



Bucks County

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Administrator

TO: MH/DP Advisory Board
FROM: Donna D. Duffy-Bell, Administrator
SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
DATE: April 5, 2022

1. Follow-up/Updates

PRA Plan Updates: The Department continues to monitor the expansion and enhancement of services funded by the PRA plan. The Forensic Diversion, Treatment, and Rehabilitation Center continues to progress with the planning/design stage nearly complete. Cost estimates for building materials/ fixtures/contractors are being discussed, as is the demolition phase of the project. USA Architects assisted County BHDP, County General Services, and the GEO Group, Inc. in finalizing design plans for the new facility which will be erected on the site of the current Women's Correctional Facility after demolition. Bidding schedule to be finalized in April 2022.

Since completion of this project is now targeted for Spring/Summer of 2023, temporary options were investigated to house the Short Term Observation Unit including a large modular unit as well as an existing County building in Doylestown which will be attached to the modular unit. The modular unit was previously used for a medical clinic, but will be refurbished to create a secure treatment facility for clients, while the County building attached to the structure will be used from some program functions and house administration, staff, and security. GEO Group, Inc. will begin hiring for the temporary facility once a final timeline is provided for beginning operation.

RTFA Relocation Update: An RFP was released by Magellan and Bucks/Delaware/Montgomery Counties for a temporary RTFA site/services to bridge remaining residents at the Elwyn-operated RTFA on the grounds of Norristown State Hospital. Elwyn, along with some Montgomery County MH Programs, received notice of lease termination in July 2022 as a result of the land being conveyed back to Norristown Borough. Review of the received RFP proposals will occur the week of April 5, 2022 with services hoping to commence by June 2022.

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MH Residential Housing Updates:

- Mainstream/Regular Vouchers: Since 2019, 43 individuals have been discharged from MH Residential programs with the benefit of a voucher, 3 of which occurred this last quarter. Attracting new landlords continues to be a challenge in Bucks County. Fortunately, the Bonus for Bucks Landlord incentive program is continuing through July 31st, 2022. Since the inception of the Housing Location program, 50 new landlords have been engaged. Of these 50, 17 new landlords have accessed the Bonus for Bucks program.
- BH/DP is excited to have just released the Sellersville Senior Apartments (SSA) interest application to the MH Residential providers on Friday April 1, 2022. This Capital Development housing project includes 8 units of affordable housing for individuals with a serious mental health diagnosis and HealthChoices eligibility. Income must meet 20% AMI (Average Median Income), which equals annual income of no more than \$13,240.00. Eligible applicants will be directed to SSA to continue their screening process, which will look further at income, credit, rental and criminal history. We are anticipating a June lease-up for this complex.
- Bucks County was awarded funding from OMHSAS to support up to 15 individuals in Assisted Living settings. MH is partnering with Allegria at the Oaks for this service and is working on contracting and identifying appropriate referrals from our MH residential programs to support increased flow within our residential services. Individuals in higher levels of care will be prioritized for admission.

2. Surveys/Site Reviews

MH Consumer/Family Satisfaction (C/FST) Surveys: Voice & Vision, Inc. met monthly with the Bucks County C/FST Workgroup and separately with the Workgroup liaisons to review current projects and to implement and monitor the current FY 2021-22 project plan.

The workgroup for the FY 21-22 MH Forensic Population survey continues to work on strategies with Bucks Co. Correctional Facility, probation/parole, and MH providers to reach participants for this project that is evaluating how being referred to services and resources in the community upon release from the jail affects a person's ability to maintain tenure in the community. To date, 3 interviews have been completed. One interview has been completed for the 21-22 Community Based Care Management project. The C/FST is waiting on more discharges from the S.T.E.P.S. program. The 21-22 Adult Recovery survey is nearly complete with more than 100 individuals with MH and/or SUD concerns being surveyed. One hundred parents/guardians were interviewed for the 21-22 Resiliency survey (report due end of March.) To date, 34 interviews have been completed for the 21-22 TAY Recovery survey. The C/FST added a new CPS/CRS survey project to the workplan for FY 2021-22 with interviews with service recipients beginning at the end of March.

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3. Vision Work/Initiatives

Mental Health Court: The first participant began Mental Health Court on October 20, 2021 and there are currently four (4) participants as of end of March 2022. Three are currently staying at the Transitional Wellness House, while one other participant is living at the Village of Hope Dual Recovery House. Both programs are residential settings with 24/7 staff who are experienced in supporting individuals with co-occurring mental health disorders and substance use histories. All of the participants are connected to community treatment providers. There are currently two additional candidates being considered for participation.

Co-Responder Initiative: The Bensalem Co-Responders have received 32 referrals since January and are currently engaged in 15 active cases. Co-Responders have been connecting individuals to community resources, and in some cases assisting in jail diversion, including accessing inpatient psychiatric treatment on 10 occasions (2 involuntary commitments and 8 voluntary), as well as facilitating 2 jail diversions.

The second team of Co-Responders, who were hired in December of 2021, began providing services in January to Falls and Middletown Township Police Departments.

The new Falls Township Co-Responder has had 51 referrals to date in 2022, with 31 active cases, 4 jail diversions, and facilitation of 13 hospitalizations (8 involuntary, and 5 voluntary).

The Middletown Township Co-Responder has received 25 referrals to date in 2022, with 23 active cases, 3 jail diversions, and assisted in facilitating 2 inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations (1 involuntary, and 1 voluntary).

Beginning April 11th and 25th, two additional Co-Responders were hired to serve Bristol Township, Bristol Borough, and Tullytown Police Departments. The Co-Responders will complete orientation in April/early May and begin working with the officers and the community later in May.

4. Retained Earnings/Budget/Fiscal NOS

FY 2021-22 Year-end: Providers have submitted their year-end projections for review, which include year-end requests. These requests will be considered in conjunction with any funding that may be available.

Additionally, the County has received additional funding of \$362,480 from the State in support of a project to support 15 individuals at enhanced care personal boarding homes and an allocation to support county-funded individuals at the new regional EAC (Extended Acute Care Unit). This funding is expected to be annualized.

FY 22-23 Planning: We are in the process of requesting budgets from providers. After we receive them, we will meet internally to determine how to best allocate funds to support services for the next year.

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American Rescue Plan Projects: At the end of 2021, the County Human Services Department initiated an American Rescue Plan Funded Grant program. Interested agencies submitted a variety of requests for project-based funding and requests for funds supporting salary increases for essential workers. Both project and essential worker pay requests were approved. Providers were notified in February and early March about their awards.

5. Workforce Competency Building

CIT: In March, Bucks County CIT held its Spring CIT class with thirty-three law enforcement officers, FBI agents, and EMTs graduating. The Task Force has trained a total of 654 people, including 574 law enforcement and supervisors. The CIT Task Force introduced virtual role play by utilizing AXON headsets that offer different virtual scenarios of law enforcement responding to individuals with autism, schizophrenia, suicide, and domestic violence. The Task Force is planning bi-monthly virtual hour long training/roundtable to all law enforcement.

6. Community Education/Awareness

Suicide Prevention Task Force: The next #HoldOnYouMatter suicide prevention walk is scheduled in Lower Bucks County on May 1, 2022. The t-shirt design contest ended March 18th and winners were notified. The design winner will be showcased on the #HoldOnYouMatter spring walk t-shirt and other merchandise. The Task Force is collaborating with Magellan and the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Task Force to host a film screening event for the film "My Ascension" on May 4th.

School Crisis and Prevention and Intervention Training: The PREPaRE model is a sequential and hierarchical set of school set of school safety and crisis response activities. **P**revent and prepare for psychological trauma, **R**eaffirm physical health and perceptions of security and safety, **E**valuate psychological trauma risk, **P**rovide interventions, **a**nd, **R**espond to psychological needs, **E**xamine the effectiveness of crisis prevention and intervention. BH/DP and the Bucks County IU provided Workshop 1 training to the Central Bucks School District.

MH Base Funding/Proposed State Budget: Community and legislative education continues around the Governor's proposed State budget and the need to preserve the proposed 36.3 million in increased MH Base funding. BH/DP staff have participated in NAMI's Base funding/budget awareness event in March as well as two presentations in March hosted by the PA School Board Association. BH/DP also continues to partner with PACA (PA County Administrators) and CCAP (County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania) in community and legislative education activities.

7. Grant Proposals/Updates

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT): Bucks County's request for funding to support a pilot AOT program was approved. This project was awarded a total of \$360,000 for the two-year period of FY 21-22 and FY 22-23, and some of the funding will be used to

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hire a fulltime Clinical Coordinator between AOT, MH Court, and D&A Court. The position was approved by the Salary Board on January 5th. On January 7th, the position was posted and approximately 15 applications were received. We have interviewed the applicants and the recommended hire is currently pending Commissioner approval in April. The Department's solicitor has been working with the courts and BH/DP to establish jurisdictional protocols and roles. AOT data points have been included into the existing database for reporting.

HRSA Grant: Bucks County was informed March 30th that it is eligible to receive a federal grant through the US Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in the amount of \$500,000. This grant is specifically a Congressionally Directed Spending Grant, and it is being offered for facility construction purposes. Federal monies were originally pursued by Commissioner Marseglia through Brian Fitzpatrick's office. This is a non-competitive grant, but application to ensure eligibility criteria is met is required. Application is due June 6, 2022. These monies were requested to support funding of the Forensic Diversion and Treatment Center.

8. Policy/Regulation Updates

None on which to elaborate for this current Report.

9. Current Challenges/Updates NOS

RTF-A Closure: Elwyn's RTF-A (Residential Treatment Facility – Adults) programs, currently located on the grounds of Norristown State Hospital, were given notice that their lease will be discontinued as of July 24, 2022. The RTF-As are regional programs and Bucks County has 6 beds allocated between the two RTF-As. These programs were developed to transition individuals on civil commitments out of Norristown State Hospital when the State transitioned Norristown to a forensic only facility.

The Region has been planning for this move since it was notified by the State in September 2020 that the RTF-As would need to relocate. Planning included seeking alternative program sites and an assessment of the need for RTF-A services. The group determined that an Extended Acute Care (EAC) program was needed and issued an RFP. Crozer was awarded the contract but is currently in the disclosure phase of acquisition by Prospect. The suburban counties were informed that there would be no further forward movement on any behavioral health initiatives at this time until further evaluation of interest/need is conducted. Bucks County had not yet executed a contract with Crozer and will evaluate next steps along with the rest of the suburban SE region as an EAC level of care is critically needed.

The Region will request an extension of the lease to allow more time to plan for the program's closure while concurrently working on identifying alternative sites. Current residents have been prioritized for other openings in the regional and Bucks MH residential programs. We anticipate that two Bucks County individuals will not have an appropriate placement by July.

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BH/DP Staff Turnover: There have been multiple retirements from the BH/DP Department in recent months. Mary Dunn and Beth Jacques retired from Developmental Programs; Cherie Latorre will be retiring in May from the Early Intervention Unit; Joanie Fischer, Administrative Assistant, retired April 1, 2022. Nicole VanReymersdal was promoted from within the Department to Beth's position. Interviews have occurred for Mary Dunn's position and a recommendation for hire will be forthcoming in early April. The need to replace Joanie Fischer's position will be evaluated.