

MHADA Board Minutes
Cape May County
May 9, 2023

In Attendance:

Membership:	Judy Kunec – Chair	Interested Parties:	Lisa Shaffer	Terri Mascione
	Dave Grusemeyer		Amy Dindak	Jennifer Zoyak
	Rev. Tom Dawson		Pat Devaney	Kelly Benigno
	Barry Keefe		Peter Belasco	Jennifer Areneberg
	Majken Mechling		Lilly Elson	Bridget Deficcio
	Joe Landis		Michelle Myles	LeeAnne DiBendetto
	Mary Dozier		Sue Anne Agger	
			Jen Zoyac	

Call to Order

The virtual meeting was called to order by Judy Kunec at 5:02.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the March meeting was made by Dave Grusemeyer, seconded by Majken Mechling. Motion carried.

Reports and Correspondence

Mental Health:

Addiction Services: No report.

GCADA: P. Belasco advised the Board that the most recent County Alliance Steering Subcommittee meeting minutes from April were included within the MHADA meeting minutes. The CASS meeting minutes contained all relevant updates to the modified FY24 grant process for both the DEDR and DMHAS Youth Leadership grant.

Old Business

Membership: Pat welcomed Lisa Shaffer who is attending to see if she wants to be a member.

Heroin Issue Update:

Joe Landis reported that Hope One is very busy and referenced the schedule that was sent out. He remarked that xylazine has been found in the county—not in pure form but combined with other drugs. A discussion ensued about the drug and its current status as a non-scheduled drug [Controlled Dangerous Substance (CDS)] in New Jersey. Xylazine is, however, a scheduled drug in other jurisdictions and the Federal gov is considering making it a CDS nationally, which complicates harm reduction efforts with Xylazine test strips. The need for wound care for users was also discussed and a case of a young person needing four surgeries for wounds was identified. Sueanne commented that the hospital doctors are getting educated regarding wound care and the Jail staff are as well. Sueanne then gave her report (attached) and talked about the Wall project where there is outreach to the homeless population that

gathers around the Branches. Pat reported that Katie was unable to attend and that the Recovery High School had their first prom and 13 youth attended. Two youth will graduate this year. Kelly reported on OFRT activities: they have published a SUD Resource booklet, fentanyl test strips are rolling out, OASIS/South Jersey Aids Alliance (harm reduction agency) is expecting to hire a full-time person who will be able to do wound care and data is being analyzed to determine the best outreach strategy and community engagement efforts. Pat reported that they Jail has 11 people on methadone and 23 on suboxone.

EISS

Michelle reported on the progress of the program. In April 43 people were served and there were 41 walk ins, which is inclusive of referrals from the police and other community partners. Recidivism is rather low- only 2 people came back to the program after their initial encounter. There is no limit on how many times a person can come back to the program. Most of the successful completions are referred to mental health or substance use disorder outpatient services.

NJ4S

Bridget explained the program that will be operated in Cape May and Atlantic County. She cited the three levels of services: (universal, moderate risk and serious risk) and what activities will be associated with each level. The schools will identify what they need. Acenda does not yet have an actual contract so more info will be forthcoming. Bridget will send Pat two pamphlets that explain a bit more of the project. Of note, the Board raised concerns regarding both the clinician to student ratio [4 social workers to 30,000+ students] and the reliance on paper student assessments to determine risk. B. Deficcio stated that each NJ4S Hub will have an advisory council and that Acenda could partner with a local agency like Cape Assist, who, she noted, provided a letter of support to their NJ4S application.

Arrive Together: This presentation was deferred until the June meeting.

New Business

Waiver Request for Screening

Michelle presented the waiver request for screening, which includes the waiver areas (24-hour holding bed and 24/7 in-person access to psychiatry) and the past history of the waiver requested by Acenda to DMHAS. She explained that she had reached out to consumer groups and the Systems Review members and no questions/comments were received. A motion was made by Majken Mechling, seconded by Mary Dozier that a letter be sent to DMHAS approving the waiver request at the local level. Motion carried.

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Application

LeeAnne Di Bendetto from Acenda described the purpose and scope of the CCBHC service and how the one in Gloucester County operates. Most of the required services are already available in Cape May. The designation will provide funding for the enhancement of existing services to make a more robust system of care. Majken Mechling asked how the staffing will be secured when Cape May already has a serious deficit in staffing and a considerable wait for service. Acenda acknowledged her concern but saw this as an opportunity to gather more funding. The agency has hired a “staff recruiter” to have a more focused approach to increasing staff.

The deadline for a letter of support is May 18th.

After much discussion a motion was made by Dave Grusemeyer, seconded by Rev. Tom Dawson to provide a letter of support. Motion carried with Majken Mechling abstaining.

JFS Homeless Case Management Grant

Lilly Elson from JFS described the program that was funded by DCA. It is street level outreach directed at the homeless population. Lilly has been organizing the program in Cape May County and has partnered with the Branches Outreach, Volunteers of America, Cape Hope, the County Social Services Division and others to maximize resources. More information will be available as the program rolls out.

Public Response

There was no public response.

Adjournment

Chairperson Judy Kunec adjourned the meeting at 6:38pm.