

# Summary

## Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Ongoing Planning Council

August 27, 2020  
9:00am  
Teleconference

### Present:

Sharon Jones, Fernando Granados, Monica Adrian, Wendy Campbell, Joana Castaneda, Caitlin Haygood, See Her, Heydi Herrera, Patti Kishi, Cindy Mattox, Rebecca McMullen, Jenna Nunes, Maria Orozco, Nancy Reding, Sandra Sandoval, Ralph Silva Rodriguez, Anna Santos, Ye Thao, Tatiana Vizcaino, Micki Archuleta, Cari Urquiza, Cesar Garcia

### Presentation and Discussion:

*All Members*

#### I. Call to Order / Roll Call

#### II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for July 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

Cesar Garcia, Dignity Health, announced the Community Network Project. This will be addressing the social determinants of health in Merced County by creating a network of service providers in the community. With this network they are utilizing an electronic referral platform to connect residents with the available services. If anyone is interested in attending a demo or being part of the network, they can contact Cesar via email. Cesar emailed Maria Orozco and Fernando Granados earlier and provided a brochure with more information, as well as his email address: [cesar.garcia2@dignityhealth.org](mailto:cesar.garcia2@dignityhealth.org). If anyone is interested in seeing a demo of the platform, it is actually a very comprehensive and powerful program that is helping them closely look at the referrals. Many times referrals are sent and they don't even know what happens with that person. With this platform they are able to see if they were served or whatever happened to them. Cesar added that if anyone has any other questions for him to please email him and he will make sure they get to see the demo.

Nancy Reding informed everyone that there is now a GLSEN chapter in Merced. It has a designed board already in place and they will be developing policy procedures as well as bylaws. It is up and going and is called GLSEN Merced. She noted that it is the only chapter north of Los Angeles in California. Fernando asked Nancy if she could explain what GLSEN means, for those who may not know what it stands for. GLSEN stands for Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, specifically designed to work in the schools, with teachers, and the community. It has been around for a long time, and there are many chapters throughout the United States; there are some states without a GLSEN chapter. Nancy asked if anyone had any questions. GLSEN chapters are designed to do presentations, education, and professional development.

Cesar Garcia shared that he is also a part of the Binational Health Week committee in Merced. They will be hosting a Facebook live session on August 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 PM. The Facebook page is BHW Merced. The topic is going to be "Public Charge." Fernando asked if Cesar had any flyers with that information. Cesar will be emailing them to Maria Orozco to ensure all attendees of the council receive the flyer.

#### V. Chair's Report

No Report. Fernando Granados hopes that everyone is doing well and keeping safe.

#### VI. Director's Report

Agenda item tabled.

## **VII. Program Presentation: NAMI Merced County of Merced**

Tatiana Vizcaino, Outreach Director for National Alliance on Mental Illness in Merced County (NAMI), acknowledged that some members of the Ongoing Planning Council also serve or have served their board; she is grateful for their service and contributions. NAMI Merced County's physical location is in downtown Merced, right across the Bank of America parking lot. Their office has been closed since mid-march due to the current pandemic. Their new service location is transitioning in part to the Zoom platform where they are conducting online recovery support groups in English and Spanish, as well as special outreach and education events. Tatiana presented a PowerPoint that was emailed to all members prior to the teleconference. The presentation provided information on the program's mission, vision, funding, prevention and early intervention groups, outreach and education events, goals, contact information, referrals, quarterly report, success stories, and upcoming events.

## **VIII. Update on MHSA Three Year Plan**

Sharon reported that we are working diligently on the three year plan. Sharon noted that Cindy Mattox, the MHSA Staff Services Analyst, takes the lead and is doing a wonderful job trying to sort everything out while working on the draft plan. Sharon explained that it is a pretty large plan with quite a number of funded MHSA actions. The MHSA team is doing their very best to move the three year plan forward; it is currently moving forward fairly well.

## **IX. Update on Community Planning Process**

In terms of the Community Planning Process, focus groups, and the key informant interviews, many needs are coming forth. There are needs for our LGBTQ+ community, youth, support groups, and interventions for youth who are isolated at home; some of it connected to the current health crisis. There is also a need for individuals with intellectual disabilities receiving care. Sharon has done about ten focus groups and noted that individuals are really showing up, speaking, and calling for better services. Sharon shared about yesterday's wonderful focus group for young people. One of the participants was a local pediatrician who was very passionate about individuals receiving help in a timely manner. Participants also brought up the situation at Mercy Hospital including hospitalizations of youth, and being able to place youth in need of a hospitalization for danger to self, danger to others and due to gravely disabled or a mental health condition; there has been great feedback. Jennifer Susskind, a contractor, has been conducting key informant interviews with many of our citizens of Merced County. It's going very well; all of the feedback will be a part of the three-year program plan. For all the focus groups that Sharon facilitates there is a call for action. There is a call to help our youth, our children, improve the access to behavioral health services, support groups, warm lines, and just being there to help families and young people. The youth on the line spoke out very adamantly about doing things a bit different. They have Google Chromebooks and Google Classroom and would like to have support groups that interface with the platforms they already have. There is more to come on that but the focus groups are moving forward. An additional youth related focus group is scheduled today at 2:00 PM, as well as one at 3:00 PM related to the Wellness Centers within our service delivery system.

Nancy Reding commented that with her decades of experience, especially with mental health, there's a strong need of direct services for children, youth and young adults. She personally believes that it needs to be direct services to Behavioral Health & Recovery Services, not Mental Health Services Act. She thinks it is the responsibility of Behavioral Health & Recovery Services to sponsor and fund direct service for the youth of Merced County. Sharon thanked Nancy for her feedback. Sharon noted that during the youth focus group, they also talked about a call to action, access to resources, and having resources not only posted on the BHRS website, but having linkages on the school or community providers' websites to build the safety net to help people.

## **X. Discussion on Program Sustainability Strategies**

At the last Ongoing Planning Council meeting, our director, Genevieve Valentine, talked about cuts possibly up to 25% to Mental Health Services Act funding. Sharon explained that this item was placed on the agenda for a conversation about strategies individuals are using. The economy is in a pretty bad situation and any time that happens, it impacts our bottom line companies such as Behavioral Health and its funding. Sharon wanted to open up a dialogue on the current strategies that programs are using to move towards sustainability.

Monica Adrian, Caring Kids, shared that her first reaction is that they're praying, hoping and wishing. Sharon would like to know how she revamped her program. Monica said they had to reinvent themselves during this time and it has not been

easy, but was necessary. She added that for a while it felt like they were in survival mode, but it's about feeling comfortable with being creative and thinking outside of the box.

Sharon noted that at any given time, even as the MHSA Coordinator for the last 12 years, whatever actions she makes, she always thinks about sustainability and making sure that services are getting to the community. We are diligently working on the three-year plan and as soon as information is given, Sharon will reach out to individuals to update them with the best information.

Nancy Reding shared that she has worked directly or indirectly with Behavioral Health & Recovery Services since it was known as Mental Health. She said it is false security to think it's going to go onto the next year. It is so important to develop some sort of sustainability plan or thought without the moneys being given to your specific organization or non-profit. Nancy has been around when they have made substantial money cuts and thinks it is important to develop sustainability.

#### **XI. Discussion on Development of New Innovation Plan**

Sharon mentioned that Merced County has had two innovation projects. The Innovative Strategist Network for adults is currently active, as well as the Innovative Strategist Network for youth. Each year, funds are allocated towards innovation. With the latest regulations with the state, Innovation money needs to be used on developing new innovative projects and learning. Real soon we will be kicking off Innovation discussions as well. Right now we're having focus groups and we are doing the three-year plan, but there will be upcoming discussions and a timeline in regards to Innovation. There is more to come on that. This was placed on the agenda to alert everyone that Merced County is in need of a new Innovation plan.

#### **XII. DHCS Information Notices Update**

Sharon reported that there are many info notices that have come out. Maria Orozco will send the link out after this meeting so the council can get familiar with the Department of Health Care Services info notices. One that has come out most recently on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 is the Mental Health Services Act allocation and mythology for the fiscal year 2020 /2021 that you can read on that link, as well as Mental Health MHSA related flexibilities during COVID-19 public health emergency. It goes into some flexibility allowed due to the current COVID-19 in terms of moving money out of the prudent reserve if the county chooses to, extending the dates for the three-year plan to July 1, 2021, and allocating certain percentages to make sure programs continue. Under the Mental Health Services Act, the full service partnerships have to operate because that is for individuals with persistent mental health concerns and severe mental illness. The link will be sent out so that everyone can stay up on the info notices as that is one way to keep this committee very informed. There is also a code of regulations for more ICD-10 billing codes. This is all in the Department of Health Care Services info notices, forms, and information. Sharon will start putting that on the agenda.

Monica Adrian asked if information was on that link regarding billing codes for family services for young children who do not have to have a diagnosed mental health condition. This came into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, and Monica thinks it is amazing. Sharon explained that there are a few changes in regards to the diagnosis for Autism, and she will make sure to send it out to the group. Sharon noted that there is a variety of changes within the info notices along with flexibilities that seem to be coming into play, but we have to make sure we're doing due diligence for our community, families, youth, and children.

#### **XIII. Administrative Updates and Changes**

Sharon reported that we are in the midst of three-year plan. The time line has been sent out and can be sent out again. The three-year plan is a huge story to tell in regards to all programs, data, and smart goals. There is an estimated time line and there will be a Behavioral Health Board public hearing. The document will go to the Board of Supervisors for approval; more is to come on that. At the Behavioral Health Board, Sharon will present any upcoming changes or program additions from last year so that the three year plan can be moved forward. After listening to the presentation, the Behavioral Health Board will have to put an action on the floor and move it to the Board of Supervisors.

#### **XIV. Possibilities and Success Stories**

Sharon stated that they have been asking for success stories for the three-year plan from many MHSA providers. The possibilities are limitless. From what Sharon has been hearing in the focus groups, we have very brilliant people and concerned citizens here in Merced County. Sharon thinks we can really have impact in this community. Sharon will start trying to put together virtual support groups for the community. She will facilitate the support groups wearing her MHSA hat

and is working on that right now to give voice to the community. If someone is having difficulty, maybe they can be connected to the support group and receive the help, care, or linkage they need, as well as pertinent education on depression, grief and loss, trauma, parenting, etc.

Fernando noted that with possibilities is also that this is the time when you can voice what you think may be an innovative project for the department to take on. As you're working with clients, struggling, or wishing there was a certain program, Fernando asked that individuals start identifying what those programs might look like so they can provide Sharon that feedback, and so she can start working on that innovation plan. It has to be something that nobody else is already doing or has been done before. It could be something that if we were to dream big, what would that look like.

Micki Archuleta, shared that a long time ago when she was first trying to put together the Alliance, she tried to get a health care provider from Mental Health to be in community support groups, go out into the community and visit the community, rather than having the community come to Mental Health. Micki was never able to do that and it is something she would like to see. Sharon added that it was definitely a request in a lot of the focus groups thus far.

Tatiana Vizcaino, mentioned about hopefully hosting more events online that can address major health concerns by clinicians; that really worked well for them and the response was fantastic. The resources are limited but if we can organize those kinds of virtual town halls with clinicians and mental health professionals, Tatiana thinks that they can address a lot of basic information that people need on how to access services.

Sharon noted that these are all wonderful ideas. As Fernando was speaking to, Innovation is about eliminating those barriers so individuals can really get the care that they require and need in a timely manner. It's about increasing access, improving the quality of services, and building more collaborations. Sharon loves innovation and vision herself because often times when she facilitates focus groups, she hears all the bad stuff but is always thinking in her mind that we can flip this and focus more energy on the flip. Sharon knows that it's very important for individuals to have their voices heard, but innovation allows you to show up with something new.

Monica Adrian asked if there was going to be a time when we could have these meetings on Blue Jeans video platform because she knows Sharon is doing the focus groups on Blue Jeans. Sharon responded that she just had a conversation this morning about trying to implement that. The next meeting will probably be on Blue Jeans video. Monica noted that it is hard to function when we can't see people. Sharon explained that we are trying to make that happen and working on getting permission to possibly have Zoom capability.

Fernando asked if Genevieve had joined the call. Sharon does not think she did because she has been looking at the same 26 people on the call. For future upcoming meeting, Sharon will check if she's not able to make the meeting. If not, she will get the report to report out for her so we can know the posts of Behavioral Health. Fernando suggested bringing back Sharon Mendonca to give a fiscal report, as there has not been a fiscal report in a while. Sharon will contact her.

#### **XV. Next Steps**

Continue with focus groups. Send any innovative ideas to Sharon. The next meeting is scheduled Thursday, September 17, 2020. Hopefully by then we will be able to use Zoom or Blue Jeans App for a video conference.

#### **XVI. Adjourned**

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 AM