

MINUTES
Saratoga County Community Services Board Meeting
September 28, 2023

Present: Edmond Amyot, M.D., Amy Hughes, Captain Dan Morley, RJ Stutzmann and Lillian McCarthy. Also present: Michael S. Prezioso, Ph.D., Megan W. Johnson and Cari Abatemarco from the Mental Health Center.

Absent: James Colamaria, Paul Morcone, Maureen Lewsey, Erin Christopher-Sisk, Ph.D., Christina Holst, Michaelah Townley, and Nicole Tremblay, M.D.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Amyot called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken. A quorum was not established.

III. MINUTES

Motion to accept the minutes from July 27, 2023 was made by Dr. Amyot, seconded by Captain Morley; however, given the lack of a quorum, this is for informational purposes and will be voted on at a future meeting.

IV. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

None present.

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT/OLD BUSINESS

HR and Budget: 2024

Dr. Prezioso indicated that HR personnel requests and budget requests have been submitted for the forthcoming year. To reflect the increasing responsibility for the substantially larger size of the program, we are looking to upgrade or reclassify our Clinic Program Coordinator. The proposal also calls for the promotion or reclassification of our IT specialist. A new Quality Assurance position with responsibilities that encompass Medicare and Medicaid compliance has also been proposed in response to the growing requirements. We are awaiting word on the personnel proposals submitted. Dr. Prezioso commended our Financial Analyst, Lisa Banden, and Administrative Officer, Cari Abatemarco, for their efforts in putting together the budget request. The budget has been submitted and the process is underway.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Saratoga Hospital MHU Leadership

Dr. Marella, a former leader of St. Mary's in Amsterdam, has assumed the leadership role of the Saratoga Hospital MHU.

B. Intensive Crisis Residence Opening

Rise has opened an Intensive Crisis Residence Program in the old Kaydeross House. It is a program which does not require a mental health or other diagnosis. It is for members of the community who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

C. Impact Sector Event

Dr. Prezioso indicated that he and Janine Stuchin, from the Prevention Council, jointly established a group that has met monthly for over eight years now, to discuss systemic, operational, and functional issues. People at the Associate Commissioner level, as well as regional and local liaisons and representatives from a few State agencies, have come to talk with us. Recently, there has been much more emphasis on the role of the nonprofit sector. Impact Sector is something that the group wants to inject as a change in framing what the nonprofit is supposed to be. There is such impact on the people living in the community that helps maintain the community supports and other services and resources. On October 10th, that group and those connected to it, such as Communities of Excellence, with whom the hospital has been collaborating, will participate in an event. Dr. Prezioso extends an invitation to the community and indicated that he would forward any information to keep the board updated.

D. Adelphi Street Shelter

Dr. Prezioso stated that he invited Sybil Newell from RISE to come and talk to the Community Services Board about the operation of the shelter. We anticipated that there wouldn't be complete representation today, so she will visit on a day when we will have a larger audience to learn about her work there and the activities of RISE. Since the shelter opened, we have observed an increase in trash and drug paraphernalia in the back, as well as a sleeping bag and coat at the front door. There have also been instances of people loitering near the building. Dr. Prezioso discussed the safety of staff and clients with the County Administrator and Deputy Administrator and they are entirely supportive. We are placing another security camera in the back of the building to help with these efforts. According to Ms. McCarthy, a CRPA who visits the shelter once a week tried to start a recovery group but was unsuccessful due to lack of interest and as a result, it was changed to a harm reduction group due to active use. While no one attends the group at this time, he stays and tries to connect through conversation. He has two individuals interested in working one-on-one with him, and is in the midst of looking for a private location. Ms. Hughes indicated that the two shelters serve essentially distinct populations. For the most part, individuals at Shelters of Saratoga are involved in some kind of program, including treatment, meetings, budget classes, and recovery programs. People don't want to leave the low-barrier shelter to go somewhere where they are expected to work toward independence.

E. NYS MHL 9.45s

Concerns have been raised, according to Dr. Prezioso, regarding the understanding of the specifications for pick-up orders. There are very particular requirements that must be met in order for someone to be picked up and a pick-up order request can only be made by very specific individuals in specified roles. Recently, Northern Rivers was contacted by a shelter worker who made a request to have an individual evaluated. A separate legal provision gives Northern Rivers, an OMH mobile crisis team, the authority to issue pick-up orders. They evaluated the individual and determined that they did not meet the criteria, therefore they declined. The shelter worker then made a second phone call and based on the information that was reported to one of the designees, a pick-up order was issued. Dr. Prezioso discussed his concerns with Sybil Newell directly and he plans to instruct her staff on who is authorized to make these requests and who is not. Along with sending a memo to each designee explaining the circumstances and criteria for reporting, as well as informing them of who can and cannot make those reports, he will also train the nursing staff of the hospital. Prior to being appointed, each designee is given a copy of the law and they must attest that they have read it and understand it. It will simply require some reenforcing with those with the authority to sign off. Dr. Amyot stated that having been a designee for decades, any and all clarification is welcomed and suggested that the memo be given to the board as well. Dr. Prezioso agreed.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Captain Morley shared a story about a recent crisis incident where they applied a different strategy that they had learned from recent training which led to a positive resolution. The family of the individual wrote a very impactful email to law enforcement thanking them for the respect and kindness they showed their family member. Captain Morley indicated that the outcome was a direct result of the training they have received and expressed satisfaction in knowing they are headed in the right direction.

VIII. NEXT MEETING

The May 18th make-up meeting and end-of-year meeting will be decided by Doodle Poll.

VIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. McCarthy and seconded by Ms. Hughes. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Kellie Russo