



State of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Council on Mental Health
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Meeting of the Legislative and Policy Committee
March 14, 2019 from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm
1 West Wilson Street, Conference Room 630, Madison, Wisconsin and via teleconference

Members of the Legislative and Policy Committee in Attendance: Alice Sykora, Joanne Juhnke, Crystal Hester, Brian Michel, Chris Wirth, Jeanie Verschay, Kit Kerschensteiner, Mike Lappen (via teleconference), Barbara Beckert (via teleconference)

Guests in Attendance: Lea Collins-Worachek, Marc Herstand, Natalie Diebel, Linda Hall, Ali Maresh, Breckyn Ryg (via teleconference), Radha Karthik (via teleconference), Kimberlee Coronado (via teleconference)

Department of Health Services Staff (DHS) in Attendance: Ryan Stachoviak, Joannette Robertson

MINUTES

1. Call Legislative and Policy Committee (LPC) Meeting to Order

Review and approval of the minutes of February 14, 2019

K. Kerschensteiner moved to approve the minutes of February 14, 2019.

C. Wirth seconded the motion.

Motion carried, minutes approved unanimously.

Announcements: Opportunity for committee members to make general announcements

B. Beckert provided voting information for the upcoming April 2nd state-wide election for state supreme court. J. Juhnke discussed an upcoming event at Marquette University "Insights into Young People's Mental Health". The event is part of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's "Kids in Crisis" series and will be held on March 22. C. Hester announced NAMI Wisconsin's Annual Conference will be held April 26-27 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. M. Lappen announced that the Community Medical Services, a 24/7 MAT provider, is now providing services in Milwaukee County.

Wisconsin Council on Mental Health (WCMH) Updates

R. Stachoviak provided an update. The WCMH will be meeting on March 20th. The Council plans to discuss the Mental Health and Substance Use Gaps Analysis and do some preliminary planning for the WCMH fall tour in September.

Public Comment

M. Herstand provided advocacy updates from the National Association of Social Workers.

2. Discussion and Review of Committee Membership and Leadership

At the most recent WCMH Executive Committee meeting J. Verschay was appointed to the LPC as an at large member. Brian Michel was also appointed as the Mental Health America Wisconsin alternate representative. The May LPC meeting has been moved to May 16th to avoid conflict with other events.

3. Legislative and Policy Updates, Discussion, and Action

Budget Priority Planning

K. Kerschensteiner announced that there will be Joint Finance Committee budget hearings in April. Members of the LPC reviewed a 2019-2021 State biennial budget summary produced by the Wisconsin Counties Association: https://www.wicounties.org/uploads/budget_documents/final-budget-summary-march-8.pdf. Members of the LPC compared the budget priority document to the Governor's budget.

Specific budget areas that were discussed by the LPC included increases in special education funding, funding for the pyramid model, the capping of special needs vouchers, and mental health consultation funding. J. Juhnke provided updates on legislation regarding mental health and school safety training. The program is currently housed at the Department of Justice (DOJ). There is hope to have this program transferred out of the DOJ. K. Kerschensteiner discussed the dental care package in the budget. This would include an enhanced reimbursement rate for those who provide services for a certain level of care for people who are on Medical Assistance or are uninsured. Additional areas that have funded in the budget are a new intake unit at Winnebago, and a new community mental health benefit focused on addressing the social determinants of mental illness.

Items that were not included in the Governor's budget that the LPC and WCMH had been advocating for include services for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Individual Placement and Support, and state wide expansion of the Child Psychiatry Consultation Program. The LPC plans to revisit these areas to provide additional support and advocacy.

State Legislation and Review of LPC Bill Tracking and Bills to Review and Approve

C. Hester introduced the new bill tracking document for the LPC to use. Given the limited size of the LPC not every piece of legislation can be tracked or reviewed. As such the LPC can be selective of those bills to track. Any bill that will be tracked must have someone assigned to take the lead on tracking that legislation. It is then the responsibility for people to provide updates on those bills.

B. Michel discussed the first draft and walked the LPC through a review of new bills for the group to consideration for tracking.

Members discussed AB11/SB20 relating to obtaining crime victim mental health treatment records. The legislation codifies existing case law in Wisconsin. Members discussed apparent changes to the legislation and language differences between AB 11 and SB 20. The group agreed to continue to track these bills, B. Michel volunteered to track the legislation.

The LPC discussed AB30/SB34 relating to creating a procedure for granting certificates of qualification for employment for persons convicted of a crime and making an appropriation. The legislation is tangentially related to employment of peer support specialists, especially people with lived experience in the criminal justice system. The LPC will track the legislation and J. Verschay will take the lead. Members of the LPC suggested that Criminal Justice Committee may also want to review the legislation.

Members will add SB39/AB33, regarding criminal record expungement, to the bill tracking and J. Verschay will take the lead on tracking. Legislation relating to regulating the sale of prescription drugs below costs, SB22, will not be added to the tracking document at this time. The LPC will track AB24/SB26 regarding step therapy protocols for prescription drug coverage and requiring the exercise of rulemaking authority. C. Hester agreed to take the lead on tracking the legislation.

Committee members discussed SB37 relating to coverage of preventive services, essential health benefits, and individuals with pre-existing conditions; rating; and benefit limits under health plans. C. Wirth agreed to track the legislation.

B. Michel discussed the “Hand for the Homeless” package of homeless bills. Housing is an issue for many people with mental illness. LRB-1854/1 adds \$500,000 annually to the Homeless Prevention Program to help avoid evictions, and creates a new program funded at \$300,000 to begin diversion. Diversion is short-term assistance to steer those who present as homeless into stable housing outside the traditional homelessness system. LRB-1227/1 adds \$500,000 annually to the State Shelter Subsidy Grant program, a 50% increase to the fund and its first major increase since its creation in 1994. It also cleans up administrative code. Most significantly, it adds performance metrics to incentivize shelters to responsibly transition individuals into permanent housing. LRB-1853/1 adds \$900,000 annually (a 300% increase) to the Housing Assistance Program, the state’s most flexible funder of Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-housing, and Transitional Housing. LRB-1316/1 adds \$500,000 annually (a 100% increase) to the Homeless Case Management Services Program to assist families in shelter with gaining employment or increasing their income. LRB-1331/1 creates a Housing Navigation Grant, funded at \$300,000 annually, to work with landlords to find available permanent housing units for individuals experiencing homelessness and to mediate any disputes that may arise. LRB-1851/1 creates an innovative forgivable loan program, funded at \$500,000 annually, to renovate existing units for use as affordable housing. LRB-1332/1 directs the Department of Workforce Development to identify and create programs for homeless youth (age 18-24) and adults, catered to those populations’ specific needs. It also mandates collaboration between local Workforce Development Boards and their corresponding homeless response systems. LRB-1852/1 adds \$250,000 annually (a 100% increase) to the Skills Enhancement Program to help low-income individuals receive job training and technical skills.

Members of the LPC discussed the legislation and whether some pieces of the legislation would have more success at being passed if it were split out for the package of legislation. Members will continue to track the legislation, and B. Beckert will take the lead on tracking.

The group discussed LRB-0383-3, regarding dyslexia. The legislation establishes a dyslexia handbook, and an advisory committee through the state superintendent. The legislation is intended to support screening and early intervention and would help parents, teachers, administrators understand dyslexia. The LPC will track the

legislation; K. Coronado will take the lead. An additional bill, AB50, would introduce a dyslexia specialist at the Department of Children and Families. The LPC will track this bill with K. Coronado taking the lead.

A. Sykora discussed interpreter licensing and how the state licenses interpreters. A proposal would change state licensing, and a new focus area would be interpreters with a focus on mental health. A. Sykora will bring more information regarding the proposed changes at an upcoming meeting. A. Sykora agreed to track any legislation associated with the proposals.

C. Hester discussed a group of advocates that has been coming together to meet with legislators in an effort to advocate for lethal violence protection order legislation. The proposed legislation would allow families to petition a court to have a firearm removed from a person if they pose a risk to themselves or others. It is believed that this bill could save a lot of lives, especially in regards to suicide prevention. Advocates are hoping to find support for the legislation. J. Verschay expressed her hope that the legislation is being considered in light of people's rights, due process, and ensuring there are not unintended consequences. M. Lappen noted that this law was passed in Texas and has seen benefits. Members of the Committee discussed various aspects of the legislation and rights.

A suicide prevention speaker's taskforce is being formed and Representative Ballweg will chair the bipartisan committee. The committee is planning on holding listening sessions across the state. Hearings will be held after Easter, and the group plans to invite DHS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prevention groups, and the Center for Suicide Awareness. There is hope that a package of proposals will come out of this effort. .

4. Division of Care and Treatment Services Updates

No updates were made.

5. Agenda Items for the April 2019 Committee Meeting

The LPC will plan on addressing a joint meeting between the LPC and the Children and Youth Committee.

6. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 pm.