

**Access to Health & Human Services Workgroup of the**  
**CJCC Early Intervention & Prevention Committee**  
**August 2, 2022 at noon via Zoom**

**Present:** Trish Chandler, Naomi Morris, Kalene Engel, Chris Meyer, Amy Sixty, Andy Kranz, Karin Sonneman, Anne Vandenberg, Marie Kovecsi

**Minutes by:** Kalene Engel

**Approve Minutes of July 5, 22 Meeting:** Minutes were approved by consensus.

**Discussion of Access to Health & Human Services Survey:** Chris thanked everyone who took the survey and Kalene for creating the report. County administration reviewed the report and felt that it was helpful tool to identify opportunities for improvement. Karin noted that HHS is the most complex department in the county and that some of the issues identified have existed for a long time. It was acknowledged that access to the programs is made more difficult by the way the state administers programs, including arcane software and state mandates. Attendees also acknowledged the importance of advocating for changes at the state level. Many of the suggestions fell into two main categories: (1) providing more education/information about the available services and how to access them and (2) having a single point of contact for a person who wished to access services at HHS.

- **Education:** Post-training surveys from the last several months of WRAP+ Trainings have confirmed a need for more training on how adults with mental health needs can access benefits (SMRT, Waiver, MNChoices, etc). Recently, the Juvenile Justice Committee completed a mapping of the system, using flowcharts and written processes. A similar approach could be helpful to increase knowledge and awareness of how to access mental health services. Naomi believed that DHS would be open to providing increased training, but were experiencing significant challenges right now due to understaffing caused by retirements, resignations and lengthy delays in replacing vacated positions. In addition, due to the state of the economy, more and more people are applying for benefits, increasing the workload. Anne Vandenberg noted that WSU was always looking for internships for students and planned to connect with Karen Sanness after the meeting.
- **Single Point of Contact:** DHS has tried different models of service deliver over the years, including a single point of contact. Here too, the lack of staff is a challenge. Karin noted that there is a new statute for Rule 20s in criminal cases that requires the appointment of a navigator to assist persons in navigating services. She suggested that advocacy efforts at the state could be used to lobby for additional positions for persons who were not involved in the criminal justice system.

- **Suggestions:** Suggestions for addressing the above issues included the following (note that not all of these are something that can be done by this workgroup):
  - Research what other counties are doing to provide information/education and better access to DHS programs.
  - At the appropriate time, have Winona DHS provide training and record it for future use.
  - Continue to utilize other opportunities for trainings, i.e. Navigator Network, monthly CJCC meetings, WRAP+ Trainings.
  - Locate other trainings (local, state) that could fill information gaps.
  - Try to determine why the hiring process is so lengthy and what could be done to shorten that process so that vacancies can be filled more quickly.
  - Provide data to the county board on the need for new positions with supporting information (i.e. the poverty guidelines are changing on 9/1 so more persons will be eligible for services or the recommended case load for XX position is XX). This could possibly include a personnel study/analysis.

**Review of Tips for Communicating with HHS:** Karen Sanness reviewed and revised the Tips Sheet prior to the meeting. Kalene will finalize the edits and provide it to the workgroup with the minutes.

**Workplan and Discussion of Next Steps:** See above discussion under Suggestions.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 1:02 pm

**Next Meeting:** September 6, 2022 at noon