussed were lack of psych beds for adolescents and information on cohorts. Connie stated that, regarding cohorts, if they've already been trained, they shouldn't be required to do the cohort. Kim stated that they are aware of this issue and she will keep the group informed if anything is modified.

Committee Focus Areas for 2021

Child Psychiatric bed Crisis and threats to our Children's system of care efforts/KB lawsuit, Policy, Advocacy, Gaps in Services, and create strategies for workforce capacity issues in our system.

Other

Connie informed the group that Livingston CMH wrote for an EMDR grant and they were funded. They will be starting that in January. The State supported this application with the hopes that this will become an evidence-based practice.

Heidi Fogarty stated that there are approx. 10 families needed for testimony on a case being developed for Child Psychiatric placement issues. She asked if anyone had a family that would be an appropriate candidate to share that information with her.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Issues Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 2021, 1:00pm. This meeting will be held in-person AND via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 2:05pm.