



HOWARD COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

Minutes of the Meeting of October 8, 2014

8:30 am – 10:00 am

Columbia/Ellicott City Conference Room, George Howard Building
34530 Courthouse Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Attending: Nikki Highsmith Vernick, the Horizon Foundation and Donna Wells, Howard County Mental Health Authority, Presiding; Andrew Angelino, Connie Anguili, Becky Bell, Leah Blain, Dario Broccolino, Karen Booth, Karen Butler, Lisa Cooper-Lucas, Mark Donovan, Beverley Francie Gibson, Gary Gardner, Andrea Ingram, Bonnie Katz, David Leichtling, Helen Liu, Lisa Lomas, Tina Maddox, Dailsa Marciniack, Vickie Miles, Jennifer Pollit-Hill, Scott Rose, Maura Rossman, Trish Schupple, Joan Webb Scornaienchi, Steve Snelgrove, Jackie Scott for Lois Mikkila, Brendan Solaner, Sue Song, Tammy Spengler, Joy Stephens, Jen Terrasa; Elizabeth Kromm, and Anne Towne, consultant. Approximately 15 community members also attended the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

On behalf of County Executive Ken Ulman, Elizabeth Kromm welcomed task force members and provided an overview of how this task force has come to be. She then introduced co-chairs Nikki Highsmith Vernick and Donna Wells and thanked all task force members for their willingness to serve. Everyone in the room was asked to make a personal introduction.

Nikki and Donna acknowledged that activities of the County Executive and his staff in bringing together a wide variety of people to fulfill the following mission:

1. To understand the roles played by all community partners in providing ongoing support for individuals with mental illness as well as in reducing the frequency and intensity of mental health crises;
2. To identify gaps in the continuum of care. These services may include but are not limited to consistent access to outpatient treatment and psychiatric services, as well as critical supportive services such as wrap-around stabilizing services, peer support services, community re-entry support post discharge from detention center, housing, employment, and case management;
3. To identify synergies and strategies to maximize return on existing investments in this area as well as to understand where additional funding or support (public and private) should be directed in the future; and
4. To develop an action plan with policy, program, and funding recommendation to enable the implementation of a preventive and recovery-oriented continuum of care for both Howard County adults and children.

The task force is charged with coming up with recommendations not later than March 2015 so Nikki highlighted the focus of identifying what we can change locally – what we can control and fund. While the task force may hear from state-level speakers, the task force's responsibility is on advancing this work in Howard County.

Donna talked about the role the Howard County Mental Health Authority plays in the county and the relationships it has with providers and government. She offered her website as the location for information on meetings, reports, and other relevant materials (www.hcmha.org).

Donna introduced Howard County’s Health Officer Maura Rossman. Maura and her staff, building on Horizon Foundation materials and those developed by the Local Health Improvement Coalitions (LHICs), pulled together Howard County Behavioral Health Data and presented it to the task force. A copy of the presentation will be posted at www.hcmha.org. Task force members asked a number of questions about the data as it was presented and notes were made when more data or points of clarification were requested. Members were asked to bring forward data they would like to share with the task force to complement the presentation.

Nikki then talked about organizing the work of accomplishing the mission by identifying work groups. She asked for ideas on this and the following is a list of initial thoughts:

- Define demand more clearly through a demographic demand analysis
- Complete the work begun by the Health Department to identify who the providers are – what services they offer, who they serve, when and where.
- Explore the connectivity of the providers and of the providers to the community.
- Identify what regulatory barriers there might be for improving the continuum.
- See where the greatest gaps in the continuum are and what might be done to close them.
- Discover potential new models for financing. This includes taking a closer look at what insurance covers (public and private) and what that means for the continuum of providers.
- Explore how to improve prevention services that promote healthy behavior so people do not enter the continuum.
- Examine how transition from services to the community can become more effective.

Task force members were also asked about who was missing from the membership and several ideas were offered given the potential direction of the work.

Future task force meeting dates were set for:

- November 17 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm
- December 9 8:00 am – 9:30 am
- January 15 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm
- February 12 8:00 am – 9:30 am
- March 11 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Locations will be announced when the meeting agendas are circulated.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Towne
Task Force Facilitator