

GREATER NASHUA CONTINUUM OF CARE MEETING MINUTES

Nashua City Hall Auditorium

August 1, 2012 @ 8:00AM

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Wendy LeBlanc, Chair called the meeting to order at 8:05AM. Introductions were made by all, and the attendance sheet passed for signatures. Newcomers were asked to add their email to the list if they would like to be added to the GNCOC mailing list. Wendy explained the meeting format for new attendees. The minutes of June 6, 2012 were reviewed. The minutes will be changed to reflect that Sara Brisk from the Nashua Housing Authority indicated they had met with Bronstein residents, not Sara Knoy. A motion to accept the minutes was made by B. Alves, which was seconded by L. Wilshire. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Presentation: Healthcare programs for vulnerable populations

Representatives from three organizations: Lamprey Health, the Greater Nashua Mental Health Center and Harbor Care Health & Wellness Clinic provided information on the work their programs do in the community.

Lamprey Health Center:

Mariellen Durso, Executive Director of Lamprey Health Center, indicated that their goal was to provide primary care to vulnerable populations in the community. They recognize that barriers to care can include financial, transportation and employment issues.

Through programs such as Lamprey's, access for all has improved over the years. They currently serve 6,000 patients and see an average of 125 to 175 new patients per month.

Changes in funding have had a dramatic impact on their ability to deliver services making it harder to meet needs. Mariellen recognized that the Nashua community has been supportive of their efforts and that they enjoy strong collaborations with Southern New Hampshire Medical Center, St. Joseph Hospital and Dartmouth Hitchcock. Dartmouth makes two providers available to see patients at Lamprey. St. Joe's and SNHMC provide specialty network support so that Lamprey patients can be referred to specialists when needed.

Mariellen and Rossy Lopez shared a video about Lamprey with GNCOC members.

Healthy Connections – Greater Nashua Mental Health Center

Mara Huberlie presented information about the Healthy Connections program offered at Greater Nashua Mental Health Center. The program started three years ago. It is funded through 2013. The program strives to treat the whole person by bringing the body and mind together in an integrated care model.

Mara indicated that the life expectancy of a person with mental illness was 53 years and that the major cause of death was not suicide, but instead untreated chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, etc. Prior to the program, it was difficult to bring the medical and mental health aspects together, but to date the program has involved over 650 GNMHC clients. The goal is to serve up to 800 through the end of the grant.

Clients served are involved in the Community Service Program, an area where there is the greatest need. Those in the program are screened every six months. Data collected in the program is being

analyzed at/by the University of Connecticut to better assess the physical/mental health status of the participants.

The program offers two offices on the first floor of the building at 15 Prospect St. Dartmouth Hitchcock furnished the offices because of the move to their new building.

Healthy Connections has established a strong partnership with the HEARTS Peer Support program and offers wellness programs at their site on a regular schedule, including a consumer-driven group offered under the direction of a nurse/educator.

Program has received national attention; Mara has presented information about Healthy Connections in Washington and Baltimore. Idea of integrated care is becoming better known and the program in Nashua serves as a model.

Different components of the program are working together to develop a sustainability plan that will allow it to continue after the initial funding period is over.

Harbor Care Health and Wellness Clinic

Kristine Howard presented information on the Harbor Care Health and Wellness Clinic. The clinic is located at Harbor Homes at 45 High Street and provides services primarily to the homeless and residents of transitional housing programs. They serve/have served around 900 clients and are very busy.

The program is part of the Partnership for Successful Living and comes under Harbor Homes. In addition to the homeless population, the clinic serves Veterans and works to connect them with other services that are available to them.

The majority of their patients come to them because they are homeless; having the clinic facility conveniently located at Harbor Homes allows them to address quickly their medical needs as housing solutions are sought.

In addition to addressing the medical needs of their patients, the clinic also helps get them enrolled in available benefit programs and provides care coordination. They provide health education and prescription assistance through the program at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center.

They have recently opened a satellite site at Keystone Hall on Amherst Street where they are able to help clients in the recovery programs offered there.

Wendy opened the floor to questions:

Availability of dental services: The Greater Nashua Dental Connection is used by the agencies to access dental care for their patients. Mariellen noted that patients who present with dental needs often have medical needs that are the result of poor/non-existent dental care. Lamprey addresses those needs first then makes a referral to the Dental Connection. Harbor Homes has built a relationship with a local dentist who provides services when needed and also refers to the Dental Connection; the Harbor Care Clinic also has dental equipment and is working towards being able to add that to the list of services they provide.

Financial eligibility of clients served: All agencies work with clients on a sliding scale basis. They work to connect clients to financial support programs that they may be eligible for (Medicaid, etc.) and offer repayment plans that allow them to pay over time. Mariellen noted that clients often use their tax refunds to pay for the services her agency provides.

Length of wait time for services: Mariellen indicated that they triage patients according to their needs and that someone in need of immediate help is seen quickly while those with less pressing needs are scheduled accordingly.

Kathy Paquette from Southern New Hampshire Services praised the quick response she had from the Harbor Care Clinic staff the day before. They provided immediate service to a client in crisis who, if she had had to wait, would have left unattended.

How will Healthy Connections be sustained when the grant ends: Mara indicated that they have begun working on how to sustain this valuable program past the 2013 end of the grant. They are assessing the various “parts” of the services being offered in an effort to have partners in the project assume some or all of the responsibility of those portions. The partnership with HEARTS Peer Support was given as an example. She also noted that it is being recognized by funders that the program serves a “high using population” and that the program is producing measurable results. These positive results will be used to seek additional funding to sustain the program into the future.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:00AM.

Minutes taken by Beth Todgham, Southern New Hampshire Services