

Healthy St. Mary's Partnership  
Behavioral Health Action Team (BHAT)  
January 13, 2017 from 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM  
St. Mary's County Health Department

**Minutes**

- 1. Introductions:** Lauren Abell – MedStar St. Mary's Hospital (MSMH), Jessica Hartman – St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD), Richard Russell – St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office (SMCSO), Nat Scroggins – Minority Outreach Coalition (MOC), Greg Reuss – American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), Tammy Loewe – St. Mary's County Department of Social Services (DSS), Sue Maskaleris – AFSP, Dee Rathbone – Parents Affected by Addiction (PABA), Glori Van Brunt – Private Practitioner BH, Melanie Ledig – Private Practitioner, Psych. Svc. Ctr., Elizabeth Ramsey – PAX River Counseling, Pete Cucinotta - Circuit Court, Kelsey Bush – Department of Aging and Human Services, Cynthia Kilcoyne – St. Mary's County Public Schools, Gerry McGloin – Pathways.
- 2. Discussion/Updates:**
  - a. **Advocacy:** The *draft* HSMP Advocacy Agenda and the Behavioral Health objectives from the Community Health Improvement Plan (Healthy St. Mary's 2020) were distributed to the group members. Gerry reviewed the two behavioral health issues that had been previously identified in the draft advocacy agenda: 1.) Advocate for financial incentives and regulatory changes to better recruit and maintain behavioral health providers AND 2.) Advocate for improved organizational policy in the local school system to expand youth access to behavioral health services. He solicited comment on whether the team wanted to retain these topics as the ones chosen for advocacy or make any changes or additions. It was suggested that the team may have better success by focusing on these issues as they are manifested locally versus state-level advocacy. The response to the proposed topics was mostly positive with the additional following points offered during discussion:
    - i. Recruiting & Maintaining BH providers:**
      1. While St. Mary's County is a federally-designated shortage area for psychiatry which can mean student loan forgiveness for psychiatrists who commit to work for a minimum period of time here, it is a recruitment strategy for service providers that has seen only limited success
      2. Difficulties in psychiatrist recruitment and retention is virtually a perennial issue that promises to be a challenging one for the team
      3. Faith based counselors offer an alternative option as their services are offered for free and they are generally less busy and more available, however they are not licensed



4. MedStar has apparently offered housing for medical professionals to decrease living costs and thereby promote retention: this is a strategy that could be considered for duplication
- ii. **Expanding youth access to BH services:**
    1. Needs of children are found to be greater than insurances cover
    2. What do providers do when insurance runs out?
    3. Often children who are referred to DSS from the schools or other sources can get lost in the system when trying to maintain coverage. When private insurance runs out, children must depend on other funding in the system to continue care.
    4. Providers in the community and even in the schools have a full caseload or waitlist, so they may be unable to receive new referrals
    5. The program at Great Mills High School is going well, but is only funded 2 days a week for 6 hours per day, which limits the number of youth that can be seen
      - a. Need to try to expand this initiative to other schools, but it would require more providers/funding to do so
  - iii. **Gerry distributed a sample advocacy sheet used by CBH of Md. as an example of how the team might articulate a position :** This organization advocates for increases in mental health reimbursement rates on the same inflation scale as that of traditional medical services
  - iv. **Nat Scroggins suggested that objective BH4 from the Healthy St. Mary's 2020 Improvement Plan,** regarding services offered to inmates at the detention center, be added as a third topic for attention in advocacy efforts:
    1. Are a full spectrum of services available?
    2. Walden has a full time employee in the detention center that does substance abuse assessments (is this only available for females?)
    3. Walden handling referrals to treatment in the detention center and handling detox situations?
    4. The group also discussed funding for behavioral health services in the detention center. It was recommended that Jenna contact Captain Merican to arrange for him to speak at an upcoming meeting on this issue
      - a. Current services and funding, what is needed, possible sources for funding (county?)
  - v. Maryland Coalition of Families and the website "keepthedoropenmd.org" (legislation related to behavioral health funding) are two other sources of information relevant for advocacy
- b. **Suicide Prevention Initiatives:**
    - i. Speaker from the HSMP annual meeting, presentation available at [healthystmarys.com](http://healthystmarys.com)



- ii. Want to establish a campaign for St. Mary's County
    - 1. First Steps:
      - a. Designated coordinator, campaign ideas & goals, target audience, etc. Suicide by firearm brought up as a potential focus due to the lethality of firearm related attempts.
  - iii. The team's efforts could potentially be integrated with annual base trainings
  - iv. Representatives from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention can provide an Action Toolkit as well as evidence based trainings on how to deal with suicide. They currently host a public suicide prevention walk in Charles County but not in St. Mary's yet. The St. Mary's advocacy work is just getting off the ground.
  - v. Southern Maryland Psychological Association would like to start a grief support group for children
    - i. Suicide panel at St. Mary's College: Follow up needs to be coordinated with St. Mary's College to get the event scheduled during the spring. 2 hour window and discussion with the availability for CEU. DSS will coordinate the CEU opportunity to try to encourage attendance.
- c. Other Objectives for emphasis in 2017:**
- i. Suicidal kids (even if they are just thinking about it but have not made an attempt) are currently being sent to the ER but can overwhelm the ER. A mobile crisis team is one approach but that can be very costly; training school counselors in de-escalation techniques is another possible avenue to consider.
    - 1. Possible use of a standardized form to determine whether the child really needs to be sent to the ER or not. Interest expressed in having teachers learning about this initiative and taking a class.
    - 2. Including a suicide text line on student ID cards since children are more likely to text than call them if they are considering suicide.
    - 3. Suicide intervention training at the libraries
- 3. Community Wellness Day:** The Minority Outreach Coalition will host a Community Wellness Day on Saturday, February 11, 2017 at the Loffler Senior Activity Center at Chancellors Run Park. Exhibitors are needed to provide health demonstrations, activities, screenings and more – [Complete this application](#) by January 31, 2017! Prize donations, sponsors and volunteers are also needed. Contact Nat Scroggins for more information at: [mocstmarys@gmail.com](mailto:mocstmarys@gmail.com).
- a. No BH Partners have signed up yet
  - b. Naloxone Training will be provided
- 4. Partner Updates**
- a. PABA discussed teen drug use and a news article about marijuana dispensaries
  - b. Pathways was internationally accredited by CARF-International as of October, 2016 for all programs, all sites.



- c. Southern Maryland Psychological Association is hosting a motivational interviewing seminar on January 28.
- 5. Other business:**
- a. The next meeting of the Behavioral Health Action Team will be held on Friday, February 10, 2016 from 2:00 – 3:30 at the St. Mary’s County Health Department.
  - b. **All members are encouraged to submit information for the HSMP Newsletter, social media postings and website content** (e-mail [jenna.mulliken@maryland.gov](mailto:jenna.mulliken@maryland.gov) with program, event or training information). The newsletter is published every other Thursday.

