



Macon County Mental Health Task Force

August 10, 2012

Minutes

Members present: Ronnie Beale, Jim Bruckner, Jane Kimsey, Andy Shields, Brian Welch, Jim Bottomley, Kathy McGaha, Mike Neidig, Paula Ledford, & Marty Wadewitz

Guests: Duncan Sumpter & Tara Payne w/ACS Mobile Crisis, Raymond Turpin, Kathryn Shields Holmes & Greta Metcalf w/MCPS, Martha Lind & Rhonda Cox from Smoky Mountain Center, Candice Rawlinson & Adam Justin w/Barium Springs & Debbie Roberts w/NAMI

Approval of Minutes – Mr. Sumpter wanted to clarify that Smoky Mountain is still funding the walk in clinics as they have in the past. They have closed the Jackson County clinic and they are trying to funnel them through Barium Springs here in Franklin. The Cherokee clinic is still operational. State funds for community support teams for adults at risk of hospitalization and homelessness were cut. Smoky Mountain is still seeing these patients. The minutes were amended as requested.

Updates

Sheriff's Department – Mr. Beale reported that Mr. Shields was dealing with a situation this morning and would be along shortly. He stated that the involuntary commitments battle is continuing and Mr. Shields would speak more about that when he arrives. He referenced a recent case where a mother involuntarily committed her son and then turned around and called Mr. Beale to ask him how to break the involuntary commitment. This is a very difficult process. With the budget cuts there will probably be a spike in the involuntary commitments.

Mr. Shields reported that in the past 7 months the department has had 115 involuntary commitments. The minimum projected cost for these 7 months is already at \$68,000. If this trend continues the total for the year will be approximately 197 which would amount to approximately \$200,000. This figure does not include those that are calm and don't have to be supervised. Currently they spend 30 hours per commitment locating a bed. Mr. Shields predicted at the June meeting that the department would end up spending \$178,000 just in wage and transportation costs for these individuals. This is the highest number of involuntary commitments the department has seen since 2009 when there were 152 and in 2007 when there were 143. In 2007, however they were only spending 9 ½ hours trying to locate a bed. As of this morning there were 4 or 5 sitting in the ER at Angel Medical waiting for beds.

Schools – First day back to school was August 9. Ms. Ledford said she had five to six new families that were going to need services this year. Mr. Beale asked Ms. Ledford to keep in touch with the board. He said they would support her any way they could.

Ms. Holmes of Macon County Psych stated that families with children with developmental disabilities were going to be in the same crisis situation as the involuntary commitments due to lack of resources. She said they have started a new day program Mountain View Intermediate. They are currently serving 6 kids with 3 being free. They also have 3 kids at Cartoogechaye Elementary and 2 are being seen for free. The wait list only has 8 kids which is the lowest it's ever been. They've hired another staff member. The budget of \$55,000 is used to cover those that aren't covered by insurance or that have insurance with deductibles that are so high that they will never be met. Generally the child can get 12 sessions and if Smoky Mountain thinks the child needs more, they have to find a way to absorb that cost. Counties will not be able to fill the void in covering services.

Walk-In Clinic – Mr. Sumpter reported that they have added staff and they have been able to respond to client needs quicker. The mobile crisis teams are still serving the clinic but they do have a waiting list for psychiatric care. They have mental health personnel that will be starting soon. The clinic provided \$152,000 worth of charity work for Macon County which is more than 50% of all of the other counties. The charity work is made up of those with Medicare only and insurances that they are not able to bill for. This does include any copay that the client cannot pay. This is very disproportionate from any of the other counties that they provide services for. Ms. Rawlinson said they do not have a funding source for these services. They are working on trying to get authorized through Blue Cross.

Mr. Neidig thanked the providers for all the help and cooperation in giving their clients the help they need without necessarily being reimbursed. There are only certain doctors that are authorized to bill for these services. Most individuals have such a high deductibles that they are never met. The providers are having a meeting this afternoon to discuss how they can best meet the needs of the community.

Mr. Beale thanked Mr. Neidig and asked that even though he is no longer a provider if he would continue to take a position as liaison between all the providers.

Mental Health Providers

Smoky Mountain Managed Care Organization (MCO) – Ms. Cox indicated that as of July 1, 2012 Smoky Mountain was changed from an LME to a MCO and received notice that almost 4 million was being cut by the legislature. Last year and years before Smoky Mountain had been taking 2.2 million from their fund balance so that providers would not have to absorb the costs. After receiving news of the cut they have tried to cut money from the program budgets with the least impact first. They had to look across each region and each disability group to try not to impact any one more than another. There

were others that were specific cuts that they did not have any control over 1.3 million dollars was cut from the block grant around children's mental health services. Target case management has been removed as a service. They had 270 consumers that needed to be transitioned to another service. Providers worked together to be sure all of these patients were transitioned. They have not had any complaints as of this point in time. The case management agencies worked very closely with Smoky Mountain. 670 clients were transitioned that had other needs and these patients were also transitioned effectively.

Ms. Cox indicated that another concern they have is for children that go into out of town placement. In the past there was very little tracking done to keep in touch with the care providers of these clients. Smoky Mountain staff has been going out and doing face to face meetings with these children. They currently have 337 clients in state facilities and 8 in out of state. As of the last count there are 42 in state facilities with out-of-home client placements. They are working with ED's across the territories on how they can integrate some care. They are required by law to have a rate setting methodology. They have to be able to defend this rate setting. They are currently taking them over at their current rate. They anticipate the rate setting methodology taking effect in January of 2013.

Community Care Clinic – Mr. Bruckner stated that the cost to maintain the clinic for a year is approximately \$100,000. Currently they only have enough in the budget for another 3 months. Mr. Beale said he and the other commissioners are working on a group of five individuals or partners who would be willing to donate \$20,000 each.

NAMI – Debbie handed out a New York Times publication based on a true story as an example of what families and patients go through in connection with involuntary commitment.

Mr. Beale asked if there was any further business. There being none the meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting – October 12, 2012 – At the Human Services Building A/B Classroom

Minutes recorded by Charlene Bellavance