

Summary

Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Ongoing Planning Council

May 27, 2021
9:00am
Via Zoom

Present:

Monica Adrian, John Aguirre, Zeus Baldevia, Joana Castaneda, Vong Chang, Jose Chavez-Diaz, Daniel Garibay, Caitlin Haygood, Sharon Jones, Patti Kishi, Monica Mata, Cindy Mattox, Rebecca McMullen, Kaota Moua, Ismael Munoz, Jenna Nunes, Sophia Ornelas, Maria Orozco, Rocio Ortega, Nancy Reding, Jeff Sabeau, Sandra Sandoval, Cari Urquiza, Bao Vang, Griselda Vasquez, Siouxwyee Vue, Jennifer Xiong

Presentation and Discussion:

All Members

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for April 22, 2021 was motioned /seconded (Jennifer Xiong /Jenna Nunes) and carried.

III. Update Planning Council Contact List

Nancy Reding encouraged all attendees to sign in to maintain an updated contact list.

IV. Notice to the Public

No notices to the public.

V. Chair's Report

No Report.

VI. BHRS Report

Sharon Jones shared about the scaled down outreach event at the main campus yesterday to celebrate May is Mental Health Awareness month. Mental health awareness is very important to enriching and saving lives, so they continue to try to get the word out. The prevention and early intervention team in the various outlying communities and some of their partners are also having events this month. There will also be what is referred to as CALAIM, which is like a restructuring of the system, connected to billing and evidence-based practices. The department is trying to gradually get back to face to face. With things coming back together on June 15 by the governor of this state, BHRS is trying to integrate into the old way of doing things; a lot of Zoom has gone forward with meetings and trainings. BHRS is looking at how to safely move back into scale down face to face meetings. More is to come on that. BHRS is still wearing masks, keeping a 6 feet distance, and taking temperatures of individuals. For future meetings, Nancy Reding commented that many agencies and organizations will continue with the hybrid – it allows people from a distance not to have to travel. Hybrid meetings also help people who otherwise, would not be able to be there. Many people cannot drive nor have transportation. Nancy thinks it would be wonderful if they could all accommodate that. Sharon will pass it on in their planning.

VII. COVID Update

Sharon Jones informed that BHRS are trying to have individuals go back to the Wellness Center with a cap of about 20 people. They are slowly having individuals come back, of course with safety first. The CUBE, which is the TAY Wellness Center, is not open yet but they are having conversations on how to bring individuals back. They have face to face counselling and therapy, still wearing masks, using hand sanitizer, hand washing throughout the day, and keeping the 6 foot distance. They have started a few trainings in person. The Management on Assaultive Behavior (MAB) training has gone forward, and a lot of employee onboarding trainings will be coming back face to face depending on the number of individuals, the size of the room, the 6 feet distance, and still wearing masks. More to come on the COVID update as information is available.

VIII. Update on Annual Update and Innovation Plan

Sharon noted that the Innovation Plan has to be approved by the Mental Health Services Act Oversight and Accountability. They are still working on getting it up to the standards they are requesting. The annual update and the innovation plan were pulled from the Board of Supervisors agenda for the 1st board meeting in June, now it will be the 2nd board meeting in June – this is because of the Mental Health Services Act Oversight and Accountability. They have had several technical assistance calls with them – it has to be

up to the regulation, so that is what they are working on. Sharon said they made a lot of updates. They didn't change the content that was shared at the public hearing but they wanted them to reduce it down and restructure it; not the concept or what was shared, but just a little bit smaller. If all goes well at the MHSOAC's June 24th meeting, there will be a presentation of the innovative plan by Jeff Sabeau, Justice and Community Integration Division Director. Nancy requested the information to be sent out for those that may want to attend. As soon as the OAC sends it out Sharon will forward it to everyone – it is usually sent out a couple days in advance.

IX. Discussion on Community Program Planning Process

Sharon Jones stated that the community program planning process is essential to the work that they do and making sure their voices are heard. It currently operates with a more formal process. The discussion today is about having a process that is ongoing so when they do have an annual update, they already have information collected quarterly from their stakeholders that shows an ongoing progression and is informed throughout the year. The goal is to have it in real time when individuals have comments. Sharon opened the conversation about having this committee revamp the community planning process so that voices can go forward and to feel empowered as a committee. There are stakeholder comment cards that individuals can submit feedback on, focus groups, and key informant interviews – some individuals directly email. Nancy asked Sharon for any recommendations on how she would like to see it enhanced or changed. Sharon said there is some learning from Kings County on how they do it. They have a wonderful process where focus groups happen quarterly. That way it's an ongoing progression of a collection of information in real time so it can be addressed in real time and not just wait until an annual update or three-year plan. They would have quarterly focus groups, quarterly key informant interviews, any meetings, etc. Nancy suggested having a point of contact for comments or recommendations on anything that comes up outside of those quarterly focus groups. Sharon agreed that it keeps the flow of communication open. Nancy asked the council for any comments, recommendations, or changes. She suggested if anybody has any recommendations for the community program planning process that they don't want to share verbally or in the chat, to contact Sharon, Maria, or Caitlin. Sharon suggested a survey be developed and sent out to this committee to fill out anonymously and collect all the recommendations.

X. Governor's Revise

Sharon reviewed the Governor's revise and the categories: Business, Consumer Services and Housing, Corrections and Rehabilitation, Environmental Protection, General Government, Government Operations, Health and Human Services, Higher Education, and K-12 Education. Categories on the radar: Labor and Workforce Development, Transportation, Corrections and Rehabilitation. She said the dollars are going towards those particular core areas. The documents will be sent out for those interested in the changes from the governmental perspective. Sometimes the changes are proposed, and then there are additional revises. There are a lot of core areas in this revise, a lot of legislation, and bills. The link to the document was shared via chat.

XI. Joint Association Letter – Request for MHSA Flexibilities

Sharon informed that many organizations came together and sent a letter asking for flexibilities for MHSA spending including the California Alliance CSEC, CBHDA (California Behavioral Health Director's Association), Mental Health America, NAMI California, REMHDCO (Racial & Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition), and Peers of California. They are calling for flexibility with the Mental Health Services Act requirements as it relates to the public health crisis. All of these organizations are coming together and looking at budget proposal extensions, administration of programs, spending of innovation funds, and all of those requirements they have to follow that may need flexibilities due to the pandemic. These organizations are asking for flexibilities monitoring the expenditures of MHSA and safeguarding innovation funds from reversion due to the public health crisis. Often times, spending may not have been flowing because individuals were not coming in as readily. They are trying to make sure that money is not lost due to the pandemic in terms of reversion amounts having to go back to the state. There are a lot of requirements for Mental Health Services Act: all the components from innovation, CSS, annual updates, and being able to do a community planning process - which is difficult when no one can meet face to face. They did Zoom and virtual but are asking to take into consideration flexibilities. Nancy proposed that they re-examine those flexibilities in about a year or two as a caution. Sharon will present more on that in this meeting.

XII. MHSA Bills

Sharon mentioned that there are many MHSA bills. They are looking at core areas as there are bills in different levels. Some of these include: mental health and older adults, service integration for mental health services for older adults, developing more outcome indicators for older adults and services, and youth mental health boards – they are looking at possibly creating state and local youth mental health advisory boards. They are looking at the Mental Health Services Act early intervention and prevention program, which would be inclusive of substance use as well.

Nancy asked about the website where those bills are located. Sharon said the link would be sent out. Nancy asked if this was through the Mental Health Services Act. Sharon explained that these bills are in reference to the Mental Health Services Act. There are many other bills, but these are some on that particular radar. She mentioned that another one is the mental health program oversight county reporting. There are many bills being proposed at different times; some of them make it to approval and others may

not. Sharon hopes to help familiarize everyone with that there are bills all the time that may be related to some of the work done in this committee. When something is proposed, it doesn't mean that it will be approved, but it does let you see the conversation. Nancy said there is a process if the bill goes through to become law. If anybody has any thoughts, Nancy suggested reaching out to their assembly person or state senator to discuss with their representatives at a local level – that is how Nancy was involved in one of the bills that became law. She said it is possible; they just need to reach out to their elected officials at state level. Sharon said it may be difficult to understand the legislative process. Nancy noted that there is an organizational chart.

XIII. Administrative Updates and Changes

The annual update is scheduled to go to the board on June 22nd. The annual update presented at the public hearing included mobile triage and the crisis team going under the prevention and early intervention MHSA component as one of the changes. The reason is because often times those individuals are not already in treatment in the BHRS system; it is more of a preventative type of approach. Nancy commented that about a decade ago they eliminated the emergency response team, which was very active when she worked for Mental Health; she is glad to see something similar is being implemented again. It also coincides with looking at having a skilled therapist, counselor, or social worker respond to the crisis along with the police. Those that have been around for a while have talked about that and suggested that; Nancy believes that in the 2020's they might witness that implementation. Sharon said it is not approved yet because the annual update has to be approved by the board first for any spending. Nancy Reding suggested that if they have read the updates and agree to them, to please contact their Merced County Supervisor Representative for discussion. Sharon added that all of the annual updates have to go to the Board of Supervisors for approval of spending.

XIV. Possibilities and Success Stories

Monica Adrian, Caring Kids, shared a radio ad from their ACEs Aware campaign that has been airing on 97.5. The ACEs Aware is a campaign that a number of entities are embarking on to inform the community about ACEs and the importance of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) screening. The effort is being led at the state level to increase training for medical providers and to get them a sustainable system so they can bill medical for these screenings. Monica and Sharon Jones are on the team, being led by the Family Resource Center and ACE Overcomers. Behavioral Health has their own ACEs Aware grant, but in the future everyone will be part of this network; they are still at the beginning stages. Sharon added that ACEs is very important to our community. We will have one Merced County trauma informed network of care. Merced County received a planning grant for the Behavioral Health department, MCOE, the Family Resource Center, and ACE Overcomers. Sharon said this is going to be wonderful for our community because of the clinical protocol they are putting in place in terms of behavioral health care, primary care clinics, and all types of programs – it's bringing to the forefront trauma. The research shows that each person at least has an ACE score. When it goes up higher to an ACE score of 10, they really need to be matching the services, the support, and the therapeutic interventions to meet the needs of the individual. Merced County Behavioral Health is preparing to provide those interventions. They want to make sure their practitioners are up to speed clinically to provide the most appropriate care. Merced County has already started through the utilization of Jennifer Johnson from CSU Stanislaus with trauma informed trainings. The goal is to help individuals understand trauma and when the brain becomes unwell, as it leads to their behaviors. Sharon is excited and thinks it is going to be very beneficial. It also calls out the racism that individuals go through with a toxic frequency of ongoing stress. Sharon thinks they are in a great time in Merced County to be having this conversation.

Nancy requested the audio file to be shared and posted on their website as the LGBTQ+ community is really in need of that. Monica Adrian thinks she should have also talked about racism in the radio ad. Nancy thinks it is so vital right now that something like that is happening across the board. The earlier they intervene and seek out assistance for children, the earlier the healing process happens. Monica and Sharon will try to update everyone during these meetings and possibly add it as an agenda item. Nancy recommended that it is always addressed somewhere. Sharon said it is a part of their planning grant and should be a standing agenda item at this meeting and Cultural Competence meetings. Nancy requested updates via email. Just like the focus group, she thinks they should not wait once a year for them. Nancy briefly shared about her experience while working at Children's Services. Monica said it was only about a decade ago when they were trying to talk about the importance of prevention. Nancy doesn't think we like to recognize the damage we're doing. She said we are now accepting that we are doing a lot of damage by not addressing it. Sharon said many partners are part of it– they have meetings twice a week and meetings at BHRS. The goal is to have ACEs Aware across Merced County with MCOE, Behavioral Health, and many other primary care and community organizations as a part of it to really address it. Nancy asked to be contacted if there is anything she can do through the Merced LGBTQ Alliance. John Aguirre shared a document regarding a campaign for mental health about ACES in the LGBTQ community. Nancy shared a different document about recent studies of mental health issues for mainly youth. Maria Orozco will be sending it out.

Jenna Nunes, Sierra Vista Child & Family Services, shared about stigma events this month at Merced High, Buhach, Weaver, and Gustine within a week and half of each other. It was a really good turn out - they got to see students in person, still with masks and being safe, but connected with them in person. They received about 50 -100 surveys back at each site which is great because not all

students were there at one time. In a lot of the feedback, students identified being bullied via virtual platform and said they wanted them in their classrooms. They are in contact with the administration at the different schools. Next year is going to be a big focus on parenting and staff support, and going out to classrooms to do presentations on bullying. Their staff was very busy and Jenna thinks it was a great indicator of the work they will be doing in all the school sites.

Jennifer Xiong, Hlub Hmong Center, shared that along with Faith in the Valley they have secured the unanimous support of the Merced County Board of Supervisors, Merced City Council, and also Merced County Board of Education to condemn Anti-Asian violence and hate. Several resolutions have been approved and they are really proud of the effort to achieve this; it is the first step to accountability. Jennifer shared the details for the API heritage month celebration tonight at 7pm. She invited everyone to join and learn about API heritage month, a little history, and meet some of the Asian API partners in the community. They had a very successful Hmong Mother's Day giveaway in collaboration with local Hmong farmers and businesses – it was the first of this kind of celebration since all the years the Hmong have been here. The Hmong mothers never felt so celebrated and were really grateful. They are looking forward to more events like this to engage, especially parents and moms who have very young children.

Nancy shared an upcoming event on June 1st at Bob Hart Square, starting at 6pm. For the first time in the history of Merced a gay progress flag will be raised up for the whole month. Nancy invited everyone to attend and support. She said there has been a lot of hate talk in newspapers, churches, and people that are threatened by a flag being raised for LGBTQIA+. By 7:30pm there will be an opening for the LGBTQ art exhibit. She mentioned that 2 years ago it was phenomenal. Nancy explained that the progress flag being raised is not the rainbow flag; it is part of it but it also includes a kind of arrow effect with the other colors accepted by transgender. Nancy recommended that flag because she thinks we need to progress with our thoughts. CAN & SLAM will be there with entertainment. Nancy informed that GLSEN now has a chapter. They will be having training for the teachers. One thing that GLSEN, as a chapter for Merced has taken on is that they are never again going to use the word bullying – they are going to call it for what it is: harassment, name calling, assault, etc. They believe the word bullying minimizes what is really happening and the long term effect it has on the child, the children surrounding, parents, and families. Nancy shared that it has been her crusade for about 8 years and it needs to happen. She said we need to take responsibility for calling it exactly what it is and not minimize it.

John Aguirre, LGBTQ Collaborative, shared that about a month and a half ago they were called by one of the local high schools in Merced County. A trans student wasn't being allowed to use the restroom with other students, was made to use the teachers' restroom, and was not allowed to play sports – this was a freshmen transferring from male to female. They were not allowed to use their name in the school records. John explained that they intercede with the local advocates and through the process they help them see the legal error of their ways. They were able to meet with the superintendent and the principal and now the young lady is allowed to use the restroom of her choice and will be given a fair try out for sports. John said it is still happening in Merced County so GLSEN is really important to have right now. Nancy stated that it was Gustine High School. She said it is against the law to do what they were doing; it is an education code. If anyone needs assistance, please contact Nancy or John. Nancy said it was their prejudice, and it needs to be called out. LGBTQ Collaborative was funded through Sierra Health Foundation to train local advocates to serve on stakeholder committees, mental health boards, and to address the board of supervisors about LGBTQ issues. 3 young people from the LGBTQ community in Merced just graduated from their program. They will be working as advocates at different levels of government within the community. John shared the names of those individuals: Jeremy Gibson, Nathan, and Trish Alsterhouse. They will be representing them and will be there to advocate whenever they see an inequity to mitigate that.

Nancy Reding invited everyone to table and attend another event on September 18th. She suggested to be contacted first.

Sharon said there is more to come. A reminder will be sent out in regards to the Annual Update and Innovation Plan going to the Board of Supervisors, along with any other pertinent information. A survey will be developed to capture feedback and information in regards to the community planning process.

Nancy suggested adding announcements because things are coming up and/or people have flyers that can be sent out.

Jose Chavez-Diaz, Golden Valley Health Centers, shared that they have a vaccine van. He shared the list of zip codes where they are able to do the Covid-19 vaccines for organizations or communities that need it. The zip codes are similar to that of the MSHA zip codes served. If anyone is interested he asked that they email him and to organize a Covid-19 vaccine clinic. Nancy asked if they were doing a single or double segment vaccine. Jose said they are doing both.

Nancy will verify the date for the Pride event on September 18th at the next meeting. She suggested checking with the city on details for upcoming events. Nancy informed that the United Methodist Church has been bringing in food for many organizations; it will not be happening for the next 2 weeks. She asked to keep that in mind when working with clients. If there is really a need, the United Methodist Church can be contacted. The drive boxes are non-perishable a good for about 2-4 days depending on the family size.

Sophia Ornelas, Youth-to-Youth Middle School Mentoring Program, gave kudos to Patti Kishi for helping them make a connection. With COVID, they haven't been at the schools with the after school program. They have reached out before and had asked for any connections with Atwater High School to get into that community. Patti connected them with the school counselor and successfully she was a mentee in their program – now she is serving as a counselor at Atwater High School. They will now get things up and running and have their Youth-to-Youth mentoring program out at Atwater and Winton. Sophia thanked Patti and is looking forward to being in all the sites. Patti explained that the contact was because Sierra Vista invited NAMI to the stigma event at Atwater High.

Next Steps

The next meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2021. The announcements item will be added back to the agenda. Sharon will send a reminder in regards to the Annual Update, along with any other pertinent information.

XV. Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.