

# Summary

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

April 16, 2019

9:00am

Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Department  
Teleconference

### Present:

Monica Adrian, Alyssa Castro, Fernando Granados, Caitlin Haygood, Heydi Herrera, Sharon Jones, Adam Lane, Cindy Mattox, Rebecca McMullen, Marilyn Mochel, Jenna Nunes, Maria Orozco, Nancy Reding, Anna Santos, Tatiana Vizcaino, Andrea Hogue, Wendy Campbell, Susan Coston, Rosie Martinez, Jesse Ornelas, Griselda Vazquez

### Presentation and Discussion:

*All Members*

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

#### II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for, 2019 was motioned/seconded (Monica Adrian /Nancy Reding) and carried.

#### III. Update Planning Council Contact List

Fernando Granados, Chair, encouraged all attendees to email their names and organization to Maria Orozco to track conference call participation.

#### IV. Notice to the Public

Andrea Hogue, parent and educator, expressed her concerns about availability of mental health services to the LGBTQ community in Merced, the awarding and the use of money for LGBTQ and that MHSA does not appear to be supportive with the LGBTQ community in Merced. Andrea would appreciate transparency in use of money, communication with personnel, and a plan to help the LGBTQ population in Merced. Nancy Reding thanked Andrea Hogue for her comment. Nancy stated that it has been an ongoing issue, and hopes to see some changes. \$30,000 has been awarded for services but Nancy thinks more is needed. Nancy questions those services as none of the two grantees ever contacted LGBTQ Alliance for any feedback or consulting.

#### V. Chair's Report

No report. Fernando Granados encouraged everyone to check with coworkers on a regular basis during COVID-19 as many are working in isolation and practicing social distancing.

#### VI. Director's Report

Sharon Jones apologized on behalf of Genevieve Valentine, Director of BHRS, as she was not able to participate on the call. Sharon will brief the director on the conversations from today's meeting. Sharon added that they are speaking about flexibility of spending due to COVID-19. They are coming up with strategic ways to lift some of the regulations so the needs of the community can be met.

#### VII. MHSA Program Update Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Public Hearing

Sharon informed that the program update to fiscal year 2019-2020 annual update was discussed in a special meeting. The public hearing is coming up to further discuss the program update with the Behavioral Health Board. This will be a conference call possibly by May 5, 2020. As soon as the date is out, everyone will be alerted and the agenda will be posted. The program update is providing prevention and early intervention services as a result of leveraging the Navigation Center. The Navigation Center will help individuals living homeless from a prevention and early intervention lens. A blue jeans trial run will be done with the Behavioral Health Board.

#### VIII. COVID-19 Community Expansion Referral Pathway Innovative Strategist Network

Sharon Jones stated that COVID-19 has brought disruption to families, communities, and workplaces. The Innovative

Strategist Network is approved by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability. Administratively, there was a decision to open another pathway for the Innovative Strategist Network. Currently, there are about 13 different pathways in which referrals can come in such as Marie Green, out of county psychiatric placement, outreach and engagement, triage, and mobile crisis. The Innovative Strategist Network is approved for 6.8 million dollars. The ISN project will end February 21<sup>st</sup> 2023. The new pathway with Human Services Agency will be to address the barrier of individuals living homeless, at risk of homelessness, and who are becoming unwell with a mental health concern. This expansion will carry out the same scope as the Innovative Strategist Network, with elimination of barriers to care. Sharon clarified she was referring to the Adult ISN, for age 18 and above. The Youth ISN is moving forward according to how it is supposed to be implemented. Per request of Monica Adrian and Fernando Granados, the ISN contact information and ISN referral form will be sent out to everyone. Monica Adrian asked about the referral process that HSA contracted partners would need to follow. Sharon said it would probably have to go through HSA. As Sharon gets more information and finds out about HSA's protocol, it will be sent out to everyone as well.

#### **IX. Central Region Workforce, Education and Training**

This is a 60 million dollar project where counties are asked to leverage workforce, education and training money. There will be a central region lead, a person that leads this work. Several programs can be offered such as undergraduate college and university scholarships, clinical master's and doctoral graduate education stipends, long repayment programs, employee retention programs, and pipeline development to build up the public mental health system. Sharon thinks this money will be funded through Cal MHSA, and then each region will get a certain amount of money. The central region will be getting about 8 million dollars for these programs. It's an opportunity to build, grow and support the workforce. In the past, it has helped many individuals with student loan forgiveness, such as going through a hardship and not being able to pay back student loans. As Sharon participates in the Central Region meetings, she will keep everyone well informed and will let everyone know about time frames and criteria if there is a particular action that can benefit Merced County. Sharon summarized that this is a 5 year project of about 60 million dollars to help the public mental health system for retention, student loans, repayment, scholarships, etc.

#### **X. MHSA Program Operations**

Sharon stated that MHSA program operations were covered in our PEI Quarterly Meeting. With the disruption and changes of COVID-19 many programs are not operating fully to the scope identified in their contracts, or in terms of implementing the work for internal programs. In speaking with our new director, Genevieve Valentine, meetings will be set up for a further discussion to make sure we are maximizing what we are supposed to do and that our community is still getting the needed support through all of our MHSA dollars, actions, and approved programs. The conversation will also be about the best way to implement programs, barriers, and things we can do to still provide behavioral health care and support. Many program filled out a form, stating how they are operating during this time. At this time, we still do not know when things are going back to where we can at least be around people. We may be reaching out to programs if we need more information. If programs are billing MHSA, there has to be some type of work they are doing in order to bill it. There has to be a contingency plan, a way that programs are still going to carry out the scope, and let us know about that plan. More conference call type meetings will be set up by the end of this month so everyone can attend and get questions answered by the Behavioral Health director or leadership.

#### **XI. Data Tracking and Collection**

Sharon reminded programs to collect whatever they are doing during this time. If they are supporting a COVID-19 effort, data is still needed. Everyone knows that COVID-19 is a serious issue going on, but programs still need to track data and do quarterly reports. Sharon liked the virtual playgroups by Monica Adrian. Sharon added that this is a time for innovation and getting creative. If programs are having virtual groups, they need to document how many playgroups were held, how many people attended, and any comments. If there are concerns, Sharon asked that programs please reach out right away to brainstorm and come up with other avenues. Monica Adrian thinks general data collection procedures are easier to collect and that it may be almost impossible to get all the demographics and specifics while doing this work virtually. Monica can easily collect how many groups or families participate, but cannot get their information with all other people on. Sharon does not want people to say they could not get information during this time. The next step would be a conversation with the director on individuals getting paid and not being able to show what they have done. Sharon

clarified this was meant for the whole group. Once again, Sharon asked everyone to tell the story the best that they can and collect what they can during this time.

## **XII. Administrative Updates and Changes**

The only change is the Innovative Strategies Network expansion. We are moving toward a public hearing for the program update and looking towards setting up groups to talk about operations for MHSA programs. Fernando Granados asked if all the programs going out for RFP have gone out. Sharon explained that there are still some in the queue ready to come out. If not, what will happen is they will just be extended for another year and go out after that. Requests were received to delay the Integrated Primary Care by a month due to everything going on in terms of health care and COVID-19.

## **XIII. Possibilities and Success Stories**

Sharon stated that she heard the testimonies of our citizens in regards to the LGBTQ community. There are two actions and two approved supportive actions on the floor with Merced Lao Family and Youth Leadership Institute. Our next meeting is cultural competence but the goal is to make sure that we are moving forward community health. Never in the last 12 years has a program been approved under MHSA with no positive movement, actions, or accountability. It's required by the state that we are held accountable, tell the story, and show what has happened with the use of the dollars. During this time there is a specific need for every cultural group. Sharon asked that they email her if anyone is having any barriers. Sharon reminded everyone about the Innovative Strategist Network, designed to help with barriers. Monica Adrian asked about Cultural Competency being hosted through conference calls. Sharon informed that Cultural Competency will be after this call, beginning at 10:05 am. Nancy Reding provided Monica with the phone call information.

The LGBTQ community is aware that BHRS and MHSA are moving forward slowly. Nancy Reding's concern about the accountability is that their moneys were put in the same pot of what Lao Family is doing. The tracking would be difficult and Nancy thinks they need to be separate. She noted that Lao family has not presented on the new moneys they received for LGBTQ. Sharon assured that presentations can happen and thinks there will be an opportunity when the director gets familiar with all programs. Nancy mentioned that LGBTQ Alliance would love to meet with the new director concerning the Merced County LGBTQ population. Sharon sent the director a copy of all the MHSA programs and contacts. She thinks more meetings will grow out of the initial meetings with our director. Sharon will check with the director to look at her approach, and will reach out to everyone. Nancy thanked Sharon for being an advocate. She believes there have been barriers where Sharon has not been successful due to barriers to make sure there is funding for the LGBTQ. Nancy said they are looking to assist Sharon and any of the grantees. Sharon hears they need support and help. Sharon added that we are looking at having a needs assessment as it has not been done in Merced County by an outside vendor since 2005. There are many opportunities to shape the programming and make sure that individuals are getting the support and help they need. Nancy said that Sharon has worked with LGBTQ to get focus groups, and the community appreciates that. This is the first year, 2019-2020, that any money has been spent through MHSA. Nancy noted, there are many cultural issues but LGBTQ just had attention this past year. The idea is to always move toward more culturally specific interventions and strategies. In the next meeting, we will be looking for each program to establish objectives on how they will meet the needs of the underserved community. This action will be initiated in the Cultural Competence Committee. Nancy appreciates that and hoped the objectives would have been outlined in the grant proposal. Sharon explained there is always a scope of work, smart goals and objectives in every contract for all programs to build capacity even further. Sharon thanked Nancy and everyone for the feedback. Sharon will brief the director.

Jesse Ornelas, Youth Leadership Institute program manager, emailed Sharon regarding concerns of the LGBTQ Alliance and barriers they are having as an organization. The project lead was tragically injured in a car accident, which will be a barrier. YLI has a plan going forward on how they will meet. They are trying to reach out to LGBTQ Alliance, which they have been doing in the past and throughout the year through Alyssa Castro. They are also going to reach out to Lao Family to see how they can help. Sharon noted that a conference call could be set up if YLI needs any support. Nancy volunteered to be part of that conference call. They have not talked to anybody in the last year about the needs of the LGBTQ community. They need a needs assessment and Nancy said that LGBTQ Alliance is available if they want to reach out. Allyssa Castro has been trying to help with the LGBTQ Alliance youth. Sharon said they will move toward a presentation to let everyone know what is happening with the best information. Before bringing other individuals in, Sharon suggested having meetings about expectations for all the contracts and changes with COVID-19. This will

possibly be early May 2020. Then there will be a presentation in terms of the rationale work and our strategies for moving the work forward for the LGBTQ community. More is to come and we will move forward in a positive way. The director will soon be on these calls and on board. Sharon thinks it is successful that we are operating. Everyone has all had to come up with unique strategies and still be there for the community.

Fernando asked if program presentations would continue each month. Sharon responded that presentations can be continued via teleconference. Presenters will need to send their PowerPoint and information. Monica Adrian asked for the possibility to move this to Zoom or other virtual format. This is to be determined, as Sharon would not like to encounter technical issues. Local county government works a certain type of way with restrictions and approvals. Merced Lao Family is scheduled to present in the next meeting. The idea is to inform the community and stakeholders the nature of their work and what it involves. Sharon will make contact with Paul Thao to get them on the agenda and ask if they will be presenting on one specific program or all. Nancy Reding requested the PowerPoint to be sent out before the presentation.

**XIV. Next Steps**

Sharon will look into the possibility of using Zoom for the next Ongoing Planning Council. Merced Lao Family will be presenting next month. Meetings will be set up in terms of MHSA operations and program scope of work by the end of this month. There will be a public hearing.

**XV. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 am.