

**PIERCE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

3:00 – 4:16 p.m.
February 14, 2022

Members: Cameron Birk, Absolute Ministries
Chris Ladish, MultiCare
Dana Orr, Pierce County Aids Foundation - absent
Danelle Reed, Kwawachee Counseling
Elizabeth Grasher, JBLM
Hayley Smith, Metropolitan Development Council
Jeannie Larberg, Whole Child Counselor Services
Kimberley Bjorn, Elevate Health
Chief Lauren Wallin, Pierce County Sheriff's Department
Lovey Offerle, NAMI
Ronald Brightmon, Recovery Innovations - absent

Non-Voting Chair: Heather Moss, Director, Pierce County Human Services

Members: Dr. Anthony Chen, Director, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
Tiffany Speir, City of Lakewood
Vicky McLaurin, City of Tacoma

Staff: Richard VanCleave, BH Manager, Pierce County Human Services
Arrika Rayburn, BH Program Specialist, Pierce County Human Services
Taffi Wheeldon, Program Specialist, Pierce County Human Services
Becki Foutz, Administrative Assistant, Pierce County Human Services

Guests: Bruce Dougherty, Pierce County Veterans Advisory Board Chair
Greg Gooch, Pierce County Veterans Advisory Board Vice Chair
Robert Sheetz, Pierce County Veterans Manager
Elizabeth Allen, TPCHD
Joe Contris, Community Health Plan of WA

MINUTES

| TOPIC/ WHO | DISCUSSION | ACTION |
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| Call to Order/ Welcome | Heather welcomed all! | Welcome! |
| Roll Call | Roll of voting members was called per above. | Thank you for coming! |

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| December Minutes Approval | Heather asked if there were any questions or comments about last month's meeting minutes? Kimberley Bjorn moved that the minutes of the 12/21 meeting be accepted as presented. Jeannie Larberg seconded the motion. The motion passed. | Minutes of the 12/21 meeting were approved as presented. |
| Veterans Advisory Board Presentation | <p>Heather introduced Robert Sheetz, Pierce County Veterans Services Manager, who introduced the Chair and Vice Chair of the Veterans Advisory Board, Bruce Dougherty, and Greg Gooch.</p> <p>Bruce thanked the group for having him. He reported that there are 92,000 veterans in Pierce County. Of those, 25,000 veterans are enrolled to receive medical care at the VA in Lakewood. Not all veterans are able to use veterans' health administration, only those who are honorably discharged. It takes quite awhile to get an appointment. The VA is struggling to retain staff and this increases wait time - currently it takes approximately 46 days to get an appointment. Veterans require a lot of assistance with adjusting to the civilian world and may also need family counseling - a priority is serving combat veterans. Cohen Clinic serves post-911 veteran families, as well as active-duty members and their families.</p> <p>Greg Gooch, Vice Chair, spoke about veteran suicide. His father experienced battle fatigue; in Vietnam they also struggled with battle fatigue. In the '70s Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) became the new term. It's a MH condition that people can develop for a variety of reasons, often after they're either involved in or witness a life-threatening event. In the case of combat veterans, they can develop PTSD by witnessing mass casualties. According to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, those who don't meet established mental health standards can be discharged, and unfortunately PTSD can be considered a conduct discharge, which is an "other than honorable" discharge. Thus, those who are most in need of BH services may not have access to it.</p> <p>Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are also common in veterans, sometimes by being in close proximity to explosions. TBI can result in difficulty concentrating, remembering things, making decisions, and even speaking or just having energy to do things. Between 2009 and 2015, over 22,000 soldiers were discharged with PTSD or TBI. The suicide rate among them is incredibly high, almost twice the rate of the average population.</p> | Welcome! |

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| <p>Veterans Advisory Board Presentation, continued</p> | <p>Robert covered homelessness among veterans. His team distributes VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) vouchers. They have 536 of them in Pierce County and approximately 200 are currently unused.</p> <p>Part of Robert’s team’s work is maintaining the Veterans Master List of all veterans identified as homeless in Pierce County. As of last week, there were 280 on the list. Looking at addressing affordable housing in the community. There are shelter options but no permanent housing. There is some transitional housing, but currently nowhere to transition. The Veterans MH system is multi-layered and complicated. Data goes into the HMIS in Pierce County. Robert’s working on getting his team access to input data in HMIS. The County’s working with landlords trying to add units to affordable housing stock.</p> <p>Richard thanked the group for coming; it’s really good timing, around the RFP. Cohen is currently funded.</p> <p>Cohen’s primary focus is post-911 veterans, which is only about 20% of the veterans in our community. The Vets Center, funded by, but separate from, the VA, focuses on military sexual trauma. Organizations capable of serving all veterans, regardless of discharge type, are needed. Heather agreed that we need to encourage applicants who can serve all types of veterans.</p> <p>Dr. Chen noted various places that have provided services to veterans and their families - has anyone produced a comprehensive map of all providers, both governmental and non-governmental? Heather agreed that this would be a good and useful project. Dr. Chen suggested adding this to the RFP, for an applicant to conduct an assessment of current veterans’ services. Richard explained that the RFP includes veterans’ services as a priority. We’ve cast a wide net as far as outreach about the RFP and he’s hoping that someone who can do that will apply.</p> <p>Jeannie asked about Valley Cities - is that through King County or do they have a facility in Pierce County? Richard explained that Cohen is a national organization; they do their own outreach process to see what local provider would be most suitable for them and they selected Valley Cities.</p> | |

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| <p>Veterans Advisory Board Presentation, continued</p> | <p>Elizabeth Grasher is a MH therapist on JBLM; they offer a plethora of services for veterans, families, and children. There are different levels of confidentiality in the military than in the private sector and some diagnoses can affect peoples’ jobs and opportunities. Once retired, Elizabeth can only see clients for six months. When considering long-term services, it’s different for post-911 veterans.</p> <p>Greg helped establish the Veterans Advisory Board. One of the first things they did was to see what the County does with and for Veterans. The first year of Veterans Advisory Board meetings included presentations about various veterans’ services. The Board discovered that there were many excellent veterans’ services, however, there was no communication across them. That’s why they are pulling together a Veterans Resource Center, to help veterans navigate and find what they need. There are currently not adequate services in areas outside downtown Tacoma. Greg noted that Robert is doing an amazing job by using the Veterans Resource van to get services to people. Heather noted that the Veterans Resource Center is on a slow rollout and we are seeing veterans at the SV office.</p> <p>Chris asked Richard if we have any prioritization or request for enhanced service navigation. The system is complex, not just for veterans, but for everyone. Richard noted that scoring and prioritization are built into the RFP.</p> <p>Elizabeth added that for over a year there have been many open positions for licensed family counselors at JBLM. The Cohen Center utilizes interns. Richard reported that the County Council has approved funding for a BH workforce study. The Council, as well as all of us, are concerned about workforce shortages. Another RFP will be issued in the near future to address this.</p> <p>Heather thanked the Veterans Board for attending to begin some cross-pollination between the Veterans and the BH Advisory Boards. Robert congratulated Richard and his team for getting the RFP out! Bruce thanked Heather for having the VAB here and he looks forward to working collaboratively with the BH Board.</p> <p>Cameron asked if there is a place within the Veterans Resource Center to help advertise service priorities of the BH team? Greg thanked Cameron for his support and noted that Robert is the Point of Contact for the Veterans Resource Center. Robert explained that his team reached out to all veteran providers informing them about the BH RFP. There is space in the Resource Center for those who would like to use it; the issue is having enough social distancing during COVID.</p> | <p>Robert left his email in the chat, included at the end of these notes, and is happy to connect and/or answer questions.</p> |

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| <p>Veterans Advisory Board Presentation, continued</p> | <p>Heather noted that the Veterans Resource Center is intended to be a hub for services and could be a good place to advertise opportunities for new providers or services. Richard added that Arrika shared the RFP release with every licensed BH provider in the State.</p> | |
| <p>RFP Process Update</p> | <p>Richard provided an update on the RFP process and timeline. Last month the subcommittee finalized RFP language, and the RFP was released on February 7.</p> <p>Feb 7 - 15 Q&A Period Feb 16 at 10:00 - Bidder's Conference March 11 - RFP closes March 16 - Subcommittee begins reviewing applications April 4-5 - Interviews April 6 - Subcommittee final recommendations April 18 - Full BHAB vote on final recommendations May - Present recommendations to Council July - Services begin!</p> | |
| <p>Substance Abuse Services</p> | <p>Dr. Chen asked about the status of substance abuse disorder services. Robert reported that the VA's domiciliary at American Lake is currently at 50% occupancy due to social distancing requirements and staffing levels re: COVID. Robert's team is networking with JBLM to communicate about existing services.</p> | |
| <p>Good of the Order</p> | <p>Heather and Richard would like to use this time for BH Advisory Board members to share needs, resources, and challenges with one another. Jeannie shared some good news! Sumner-Bonney Lake held a virtual event on suicide prevention, providing information on how to help adults or children in crises.</p> <p>Lovey reported that NAMI Pierce County is seeking artists to collaborate on a mental health awareness campaign. They want to highlight artists of all ages and backgrounds who tell their stories through art, communicating how art has helped them along their mental health journey. Artists will receive stipends and will be highlighted on NAMI's website in May, which is Mental Health Month.</p> <p>Chris reported that MultiCare/Mary Bridge is working on integrating BH and medical services. It's quite a large project. Workgroups have been meeting for a while now, and later this year a new structure will be rolled out.</p> | <p>Lovey will share information so members can spread the word!</p> |

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| Good of the Order, continued | <p>Dr. Chen asked Jeannie to talk more about the wider effort at Sumner-Bonney Lake. Jeannie said that three social workers are helping Sumner-Bonney Lake students with complex BH needs. They just started January 31 and have already had eight referrals. This is a great opportunity and she's very excited that these students are being linked to these much-needed services. Chris explained that MultiCare wrote a grant for these Youth Engagement Services, (YES), beginning with YES Tacoma, and spreading to YES Puyallup, and YES Sumner-Bonney Lake, with potential for statewide funding!</p> <p>Kimberley shared that she hosts a podcast for Elevate Health and she recently had Ashley Mangum on, to discuss youth behavioral health.</p> <p>Heather thanked our guests from the Veterans Advisory Board, as well as Richard and his BH team.</p> | <p>The link to the Elevate Health podcast is included in the chat at the end of these notes.</p> |
| Adjournment | <p>Heather thanked everyone for their time! The meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.</p> | <p>Thank you!</p> |

The next *Behavioral Health Advisory Board* meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 18, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Becki Foutz
 Administrative Assistant

Chat from 2/14 Behavioral Health Advisory Board

From Becki Foutz to All Panelists 03:00 PM

There are 11 members and four non-voting members

From Anthony Chen to All Panelists 03:05 PM

I am here, did not hear my name called

From Arrika Rayburn to All Panelists 03:06 PM

Thank you, Dr. Chen. We see you now.

From Anthony Chen to All Panelists 03:09 PM

Isn't there also a "service connection" determination even if they were honorably discharged?

From Anthony Chen to All Panelists 03:33 PM

The problem is Cohen did not do community outreach in PC before designating Valley Cities as their clinical partner

From Kimberley Bjorn to Everyone 03:45 PM

Thank you for your service Bruce and Greg. And any other veterans on the call.

From Robert Sheetz to Everyone 03:45 PM

For any questions or comments robert.sheetz@piercecountywa.gov

From Jeannie Larberg, Phd SBLSD to All Panelists 03:46 PM

Thank you for this information regarding Veteran's services.

From Jeannie Larberg, Phd SBLSD to All Panelists 04:06 PM

What age group for NAMI art?

From Arrika Rayburn to All Panelists 04:08 PM

Wonderful idea!

From Kimberley Bjorn to Everyone 04:13 PM

[Elevate Health | Elevate Health Podcast](#) (some of this chat post was somehow cut off during copy and paste – Kimberley was saying that she hosted Ashley Mangum from Kids MH Pierce County as her guest recently and they discussed youth BH services)