

Summary

Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Ongoing Planning Council

May 21, 2020
9:00am
Teleconference

Present: Monica Adrian, Alyssa Castro, Vong Chang, Zachary Coston, Fernando Granados, Caitlin Haygood, Heydi Herrera, Sharon Jones, Patti Kishi, Adam Lane, Cindy Mattox, Rebecca McMullen, Marylin Mochel, Jenna Nunes, Maria Orozco, Nancy Reding, Aracely Sanchez, Anna Santos, Griselda Vazquez, Tatiana Vizcaino, Ye Thao, Ralph Silva, Kimiko Vang, Christina Celis, See Her

Presentation and Discussion:

All Members

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for April 16, 2020 was motioned/seconded (Nancy Reding /Jenna Nunes) and carried.

III. Update Planning Council Contact List

Fernando Granados, Chair, encouraged all attendees to email Maria Orozco stating their names to track call participation.

IV. Notice to the Public

Adam Lane, Merced LGBTQ+ Alliance, introduced 4 online virtual groups including support times, social networking, and a get together. All can be found through their website Mercedlgbtqalliance.org, their Facebook page and Instagram. Adam recommended anyone with LGBTQ+ clients to send them their way. He noted that now is a great time to connect online, as they just started virtual groups this week and will be doing this for the foreseeable future. Nancy shared about a young man referred by his therapist who joined the group. She added that allies are also welcome to the call. Fernando asked if the groups were for adults, teens, or children. Nancy responded that they are themed with a different one every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday night on their website; visiting the website will help learn more about the group.

V. Chair's Report

No report.

VI. Director's Report

Agenda item tabled.

VII. Program Presentation: Merced Lao Family-SEACAP (Southeast Asian Community Advocacy Program)

Ye Thao, Merced Lao Family, presented a PowerPoint on the SEACAP (Southeast Asian community Advocacy Program). The PowerPoint was emailed to all members prior to the teleconference. The presentation provided information on the program's mission, vision, services, target population, data outcomes of the 2019-2020 fiscal year 3rd quarter, SMART goals, and success stories. Nancy Reding thought it was a great PowerPoint and appreciated Merced Lao Family's time. However, Nancy had some very grave concerns. Nancy is aware that Merced Lao Family received a grant from MHSA to deal with the LGBTQ community. She noted that there is nothing in any one of the slides that indicate what Merced Lao Family is doing by serving or educating their community. Sharon explained that this was the Southeast Asian Community Advocacy Program, the medical billing outpatient program that Merced Lao operates. Nancy said it was her mistake because she understood that this was going to be the moneys for the Mental Health Services Act which encompasses the \$8,000 for LGBTQ; she believes it should have been addressed somehow. Sharon explained that LGBTQ clients are qualified for this program as well, but there will be a separate presentation for that initiative.

Fernando Granados mentioned that it had been agreed that each program would present on all services and programs provided under MHSA. Sharon explained that in this case, the program started later due to local county government glitches.

SEACAP has been up and running since 2006. There will be a special presentation in regards to LGBTQ+. It would have been integrated together but for this particular purpose it was just for SEACAP. Sharon noted that some presentations are behind due to COVID-19, but it will be on the list. Nancy commented that this has been an ongoing discussion from month to month and thinks they should be high on the list to present. When the Youth Leadership Institute presented, they went into detail about what was being served and how the LGBTQ community was being served with moneys from the Mental Health Services Act. Sharon explained that there will be a presentation shortly. Sharon added that everything is getting organized with presenters that had already prepared and we are trying to get the list in order. Sharon thanked Nancy for her feedback.

VIII. Safety and Self-Care

Sharon briefly checked in on safety and self-care during this time to find out how everyone is doing. Sharon informed that the department's services are essential and are continuing either by telephone or in the clinic face to face. Not a lot of outreach is happening because of the governor's order and the public health order in place at Merced County. Monica Adrian, Caring Kids, has been hosting self-care sessions with a variety of early education educators around the county. During a normal year they provide support on how to address challenging behaviors in the classroom; the focus has now been on self-care for them as individuals, and it has been well received. Kimiko Vang, Human Services Agency, shared that for the last couple of years they've had mindfulness based training offered to their staff in partnership with CSU Stanislaus Wellness Options. During the COVID-19 pandemic they have not been able to offer in person and have sent out weekly wellness tips to their staff to continue with the mindfulness exercises they were trained in. Ye Thao, Merced Lao Family, shared that they have provided face masks to their clients and residents who need them. This is posted on social media so that many clients can go get services at their office. Christina Celis, Department of Public Health, said that for mental health awareness month they started implementing webinars on stress management and reduction during COVID-19. They received a really good response rate from people in the community, as well as collaborating with different community organizations to deliver the workshops online. Jenna Nunes, Sierra Vista, shared that they are continuously checking in with lot of staff who are working remotely and coming into the office one day a week to make sure they are feeling connected. Staff support groups are also being provided for head start staff and has been very well received with over 80 staff attending. Sierra Vista also provided face masks for all of their staff to ensure safety. Sharon Jones thanked everyone for sharing self-care tips and techniques.

IX. Update on MHSA Program Operations and Productivity

Jenna Nunes reported that they are continuing to provide virtual groups. They have had some success, especially in Los Banos, where they have about 15 students attending groups weekly and a request for parenting support groups. Students participating in groups have siblings and parents on the Zoom calls as well. It has now increased to not just students from that school but to the families. They have noticed they have been able to reach more people through those groups.

Monica Adrian, Caring Kids, shared about a write up on the Merced County Times on the Caring Kids virtual playgroup; a shout out was given to MHSA. Monica encouraged Sharon to take a look at the May 14th paper or access it online. Monica liked that they focused on how their focus right now is on building healthy relationships and how they had to switch to a virtual platform. Sharon thinks it is something that can be put in the three year plan and thanked everyone for sharing.

X. Discussion on Rate Based Contracts

Sharon stated that the new director, Genevieve Valentine, will soon be on these calls or if not her designee will be. There is current discussion in regards to a rate-based contract, meaning that the process for negotiating contracts would include negotiating a rate for certain items or to do certain things in terms of the scope of work. Currently on the Mental Health Services Act, one program has a rate-based contract, the Aspiranet WeCan program. Sharon added that a systems improvement was started about 3 or 4 years ago, and this would be another way to improve the system. Monica Adrian asked for more information to be provided on what that would look like. Sharon responded that there will be more information to come. She explained that rate-based means that a certain number of services would be provided at a particular rate and if those services were not billed or complete, you would only be paid for whatever you do in terms of the negotiated rate and service. Fernando Granados asked if this was for new contracts or for next year as it is based on productivity; the number of client contacts is how they will get reimbursed. Sharon explained that each contract has a different scope, so it depends on the service being provided. Today Sharon is letting everyone about the direction the new director wants to go and there will be more information. Sharon noted that there will be meetings as usual.

Aracely Sanchez, BHRS Contracts & Compliance, reminded everyone about some end dates coming up and informed that

they have been working diligently with county level counterparts for review. The contracts are drafted and it is just a matter of them being reviewed at county level. Individuals can reach out to her for any questions or concerns.

XI. Early Intervention Billing

Sharon shared that there is a conversation about medi-cal billing for early intervention. This request has come throughout the years in regards to integrated primary care and mental health. There is no information to share but Sharon informed that moving forward, they may be looking at programs already approved through MHSA that are able to bill early intervention. This would be medi-cal billing, not only billing the contract but being able to leverage medi-cal dollars. Fernando Granados asked about what Sharon meant with early intervention. Sharon explained that early intervention is when a reduction of symptoms is needed and a clinician or mental health worker work to reduce those symptoms, just like for specialty mental health. The clientele would probably be mild to moderate. Fernando noted that those are the clients currently being served through Beacon and asked what would change. Sharon explained that it depends on how the infrastructure is set up. There is currently no medi-cal billing if it's an approved MHSA contract with a clinician working in integrated primary care funded through MHSA. Those may be some of the opportunity areas, with integrated primary care.

XII. BHRS Billboards

Sharon informed that shortly throughout Merced County, there will be billboards that Behavioral Health and Recovery Services are putting up to let individuals know that we are here if they are in need in terms of support, mental health, behavioral health, wellness and recovery. Also, banners will possibly be up shortly moving forward. Sharon explained that we are trying to reduce stigma and increase support for individuals that may need emotional, health, and wellness support. Sharon tried to put things on the agenda that are moving forward or generating conversation.

Adam Lane asked about the Billboard locations. Sharon responded that the various locations will be sent out to the group. A lot of them will be out in the rural area. This will be a first for BHRS and Sharon is happy about it, as it is funded through MHSA dollars. The billboards are not bilingual and will all be in English. Sharon explained that the goal is always to move toward cultural responsiveness as much as possible. Sharon noted that we will work towards bilingual billboards. This will only be for the month of June and hopefully moving forward there will be more billboards throughout the year.

XIII. MHSA Needs Assessment

Sharon said that the last official needs assessment done by an outside provider was early on in the MHSA roll out. We are moving towards another needs assessment to really speak to the issues and needs through the eyes of an outside person. Sharon added that they are in the process of negotiating a contract for a needs assessment. This will be timely as we are also moving into a three year MHSA program update plan. In terms of the needs assessment, it will not only look at MHSA, but also at the entire BHRS service delivery system, which is inclusive of providers as well. Sharon asked for any questions on the needs assessment or the billboards.

XIV. MHSA Three Year Plan

Along with the three year plan comes the community planning process. More key informant interviews, focus groups, and outreach will be scheduled. In the June planning council meeting, there will be a kick off PowerPoint in regards to the three year plan. Focus groups will probably begin in July to start having a conversation. Sharon thinks this will be great because we have the needs assessment going as well. A lot of feedback will be collected to help out and really make sure that people are getting the help and services they need.

XV. Administrative Updates and Changes

Sharon reported that the early intervention program through Human Services Agency was approved by the board on Tuesday, May 19th, and that work will begin. Individuals who facilitate that program will do a presentation as well. Sharon mentioned that many have probably seen in the paper and have heard conversations about the navigation center and the leveraging of PEI dollars to support the navigation center, which will be similar to new direction. There will be 70 to 120 beds, so it will be an expanded New Direction. Sharon shared that she is hearing great reports on how individuals are being placed in motels and hotels due to COVID-19. Another pathway was opened at the Human Services Agency through innovative dollars to help eliminate barriers and customize services. Patti Kishi, NAMI, asked if in terms of administrative changes within the grantee, whether or not they would hear about this year's budget modification request made earlier in the year, as they still have not had final word on that. Now that they will be moving into a Zoom format, they want to be able to utilize their

dollars as effectively as they can. Sharon explained to Patti that this would have to go offline, as this would not be the call about contracts. Sharon explained that if a letter was submitted, they should get a response of any changes to programs or negotiation of contracts. Patti said they want to be in compliance as the fiscal year is coming to a close. Sharon said we have a protocol under MHSA for budget requests for months of December and April. Sharon let Patti know that they would reach out to her and answer her questions to move forward. Aracely Sanchez clarified that for some contracts it is the month of March. Aracely suggested that they refer back to their most recent amendment or contract version to verify if it's March or April. If they have further questions they can feel free to email her.

XVI. Possibilities and Success Stories

Alyssa Castro, Youth Leadership Institute, shared that recently in the last week; YLI and Merced Lao Family were able to follow their workshop for gender identity and pronouns. It was really well attended and the staff was very interested in the topic. She noted that it was really great to see so much dialogue happen between staff and facilitators, as it was facilitated online. The technology went smoothly as well.

Rebecca McMullen, Aspiranet, shared that they have been working remotely from home for about 2 months already. They will start to get to the office next week as they have been doing telehealth only. Many of their clients have been excited to have the opportunity with the appropriate social distancing in place. Office appointments will be starting next week for their clients, triaging with those who may benefit the most during this time starting with high risk clients. They will start to slowly integrate back into the field.

Marylin Mochel, NAMI, commented that the new director presented at the board of supervisors meeting on Tuesday, with part of the COVID-19 update. The director gave an extensive review of services currently being provided, how the department is looking at services for the next fiscal year, how the department is embracing trauma-informed care, and other practices that Marylin thinks support our community well. Marylin shared that the Board of Supervisors videos are placed online and said this presentation would be worth watching. Marylin thinks the director did an exemplary job in providing information to the Board of Supervisors and the public. Sharon Jones stated that she would try to get the director on the June meeting. She was not able to be on the call today as she was working on some administrative endeavors. Sharon noted the possibility of the director sharing with each of them what was presented at the board. This will be on the agenda.

Fernando Granados asked Sharon if we would be going to video conferencing at any point. Sharon explained that we don't have the capability just yet, but it is something we are working on and looking for the most appropriate platform. Sharon noted that it takes a while with local county government. Zoom has not been approved, which is why only the telephone part of Blue Jeans is being used. Marylin Mochel added that the youth prevention substance use disorder group led by Christopher Jensen had a Blue Jeans video conference call yesterday. She shared that Public Health is also doing something tomorrow using the Blue Jeans platform. Some departments within Behavioral Health may have begun using the video conferencing part of Blue Jeans. Sharon will look into it.

XVII. Next Steps

Sharon will look into video conferencing. The council will wait on more information regarding the early intervention billing, and will also be looking forward to the discussion on the rate-based contract. In the next meeting there will be a kick off for the three year MHSA plan; if time allows Sharon will provide a brief presentation. Aracely and Sharon will reach out individually to those who are still waiting on budget modifications; if programs did not submit their requests between the given time frames, they will have to wait until it opens up again.

XVIII. Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 9:49 am