

Yakima County Human Services
BH SUD Coalition
MEETING MINUTES
February 26, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The **February 26, 2024** BH SUD Coalition Meeting came to order at **3:00pm**.

INTRODUCTIONS

Members present: Trevor Downy (WSP), Rod Myers (Community Member-lived experience), Kyle Schafer (Community Member -lived experience), Monica Jenkins (DCYF), Carolyn Thurston (DRCY), Melissa Denner (Merit), Hope Baker (ESD105), Ken Braconnier (Comp. Healthcare), Commissioner Linde (YCC), Cassidy Leslie (TTS), Chad Morris (CHCW), Gillian Zuckerman (CHCW), Megan Tweedy (Community Member), L. Paul Schneider (Community Member), Shannon Young (MultiCare), Lynda Boggess (MultiCare), Kim Clemons (Comp. Healthcare), Sheena Torres (Comp. Healthcare), Andrea Walker (Comp. Healthcare), Erika Ochoa (YHD), Melissa Sixberry (YHD)

Zoom: Meagan Takamori (BC), Renee Hall (DCYF), Annette Rodriguez (YNHS), Angela Bazan (NAMI), Jon Schlenske (Comp. Healthcare), Elizabeth Tellez (YWCA), Sherran Campos (NCAC), Dawn Mason (Coor. Care), Melissa Gorsuch-Clark (CCF),
*If you don't see your name or your organization name here, please email Deann at Deann.Bergquist@co.yakima.wa.us

Human Services staff present:

Melissa Holm, Esther Magasis, Deann Bergquist, Ivan Orozco

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of minutes

Approval of Minutes: January 22, 2024 BH SUD Coalition Meeting.

Ken Braconnier moved to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2024, BH SUD Coalition Meeting. Megan Tweedy seconded. No one abstained/denied. The motion carried.

Review Systems Map Priorities - [Review of Behavioral Health Systems Maps](#)

Cassidy Leslie initiated the meeting by providing a brief overview of the BHSUD Coalition and its purpose, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among individuals with lived experience and professionals to identify and address barriers within the community systems. She encouraged attendees to invite others who might be interested in joining the coalition. Melissa Holm then presented the results from the JotForm survey, noting the significant number of responses indicating "other" as the chosen option. She proceeded to discuss the various sections of the survey, including Youth Interventions, Criminal Justice, and the Homeless Response System. Melissa highlighted that the responses demonstrated a clear interest in further discussing these priorities within the group.

Melissa conducted a detailed review of the provider responses. The main themes that emerged included transportation barriers within Yakima County, collaboration with Work Source, and the need for youth programs in the area. Melissa read through the responses, identifying common themes such as housing challenges, workforce shortages, recruitment and turnover issues, as well as various strategies for housing individuals. There was also a shift noted towards preventative strategies over rapid rehousing and a desire for increased collaboration within this area.

A coalition member highlighted an agreement between the child welfare system and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) aimed at facilitating the issuance of IDs for children in foster care. This agreement streamlines the ID application process, allowing teens in the system to obtain state-issued IDs without the usual requirement of providing five pieces of identification. This initiative enables these youths to obtain

crucial identification documents both during and after their time in foster care. Additionally, the member discussed the challenges faced by these youths, including insufficient funding for essential needs such as food and housing. They also emphasized the importance of educating these individuals on various life skills, such as understanding rental rules and managing budgets, to help them navigate independent living successfully. However, the lack of funding poses a significant obstacle to implementing such programs effectively. Megan Tweedy, expressed difficulty in accessing and understanding the necessary forms and documents required for these processes, underscoring the need for clearer information and support for individuals navigating these systems.

Cassidy Leslie emphasized the importance of clarifying the type of work being done in behavioral health when establishing the coalition. She suggested following a similar process to the one used previously, where common issues were identified, top objectives were selected, and one was chosen to focus on. However, she stressed the need to consider existing work in the area to avoid overlapping objectives. Esther supported this approach and proposed a two-fold strategy. Firstly, updating the priorities list based on community feedback to ensure alignment with stakeholders' needs. Secondly, delving into these priorities to identify actionable solutions, whether or not funding is available. These priorities serve as overarching goals, guiding the coalition's efforts throughout the year. Trevor Downy echoed this sentiment, explaining how this approach has worked effectively in his area.

Cassidy highlighted the importance of involving all relevant community members, such as representatives from law enforcement, to address gaps and establish connections within systems like the jail's case management and Department of Corrections (DOC) processes. To facilitate this process, Melissa suggested using index cards for everyone to write down their themes, which can then be shared and discussed at the next meeting, allowing for a collaborative approach to identifying priorities and addressing gaps.

Megan Tweedy highlighted the importance of addressing issues such as the Fentanyl problem, which had only been mentioned once. Esther encouraged members to email Melissa with any new ideas, which could then be brought back for discussion at the next meeting. Melissa identified several themes discussed during the meeting, including issues related to incarcerated individuals, housing models, detox facilities, flexible funding, prevention strategies, and workforce development. The group discussed the need to narrow down and define these themes further, particularly regarding prevention strategies and their actionable implementation. Kyle Schafer raised a question about how individuals will sustain themselves once initial needs like housing, recovery, and employment are addressed. This led to a discussion about the importance of considering the continuum of care and addressing gaps in services, such as eviction prevention.

Opiate Settlement Fund - Link for Strategies for Effectively Allocating Opioid Settlement Funds
<https://www.rand.org/health-care/centers/optic/>

Commissioner Linde highlighted the funding received from settlements, indicating a yearly allocation of approximately \$150,000 and an additional \$1.2 million expected in June for a one-time project. He emphasized the importance of addressing substance use, particularly among youth and young adults, and expressed the county's interest in receiving feedback from the group to inform their response to these issues. Esther reiterated the importance of ensuring that the RFI information reaches the appropriate person within each agency.

Megan Tweedy expressed concerns about the definition of prevention, emphasizing the need for a focus on opioid prevention, including Narcan distribution, medication for opioid use disorder, and addressing opioid misuse. She highlighted the increasing

[tools/fund-allocation.html](#)
Link for how the Opioid Settlement Funds are being spent so far
- [MedPage Article](#)

number of deaths in Yakima County due to opioids and stressed the importance of informed decision-making regarding the allocation of funds. She urged everyone to be aware of how these funds are being utilized. One member expressed support for prevention efforts but highlighted the need to also allocate resources for those already suffering from substance use disorders. She noted that an over-emphasis on prevention may overlook the urgent needs of individuals currently affected by addiction. Commissioner Linde reassured that the county is working collaboratively with the community to address these issues comprehensively. Esther emphasized the importance of responding to the RFI when it is released and encouraged the group to consider a range of actions beyond prevention alone. Melissa highlighted the need for a comprehensive dashboard that provides transparency regarding the funding coming into the community. She informed the group that the state has responded to their concerns by dedicating resources to create a data dashboard focused on Washington state. This dashboard will allow users to track payments, view estimated payment schedules, and upload local spending plans. It will provide visibility into state-level, local-level, and tribal spending, ensuring full transparency. Commissioner Linde emphasized the importance of collaboration among Yakima County and other large cities receiving funding to plan spending effectively. He suggested learning from other communities' strategies, such as naloxone distribution and syringe exchange programs, to inform local spending plans. Melissa announced that the pre-development for the website will begin on March 7th, with Yakima County serving as a test community. Test emails will be sent out, and she encouraged recipients to respond promptly. The dashboard will have both internal and external components, allowing leads to post information on funding spending internally while providing the public with transparent access to see where the funding dollars are being allocated. The website is scheduled to go live at the end of May. A member from the Yakima Health District announced an upcoming syringe service to be held weekly. She noted that she would send this information to Esther. It was clarified that this service is not intended for the public but rather for providers. Esther provided a brief overview of the Request for Information (RFI) process, highlighting that it consists of 10 questions about the agency. She encouraged attendees to share the RFI with anyone who could benefit from the information.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Melissa will send out a reminder to the group to send in your list of priorities to review at the next meeting.
2. Esther will send out the Toppenish Harm Reduction Program information to the group.

Next Meeting

DATE: March 25, 2024

Location: Hybrid Zoom and In Person at Yakima County Resource Center

Adjourn

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at **4:31pm**.