

Summary

Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Ongoing Planning Council

September 17, 2020
9:00am
Teleconference

Present:

Fernando Granados, Sharon Jones, Monica Adrian, Micki Archuleta, Alyssa Castro, Christina Celis, Vong Chang, Fernando Granados, Caitlin Haygood, Heydi Herrera, Patti Kishi, Cindy Mattox, Rebecca McMullen, Ismael Munoz, Jenna Nunes, , Sophia Ornelas, Maria Orozco, Nancy Reding, Sandra Sandoval, Anna Santos, Ye Thao, Sia Vue, Joanna Castaneda, Alejandro Jurado, Linda Xiong

Presentation and Discussion:

All Members

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for August 27, 2020 was motioned/seconded (Monica Adrian /Cristina Celis) and carried.

III. Update Planning Council Contact List

Fernando Granados, Chair, encouraged all attendees to confirm their attendance via chat or by emailing Maria Orozco.

IV. Notice to the Public

No notices to the public.

V. Chair's Report

Sierra Vista Child and Family Services has a new CEO Andrew Timby, coming from Maryland. He will be joining Sierra Vista as new CEO on October 5th. No other chair reports.

VI. Director's Report

No report.

VII. Program Presentation: Public Health COPE

Sandra Sandoval and Cristina Celis, Community Health Specialists, presented a PowerPoint on the COPE Public Health program which was emailed to all members. The presentation provided information on their partnership, funding amount, program scope, objectives, target and priority population, service location, members served annually, Fiscal Year 2019-2020 objective results, COVID-19 new strategies and implementations, virtual campaigns and classes, challenges and limitations, success stories, upcoming classes and workshops, and contact information.

Sia Vue, Hlub Hmong Center asked, with the people served in outreach, how many adults were Southeast Asian and if any outreach material was available for the Southeast Asian community in their home language. Christy Celis responded that they would have to look back at their database and run the numbers to look at it more demographical. Public Health currently has a survey with questions on ethnicity and will report back to Sia with that data. Public Health currently does not have any outreach resources for individuals besides English and Spanish. Christy asked Sia if she knew of anyone who would be interested in translating that information.

VIII. MHSA Boot Camp

Sharon Jones informed that the Mental Health Services Act Boot Camp, usually face to face in Sacramento, has been occurring in individual virtual sessions. Yesterday's session provided information on innovation, workforce education, and training. Maria Orozco will forward a link so the council can review some of the information, and stay updated on MHSA.

IX. Overview of Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

Sharon Jones provided some of the feedback from the focus groups and key informant interviews. Some of the strengths identified included: Highly experienced caring staff or people, diverse stakeholders that participated and reflected the community interests, and the collaboration of First 5 with the Caring Kids program. Caring Kids is doing very well with parent to parent connections, empowering families, building confidence for families, and providing tools for families. The CUBE was mentioned as a safe place for at risk students and youth that are homeless. The Navigation Center was also mentioned. Mental Health Services Act gave 4 million

dollars towards the Navigation Center for the homeless in an effort to bring health and healing to the lives in Merced County. The Older Adults System of Care, operated by AAA Human Services Agency currently has a nurse and may be adding a clinician. Other opportunities for collaboration include schools, educators and administrators, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Some of the challenges include: capacity issues, difficulty in hiring and retaining staff, being a professional shortage area with over half of the county underserved, access to services, the digital divide, the need for more clinicians and substance services for youth in the criminal justice system, more crisis services and support for uninsured individuals, low income, high rates of trauma, community violence, services being too traditional and not non-traditional enough to meet needs from a cultural perspective. Heydi Herrera, Golden Valley Health Centers, asked if there was any feedback provided on how non-traditional was defined. Sharon thinks they were referring to the western ways of doing things with the talk therapy as opposed to maybe circles or things of that nature. In addition, African Americans do not believe the system is friendly towards them nor the services are culturally relevant. For LGBTQ+ there is ongoing homophobia, transphobia and ignorance among service providers. For Hmong, Laotian and Ming, the elder population has multiple issues compounding their mental health. For Latino Latin X Hispanic community, there are insufficient services, especially bilingual services. Immigrants and migrant farm workers have elevated levels of stress, fear, misinformation, ongoing stigma, isolation, and need for resources in their language.

Fernando Granados asked if focus groups were all completed. Sharon confirmed that focus groups are done. Sharon will be having more forums to keep the conversation going for more support, healing and help. Any feedback can be sent to Sharon. Monica Adrian, Caring Kids, asked if there was more diverse community participation than there was historically as mental health and stress has risen due to the pandemic. Sharon enjoyed the focus groups and the diverse audience of young people who came on and advocated strongly for themselves. It brought the community together and the transportation issue was resolved. Monica suggested virtual focus groups in the future, even after the pandemic, to help with transportation. Sharon thinks focus groups are so great due to the diversity, the difference, acceptance, and honoring everyone's voice. Monica noted that the youth focus group was all over social media; she had never seen anything like that before as far as the reach to get people to come. Sharon also shared that the Caring Kids online playgroups provided structure and happiness for young people. If anyone needs more information, Sharon asked that they reach out to her.

X. Draft Three Year Plan

Sharon hopes the three year plan draft is posted by Friday for 30 days for everyone's viewing and to collect all feedback. The draft is about 300 pages and has to be appropriate before being posted. It is moving quickly as the Behavioral Health director, Genevieve Valentine, has set a date for the public hearing and within our timeline for October 20th.

XI. Upcoming Public Hearing

The Behavioral Health Board public hearing will be held on October 20th. Information will be sent out right away, and there will also be a press release.

XII. Administrative Updates and Changes

No administrative updates or changes; everything is moving status quo. Fernando asked if contracts previously approved to a 6 month period have to wait until the three year plan is done and all information is gathered, or if they are set for three years if they have already been awarded that. Sharon said that right now they are approved until December. The update will come in the three year plan. Sharon informed that all contracts will be rate based. Whatever service is provided, there will be a rate attached as well as deliverables. Sharon explained to Fernando that it will be for all Community Services and Support as well as PEI. The goal is to align all contracts with rate-based, depending on the contract. Fernando asked if they are looking to start this in January or the next fiscal year. Sharon said that we are moving toward January 2021. As some of the contracts are amended, they are looking at getting them on a rate-based. Fernando is concerned that we are in the middle of a pandemic so programs are going to struggle with that and transitioning to a rate-based. He hopes the department takes into consideration the pandemic and considers starting next fiscal year versus January. He thinks it may be hard to start a rate-based in the middle of a pandemic without access to all clients. Monica Adrian thought about how we employ staff with the uncertainty if we meet the goal. She wondered if it could be based on prior year performance, to at least know the budget for the current year. Monica thinks it would be difficult to plan an entire year and assure employment if we are only being reimbursed by the work done. Monica asked if we were tapping in to the prudent reserve. Sharon responded that we are not tapping into the prudent reserve at this time and there is more to come. Monica hopes it won't be too much of a shift and agreed with Fernando that this is probably not the time to start something so different. Sharon will take all concerns, brief all the necessary parties, and follow up with an email update. Sharon asked everyone to please take a look at the draft. She asked that they attend the public hearing to really hear their voices and advocate.

Nancy Reding requested the link to be sent out. Nancy doesn't know how much more the LGBTQ community can advocate, as they have done it for years and participated in many focus groups. The link for the draft plan will be sent out along with the press release when they get the okay to send to all stakeholders; it will also be posted on the official Merced County website. If individuals request

a copy it can be sent to them.

Fernando knows the focus groups shape the three year plan, and the plan shapes funding for the future. He knows that the full purpose of the focus groups was to see if the needs of the community continued to be the same or if these have changed. Based on what is gathered, Fernando asked if there have been changes and if there is going to be new opportunity for other programs to come to the forefront, as there is now a need of the community that maybe before it was not. He asked if there are programs at risk right now of not being funded because their service is no longer a community need. Fernando thinks it is something we need to have conversation about instead of reading about it in a three year plan. Sharon noted that a conversation will happen at the public hearing. As the three year plan is reviewed and concerns come to the fore front, everyone is encouraged to speak out at the Behavioral Health Board and the public hearing to give their feedback. The three year plan updates all the great work done the year before and all of the data, including the health crisis; it gives stakeholders a snapshot of the work that we've done and how we're going to continue moving forward.

In terms of being a contractor or provider there's a lot of fear, even with BHRS, of uncertainty in terms of fiscal sustainability and accountability. Sharon noted that we are doing due diligence to keep everything going. When you look at the health professional shortage area and data, Merced County is a professional shortage area. At the time, our population was 251,000 and almost over half of the population was underserved shortage population. About 75,000 in Merced County may not be underserved. Currently we are at 281,000 people and close to one third of the population are unserved. When we look at the feedback from today and 12 years ago, it is the same around service delivery. This is due to not knowing about resources, not making it over, and not enough practitioners; there's a huge need and demand, but how can we help each person heal one step at a time? The three year plan is the best effort to help each person heal one step at a time and make sure that staff is trauma informed. It is to ensure that we are moving toward health and healing with cultural humility. That is why voices are needed. The ultimate goal is to make sure that we provide some type of care for this community. We do not have unlimited resources but want to do the very best as resources allow.

Nancy Reding commented that she knows Sharon does the best she can and truly believes she is the middle person. She appreciates Sharon and agrees with what Fernando says. Sharon noted that another part of the work that we do in being stakeholders in the community is making sure our voices are heard and making sure that action is linked to the voices.

Patti Kishi, NAMI Merced, asked if Sharon could explain the timeline. Sharon explained that the three year plan starts in 2020/2021 until the Board of Supervisors approves it. It starts as soon as their contract is executed and approved by the board. Once the Board of Supervisors approves whatever action is under the three year plan, the work can begin. If there is an amendment or an update that needs to be done, then the work begins when the Board of Supervisors signs off on it and approves it. For the three year plan timeline, we are on a fast track to get it to the board in November of this year. The public hearing is on October 20th, and after that it goes to the Board of Supervisors after that. Sharon noted that we are trying to get it to the state in December. Sharon asked that they email her for clarity or any further questions.

Fernando understands the three year plan, as it is to highlight the successes we have had. He thinks it goes beyond that and is also to voice the needs of the community. With the focus groups and the data being gathered, Fernando asked if there are things coming to the forefront of possibilities to fund possible future programs. Sharon explained that right now there will not be any new programs. Fernando asked why, if the community is saying there is a need for that program. He added that LGBTQ come to these meetings to talk about needs in that community and some funding has been done to that community, but is still not enough to meet the need.

Fernando asked, if that community is coming to the forefront and saying they have a need and it's being heard across the different generations within different groups, why is that we're not able to say there is going to be funding opportunities for this group, for the organization to work with this group and the community need. Sharon explained that it is as resources allow and as decisions are made administratively. Within the three year plan there is a table that will address any new programs, actions within the draft plan, and answer questions in regards to any changes.

Monica Adrian suggested a page of service gaps as an ongoing basis. Even if funds aren't available right now, at least there could be a record every year of what identified gaps to draw back on as historical data. Sharon explained that this will be in the Community Planning Process. Jennifer Susskind identified the full voice of the community, the gaps, things that were working, and things that we need. This could be a historical document within the three year plan. Sharon noted that more correspondence is to come and they can email her as well. There is so much need in this community and Sharon agrees it has been verbalized over and over that the LGBTQ+ community needs support. When speaking to the African American or Latino community and youth, there is such a huge need. Sharon suggested coming up with innovative ways to provide some type of support and more collaboration because the need is across the board.

Micki Archuleta mentioned that the LGBTQ+ community has said they needed funds for a long time and if there's no room for them to join the table, then they should tell them now. Sharon responded that this is just one funding stream. Over the next one to five years,

the funding is slated to go down 25%. For the last 11 years that Sharon has been here, there's been more money available. We are now in a health crisis and the need is greater than ever due to stress, overwhelm, and compounding issues. Under MHSA funding, we are looking at a 25% cut over the next couple of years and that has to be taken into consideration as well. With her MHSA community hat, Sharon is advocating as much as possible for changes that are going to help people get better with their care. Sharon hears the LGBTQ+ community, the Latino community, and the young people. Sharon is open to passing along any strategic things they feel we can do because she is really about community health and getting creative to help people.

Fernando mentioned the prudent funds. He asked, if we don't use them now during a pandemic, when we are going to use them and what are they for. Monica agreed, if not now, there's never going to be a time when we draw on them. Sharon noted that we also have other requirements and the prudent reserve is for our most severely mentally ill individuals: our full service partnership participants and 51% has to be for our young people 17 and below. Sharon noted that everyone's feedback is very important. It will be recorded in the minutes and she will definitely make sure to brief on all of their concerns.

XIII. Possibilities and Success Stories

Patti Kishi shared about NAMI's educational outreach event "What is a 5150 hold?" on September 29th, 6:00 PM via Zoom. Patient Advocate, Kris Kraushar will be providing information and there will be Spanish simultaneous interpreting. The flyer will be sent out to everybody. This is the first of a series of educational outreach opportunities they hope to have to help educate the community and meet needs. Individuals can contact NAMI if they have any other ideas of areas that anyone is concerned might be appropriate.

Christina Celis shared that individuals who historically didn't have access to educational classes have now been able to access them. Historically, visually impaired individuals don't really come to Merced because they don't have access to transportation. Christina shared about the classes they have been conducting for them. She provided her contact information for anyone interested in collaborating or who would like to have them facilitate stress or crisis disease prevention classes.

Sharon will be providing virtual support groups to young people on Friday, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM. She will be establishing support groups for families as well. Flyers will be dispersed and word will be put out to the schools.

XIV. Next Steps

The next meeting is scheduled Thursday, October 15, 2020.

XV. Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 AM