



Administrative Office, 105 Hall Street, Suite A, Traverse City, MI 49684

## Virtual Public Hearing Minutes

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July 21, 2021

1:00 PM

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### 1. **ATTENDANCE:**

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority Public Hearing held by remote virtual meeting. Joanie Blamer called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Public Present: Tracy Trasky, Finance Director Summertree Residential Centers (GT County); Monica Salink, Area Director, Spectrum Community Services (Wexford Cty); Susan Wilson, Kennedy House West and Kennedy House (GT County); Sharon Lane, Spectrum Community Services (Wexford County); Dr. Margaret Ficaj, Rise Center (Roscommon County); Debra Dailey, Summertree Residential Centers (GT County); Sarah Hammond; and Sarah Benson.

Board Members Present: Ben Townsend, Randy Kamps, and Penny Morris.

Staff Present: Joanie Blamer, Interim Chief Executive Officer; Lauri Fischer, Chief Financial Officer; Deb Lavender, Executive Secretary; Aaron Fader, Executive Administrative Specialist; Tracy Andrews, Director of Integrated and Managed Health Services; Carrie Gray, Chief Population Officer for Individuals with IDD; Aimee Horton-Johnson, Office Administrator; and Brie Molaison, Customer Services Specialist.

Welcome and introductions. Identified that we are recording the meeting and making available to the public on our website so the public has access to the information.

### 2. **OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SERVICES:**

Joanie reviewed the presentation relating the current services we provide. She responded to a question about the Juvenile Justice Diversion program. Carrie Gray and Tracy Andrews highlighted specific program information.

### 3. **OVERVIEW OF FISCAL (FY) 2021 BUDGET:**

Lauri reviewed the Expenditures by Source of Funds; FY 2020 Units and Dollars of Medicaid Services – sharing the service category, total units and Medicaid, Healthy Michigan and Uninsured Expenditures.

### 4. **ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM FY 2020:**

Joanie reviewed our Accomplishments in FY 2020. There is still a challenge with the staffing shortage due to wages and still know there is work to be done in this area.

### 5. **WORKS IN PROGRESS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR FY 2022:**

Lauri reviewed the Works in Progress and Considerations for FY 2022.

### 6. **GROUP DISCUSSION AND WRAP-UP:**

- Dr. Margaret Ficaj from the Rise Center identified her interest in the Juvenile Justice Diversion and asked that we keep in mind as we branch out if there is any way she could help to facilitate services.

### **What do you think is the highest need in your community where there are gaps?**

- Dr. Margaret Ficaj identified concern about shortage for residential care for extreme cases for juvenile justice. There are no options or they don't belong. There is a shortage for short term residential or specialized. She communicated she is looking at turning her facility in Houghton Lake to specialized residential (15 rooms). She has been communicating with the township. She noted she also provides services in the Farmington Hills area for this population. It was noted that we have a specialized residential home in the Roscommon area for individuals with an Autism diagnosis.
- Sarah Benson indicated they are noticing in their office that consumers and caregivers have been contacting them letting them know a service coordinator from Northern Lakes will not authorize a needed service for a recipient unless that recipient can identify a provider. How are all of these unmet needs that are identified but not accounted for taken into consideration for future budget planning and additional services that are actually needed in our community but are not reflected in recipient's Individual Plan of Service (IPOS)? Joanie identified that we heard this one other time that consumers and caregivers are not being authorized a service because we cannot find a provider. The response to the other person that we have an assessment that drives the IPOS and is not sure whether it is a staffing training issue or an electronic record issue. We are looking into and she was told that if you don't have a provider listed in the IPOS in the record it won't allow you to enter it. Joanie noted that our Technology Steering Committee will look into as to how our vendor will rectify that and find out how other CMHs are doing it. Lauri noted for self-determination if we have a lack of provider network contracts to meet a specific need then the idea of self-determination allows for the consumer to hire their own worker, family, friend or someone that maybe could help them provide the service that they need through a self-determination model that could expand the availability of providers for them as well. Joanie will look into and will follow-up with an email.

### **Discuss what we are doing regarding staffing challenges and what you're doing and what can we do as a community to improve that.**

Joanie identified that we are continuing the \$2.00 an hour wage increase and we are budgeting that for the next fiscal year. We will be recommending to our Board in August for approval. We have created a retention pay for our staff because we don't want staff to leave because it is hard to get staff. We did provider stability payments in the amount of \$2.7 million and Lauri shared the parameters for requesting funds for providers. We do not want to out pace our providers and know that there is limited people.

- Dr. Margaret Ficaj identified that they worked very hard in this area and partnered with Michigan Works. Michigan Works is helping with advertising and have hiring events. They paired them with the US Department of Labor and they launched an apprenticeship program. The US Department of Labor will give out a Journeyman Certificate for a Behavioral Health Technician for ABA and they run a year long apprenticeship program. They also provide them \$3,000 which is the first \$3,000 of what that person earns. One of the biggest expenses is 40 hours of training expenses. They also coach them on the types of employees to look for that match that kind of work. They recommend going into schools for individuals once they turn 18 for those who don't want to go to college and want to earn some type of credential. Also suggested people that are a little older may be looking for work. Michigan Works helped them understand how they spend their money in relation to staffing. She related the different levels of workers specific to tiers. She indicated that they were correct that the apprenticeship program worked.

### **Feedback or things as providers, citizens, county representatives would like to see us do differently either in services or our business such as accounting, provider network.**

- Monica Salink shared that Mark and Tracy have done a phenomenal job with holding meetings with the providers and they should continue. With many of the providers state wide everyone has different challenges and different things that will work. To bring all to the table to get different ideas and to be able to present this to CMH for support has been useful to them. She is grateful about the \$2.00 wage extending because the staff right now going into August are wondering what is going to happen after September. They want to

know whether they need to look for a different job because they can't afford a lower wage.

- Person served observation – heard we have an answering service as opposed to our regular staffing. With COVID it has been difficult to get through to people and is frustrating. Lauri noted that the comment was made relative to 7 days was because we had to vacate the buildings quickly related to COVID. The services are still provided by the people and the manner that they are provided may be technological, virtual or face to face. She noticed within the past year during COVID that communicating with CMH has gone downhill. It seems like the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. Joanie responded that it is value feedback to have and not something that we had heard before. She will contact our Customer Service staff and have them contact her. She related an incident with the FAST Team. She identified that she had tried to join virtual and the link did not work for her and had to call by phone. We will have the whole session on the internet so she can access.

The feedback will be used in development of our Strategic Plan that we started this month.

Meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Lavender  
Executive Secretary

dsl  
(7/22/2021)