

Beaverhead County Mental Health Local Advisory Council

2017 Activity Report

(January 22, 2018)

In 2017, the Beaverhead County Mental Health Local Advisory Council found itself to be a thriving organization of ten on-going committees, task forces, and collaborations. Some of these initiatives grew out of the Montana Healthcare Foundation Grant awarded in 2015, which concluded in October 2017. Others were developed and strengthened through strategic networking with our local BE THE CHANGE 406 substance abuse prevention coalition. Our MHLAC recognizes an intrinsic relationship between mental health and addiction and is committed to programming that highlights this interplay. All initiatives seek the goals of education, access to services, and increased awareness. What follows is a summary of the activities during the past year for each of these initiatives:

The ACE Task Force continued in its goal of increasing awareness of adverse childhood experience research and promoting trauma-informed approaches in our schools, community groups, and other services. In 2017 they became Child Wise affiliates and eleven members of this group completed the work necessary to become ACE trainer certified. Since then they have conducted an additional six ACE specific trainings, hosted a Mental Health First Aid course in May in which 60 participants were trained, coordinated a suicide prevention community-wide meeting attended by more than 30 county residents, hosted a special presentation by Katie Loveland entitled “Trauma-Informed Approaches in Rural Communities” with 52 attendees, sent four members and/or school staff to a “Science and the Brain” trainings, purchased and disbursed educational material including two documentary films (*Paper Tigers* and *Resilience*), and reached another 561 people in Beaverhead County with their message. This raises their total numbers to over 2500 since the inception of the taskforce. These accomplishments were made possible in large part due to our partnership with Be The Change 406 and their amazing staff. (Chair: Melainya Ryan – 683-6106)

The Criminal Justice Taskforce spent the first quarter continuing to explore new ways to integrate behavioral health programs within our city and county criminal justice systems. They collaborated with our sheriff, judges, and police officers to promote more training for officers, provide screening and treatment of current inmates, and researched jail diversion programs for possible future implementation. As the staff of the Women’s Resource Center was chiefly involved in this group’s leadership, the LAC chose to support them in bids for two new MHCF grants to support these ongoing efforts. Sadly, both of these proposals were unsuccessful however the task force is reconvening and seeking another source of funding. In addition, Sherriff Kluesner is networking with Lyn Ankleman, of WMMHC, to arrange a 40-hour CIT training in Dillon for his staff and others in the community. (Chair: Alison Dunn – 683-6106)

The Mental Health Crisis Committee was officially organized following the completion and review of “*A Report On Community-Wide Intervention in Mental Health Crisis*” compiled and submitted in March by the LAC’s MHCF Implementation Team. This committee now meets monthly to engage in continued improvement for mental health crisis management in our community. Utilizing the findings of the above local survey as a foundation, this group made great strides in improving communication between the hospital, CRT, and the schools, regarding confidentiality, transportation, tele-health access, contract review, and policy revisions related to service delivery throughout the later months of the year. (Chair: Jenny Given – 683-1183)

The Summit Planning Committee was created this year as a means of organizing a regularly occurring conference event as a resource for education and training targeting providers throughout the region. In September 2017 over 130 individuals attended the first Big Sky Behavioral Health Summit professionally hosted by our MHLAC with over \$8000.00 in co-sponsorship funding from Be The Change 406. Because of this collaboration, Summit organizers were able to bring in nationally recognized speakers, create a custom designed event logo and staff tee shirts and obtain other valuable media support. The featured keynote speaker was Jessie Close, who was introduced by her sister Glen Close, the actress. The theme was “*Creating a Trauma-informed Community*”. Other noted speakers were Eric Arzubi, MD; Erin Butts, MSW; Malcolm Horn, LCSW; and Daniel Nauts, MD. Because there was a special track for medical providers, our primary care providers responded by setting a goal of being a more trauma-informed clinic including becoming actively involved with Project ECHO. They are now regular participants. After the event, this committee immediately reorganized and began preparing for another Summit in 2018. (Chair: Jerry Girard -683-7181)

Universal Screening Promotion is an initiative now supported by the MHLAC at-large. As such, we encourage regular screening for behavioral and mental health issues as a critical piece in heading off mental health crises and identifying suicide risk. We do this by encouraging the incorporation of screening into already existing activities, when appropriate, and hosting supportive conversations to share ideas for best-practice strategies. This effort is responsible for creating our online providers resource list now on our webpage and regularly updated by the Women’s Resource and Community Support Center. This resource list is utilized by many of our primary care providers and was provided in December to the 112 clients left without local services upon the closure of the Dillon of WMMHC. (Contact: Lynn Weltzien – 683-6858)

The Howard Gaines Community Service Award Committee accepts nominations and chooses a community member to honor each year for their service in promoting behavioral healthcare. We believe scholarships and an award, such as this, bring visibility not just to the honored person for their significant contribution but also highlight the importance of this work. This committee announced the award and honored the family of Howard Gaines, a former long-term LAC member, at a public

event in May and then presented the first award in September in conjunction with the Big Sky Behavioral Health Summit. Four nominees were recognized in addition to this year's winner, Julie Ingram. (Chair: Jenny Given – 683-1183)

The Public Relations Committee works to raise public awareness of programs, events, and information about mental health. It maintains our Facebook page, works with the county on our web presence, and coordinates other media and public relations materials. This year they designed a new logo, created a Facebook page and launched a new webpage within the county site for the LAC. Our page can be viewed at beaverheadcounty.org under "Departments". (Chair: Melainya Ryan – 683-6106)

In addition, as an LAC we participate in the following three additional collaborations:

The MHLAC actively supports the Women's Resource/Community Support Center's **Suicide Prevention** efforts. This past year they organized a weeklong schedule with daily activities for National Suicide Prevention Week to increase awareness and provide training along with other trainings scattered throughout the year. Five local QPR course sessions were taught with 88 people physically attending and an unknown additional number participating online. In addition, there were 97 participants at a PIR half-day suicide prevention training for local school staff. Three in-school events were organized to bring awareness and collaborative prevention effort directly to schoolchildren. These occurred in both Dillon and Lima and reached over 800 students. Finally, an additional group of fourteen community members were trained in MHFA in December through the efforts of this taskforce. (Contact: Brylee Zumpf – 683-6106)

Our MHLAC has a connection with the Outreach Department at the University of Montana Western to partner in their **Behavioral Health Career Camp**. With co-sponsorship from MHLAC and others, ten high school students interested in careers in behavioral health attended a 2-day on campus training in March, which included MHFA certification. Several members of our council served as camp staff. Three graduates summarized the success of the program and explained their sustainability projects during our May meeting. This year's participants will recruit for next year's class and the MHLAC plans to continue our sponsorship. (Contact: Beth Wharton – 683-7308)

A final collaboration for 2017 was between our MHLAC and the Mental Health Alliance of Montana for the **Children's Mental Health Initiative**. Ten community members came to the focus group in May led by Dan Aune and Shellie from the Mental Health America of Montana in Bozeman. They were very pleased with the amount of discussion and involvement, which focused mostly on early prevention via education of parents and the general public. The Mental Health Alliance of Montana included our input in their June, 2017 report "Child-Centered Mental Health Initiative" which recommends a three year strategic implementation plan to

develop a child mental health delivery service that has a “soft landing” approach for southwest Montana and moves away from the utilization of ER’s as child trauma centers. Grant possibilities through MHCF are currently being explored. (Contact – Lynn Weltzien – 683-6858)