



COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



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LISA ROTHENBURGER

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PETER NIEMIEC

Volunteer Services
WILLIAM F. CROSBY

Youth Services
LINDA M. PORCARO

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, March 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes
Meeting held via Zoom

Council Members Present:

- Chair Mary Jane DiPaolo, Community Child Care Solutions
- Vice-Chair Pastor Tim Wolf, EmPower Somerset
- Secretary Diann Robinson, Adult Day Center
- Jerry Star, Jewish Family Services (JFS)
- Joanne Kemp, Board of Social Services
- Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department
- Dr. Mark Avery, Zarephath Christian Church
- Michele Boronkas, Safe + Sound Somerset
- Michelle Dufour, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)
- Mike Frost, Director of Human Services
- Nancy Good, Alternatives, Inc.
- Paul Grzella, The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB)
- Rajni Chopra, Martin Luther King Youth Center (MLKY)
- Richard Schumann, Family and Community Services (FCS)

Council Members Excused:

- Andrea Strack, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey (LSNWJ)
- Daniel Powell, Community Visiting Nurse Association, (VNA)
- LuAnn Dias, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM)
- Nicci Spinazzola, Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center

Council Members Absent:

- David Walker, Visions and Pathways
- Lauren Frary, The Arc of Somerset County

Council Officials and Liaisons:

Somerset County Department of Human Services (SCDHS) Staff:

- Advisor Rheanah Johnson, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
- Antonietta Phelan, Office of Youth Services
- Ellen Russo, Office on Aging and Disability Services
- Henry Young, Office of Youth Services
- Jennifer Guyette, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

Kim Cowart, Community Development Office
Meg Isbitski, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Zachary Berliner, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

Guests:

Art Hernandez, Rutgers Community Christian Church
Catherine Sackey, HOPEs, Inc.
Danielle Schappert, Norwescap
Genna Rutka, Big Brothers Big Sisters Coastal & Northern New Jersey
Jeff Phillips Collaborative Support Programs of NJ CSPNJ
Linda Zimmerman, TriCounty Care Management Organization (CMO)
Lori Soto, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM)
Maria Marnell, Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (ESC)
Steve Katz, Food Bank Network of Somerset County

I. Call Meeting to Order & Introductions

Mary Jane DiPaolo called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM. A quorum was established.

II. Approval of the February 23, 2022 Minutes

Motion to approve the February 23, 2022 meeting minutes was made by Tim Wolf and seconded by Jeff Philips. All were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Motion carried.

III. Presentation: TriCounty Care Management Organization (CMO) - Linda Zimmerman, Director of Community Resources

TriCounty CMO, a non-profit care management organization for youth aged 5-21 in Warren, Hunterdon, and Somerset counties, is part of the Children's System of Care within the NJ Department of Children and Families. The organization has been in operation for over 16 years. TriCounty CMO strives to ensure that all youth with complex behavioral, developmental or addiction challenges have access to tailored, comprehensive formal and informal resources.

The sole business is provision of care management, which entails a series of protocols and practices that our care managers are trained and supervised. The three primary key areas of the children served are moderate-to-complex behavioral emotional health, developmental or intellectual disability challenges, and substance use challenges. Employing our wraparound care model, we serve youth and families in their homes and communities. We collaborate with our system partners, our schools, and our community-based providers in enjoining our services and strengths in keeping families strong. Each youth has an Individual Service Plan (ISP): comprised of the family vision, needs, strategies and identification/linkage of formal and informal services and supports.

Services can include Intensive-in-Community (IIC), Behavioral Assistance (BA), Intensive-in-Home therapeutic services, intensive outpatient services, mentoring and psychological and/or psychiatric evaluations, and out of home treatment when in-home and in-community do not meet youth's level of need. There is no cost to the family for services.

How to access TriCounty CMO Services: contact Perform Care 1-877-652-7624

Contact:

Branchburg Office: 3040 Route 22 West, Suite 210, Branchburg, NJ

Washington Office: 315 W. Washington Ave., Suite 1, Washington, NJ 07882
 Website: www.tricountycmo.org
 Phone: 908-526-3900
 Email: info@tricountycmo.org

IV. State and County Agency Reports
Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)- Michelle Dufour

2022	February
Families	355
Children	668
Children in Out of Home Placement	48
Referral Type	
Child Protective Service Referrals	129
Child Welfare Referrals	9
Allegation Type	
Neglect	131
Physical Abuse	55
Sexual Abuse	16
Emotional Abuse	N/A

V. Human Services Director’s Report – Mike Frost

The nonprofit of service contracts and American Rescue Plan (ARP) contracts have gone out. The monitoring process for both contracts will be the same. If there are any questions, Jen Guyette, and the rest of the team can assist. The County is still working on blankets for some of the contracts for potentially half of the year.

On March 24, 2022, at Lucid Coffee Co. at 5 pm will be the kickoff for anti-stigma as it relates to businesses. On May 13, 2022, there will be an anti-stigma conference in North Plainfield. On March 31, 2022, the Department of Human Services staff have been invited by Father Ron at St. John’s in Somerville at 7pm to discuss outreach services. There has been some confusion about access to services and how to coordinate. Zachary Berliner is coordinating the efforts on behalf of the Department.

Construction is completed on the Richard Hall Health and Wellness Center and Zufall Health Center medical clinic. There is still specialized equipment needed.

Much focus has been on the ongoing relationship with the Bridgewater Police Department through Dameon Stackhouse our Community Police Alliance Coordinator. There is a lot going on and in terms of the position itself and what it is intended to do, particularly the crisis de-escalation, Mr. Frost reports that he has had long

and productive conversations with Chief Payne. He expects to see some positive changes in what Dameon is allowed to do within the next month or two.

Meg Isbitski discussed the Somerset County Stigma Free initiative which aims to spread awareness in the community about mental health and substance use disorders and local resources. The ways that the Department has been doing this is through outreach to local businesses within the community. This is an effort to capture a part of the population that we do not normally touch, including residents, patrons, and employees. The small event at Lucid Coffee Co. is for the businesses who have signed on to the initiative and for those interested in learning more. On May 13, 2022, there will be an in-person conference offered at no cost. There will be presentations on suicide prevention and the new 988 service which will be rolling out in mid-or late July. Registration will be up very soon and is open to everyone in the community.

Steve Katz elaborated on the meeting with Somerville Stakeholders. Mr. Katz explained that it comes out of a conversation he had with Father Ron over at St. John's and other clergy. The idea is to bring together stakeholders and talk specifically about food insecurity. There will be an agenda to keep everyone on topic.

VI. Unfinished Business

Rheanah Johnson reminded the members to sign up for one of the four committees. Ms. Johnson will send out committee emails to collect each groups' availability. The expectation is that each committee will have their initial meeting prior to the next HSAC meeting on April 27, 2022. The goal is for each committee to come up with at least one goal to work on for the year. A staff member will be present for each committee meeting and will be responsible for setting up the meetings and sending out correspondence. Each committee will have a chairperson to run the meetings and keep the group on task. Another expectation is that each committee should meet at least once quarterly. Each committee will be responsible for providing a brief report at the HSAC meetings discussing what they are working on.

From the last meeting, the top priorities discussed were senior support services and mental health. Ms. Johnson led an exercise using Mentimeter.com to encourage the council to explore priorities more in depth. The council participated by submitting responses virtually. The first prompt was for members to list additional priorities and concerns that go along with those mentioned. Kim Cowart shared that a concern is resources and services for people who are reentering the community with a criminal background. Ms. Cowart also shared that another population that is underserved are people who are undocumented. Catherine Sackey shared a concern is part time employment opportunities for seniors and job training for those reentering the workforce with a criminal background. The word cloud revealed that suicide prevention, affordable housing, and domestic violence as the top three responses. The second prompt asked how the council can work towards alleviating the issues mentioned. Ms. Sackey suggested we compile a list of those in the community to send out information via text. Ms. Johnson will distribute the results of the exercise to the group following the meeting.

Mr. Berliner shared that he likes the "boots on the ground" suggestion and expressed that targeted outreach is a good idea. Diann Robinson expressed that a start for the committees can be to take the priorities and

connect to what services each participants' agency provides. Ms. Cowart added that it is important to ask people directly what they need.

VII. Agency Highlights/ Announcements

Tim Wolf shared the Family Success Center is celebrating their 10-year anniversary. On April 21, 2022, the center will be holding an open house from 4 pm – 7pm, which will be mostly outdoors at 50 Post Office Plaza, Division Street. There will be hors d'oeuvres, mingling, and information. At 5:30 pm there is a ceremony that will be recognizing volunteers and partner agencies. Mr. Wolf also shared about their partnership with a young woman in high school with her golden award for girl scouts. Her project is Voice: The Silence of Child Abuse which includes a presentation and mini-ACEs training. The center is also doing comfort care bags with CASA SHaW.

Michele Boronkas shared as of the week of April 4, 2022, Safe + Sound Somerset will be operating out of their new office in Somerville. They will become a permanently hybrid organization.

Ms. DiPaolo shared Community Child Care Solution is having a virtual job fair next Tuesday, March 29, 2022. There are 17 centers registered.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned

Tim Wolf made a motion to adjourn and seconded by Nancy Good. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 1:30 PM via Zoom. The link will be sent out a week prior via email.