



Welcome, introductions, and election of new officers

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 by the vice-chair, Shane DeLosSantos. Individuals in attendance then introduced themselves.

Attendance

The Committee members present were: Larry Diaz, Shane Delossantos, Verlyn Johnson, Annie Powell. Present from HHSC was Jondell LaFont-Garcia, and present from the Hogg Foundation was Tammy Heinz.

The Via Hope staff present were Dennis Bach, Sandra Smith, Kamala Joy, Christianna Hale, John King, Liz Castaneda, and Marybeth McAndrews.

The Via Hope Director explained Larry Diaz is a new member representing the CPS Advisory Council as the new chair. Another new member, Council Vice-Chair Cassandra Ramirez, was unable to attend. Annie Powell is also a new member, representing Recovery Community Organizations.

The director next explained that the committee chair, Wayne Gregory, had submitted his resignation. The committee then elected Shane DeLosSantos as the new chair. They then elected Annie Powell as the new vice chair.

The committee agreed to change the order of the agenda to accommodate the Hogg representative who had to leave for part of the meeting. The following notes are in the order in which the agenda items were presented.

Recovery Institute Plans for 2018

Mr. King, from the Via Hope staff, discussed the two major program initiatives under the Recovery Institute, the Peer Support Implementation (PSI) Program and the Person Centered Recovery Planning (PCRP) Program. Mr. King is coordinator of the PSI Program and is a Certified Peer Specialist himself.

The PSI Program is structured as a learning community this year. An announcement and application will be available in February. Mr. Bach added that a new position had been created

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at Via Hope, PSI Field Liaison, to provide additional content expertise to the program. Ms. Amy Pierce, a Certified Peer Specialist with extensive experience, was hired for this position.

The PCRCP Program will also be structured as a learning community, with an announcement and application in February. The focus of PCRCP will be on training coaches in local provider organizations who can train other staff on the principles of PCRCP using a curriculum provided by Via Hope. We will also develop a series of training modules (PowerPoint presentations with professionally recorded voiceover) that the coaches can use along with the curriculum. The modules are intended to help ensure fidelity with the curriculum and greater consistency in the training.

Demonstration of new website

Via Hope has been working on a new website which is scheduled to launch on February 1. It will have enhanced graphics, easier navigation, updated content, and features such as online training applications and payment. There is also backend functionality that will allow for greater efficiencies in tasks such as reviewing and scoring applications. Dr. Sandra Smith, Peer Leadership Manager, walked the committee through a demonstration of the beta site.

Focus Points for Enhanced Services

Over the last several months, Via Hope staff were engaged in a strategic planning process, which the Stakeholders Committee participated in during the August meeting. The committee was updated on the progress during their October meeting. Out of this, it was determined that Via Hope would develop grant proposals for enhancing our services and submit these to various potential funding sources. Ms. Kamala Joy, the Family and Youth Leadership Manager, discussed three ideas for proposals that Via Hope is actively considering.

The first proposal is to translate our training curricula, starting with the two certification trainings, into Spanish. Beyond just translating the materials, new content may need to be developed to ensure that the training is culturally appropriate.

The second proposal is to develop a pilot project to offer peer support in area high schools, using Transition Age Youth Certified Peer Specialists. This is an age in which many behavioral health challenges first present themselves, and youth do not readily access services at mental

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health agencies. This project would be an attempt to meet them in their own space and connect with them through peer support.

The third proposal is to develop and pilot a project to provide forensic peer support. The unique aspect of this project is that the initial training would be provided to individuals while still incarcerated, starting about six months prior to release. There would be an assessment to determine what type of community supports they would need to be successful once released. The first group of individuals trained would then provide peer support and assessments to other individuals approaching their release date.

The Stakeholder Committee members were asked their opinion of the value and viability of each proposal, and they felt all were in line with our mission and would be valuable projects.

HB 1486 Workgroup Update

The Via Hope director, Dennis Bach, updated the group on the progress to date of the stakeholder workgroup created by HHSC to advise them on implementation of House Bill 1486. The bill directed HHSC to develop administrative rules and an amendment to the State Medicaid plan to provide a new peer support service. The workgroup has met monthly, starting in November 2017. Mr. Bach summarized the parallel processes need to develop rules for the Texas Administrative Code and an amendment to the State Plan. It is expected to take until mid to late 2019 for both to become final.

An internal HHSC workgroup developed resource materials for the workgroup to use, including a draft set of TAC rules. They plan to use these draft rules as a framework for discussing issues. So far, the workgroup has primarily discussed the definitions section of the proposed rules. One contentious issue in the workgroup was the requirement to conduct criminal background checks and the list of violations that would disqualify peers. Workgroup members felt this list was overly strict, and the committee members agreed with that assessment.

HHSC is also proposing to implement a new training and certification model that is different from what is currently used for either mental health peer specialists or substance use recovery coaches. It would include core training on peer support that everyone would take, followed by field experience, followed by specialized training on mental health, substance use, or co-occurring disorders. After completing all three components, individuals would be eligible to

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become certified and provide Medicaid billable services. The committee used a Liberating Structures, 1-2-4-all process to discuss two questions:

What are the potential benefits of this new model? What questions do you have about the model?

The list of benefits and questions they identified are in Attachment One.

Debrief

The meeting ended with a general debriefing session in which members were given the opportunity to reflect on any aspects of the committee meeting and identify any other issues for follow up by staff.

The meeting was adjourned by Committee Chair DeLosSantos at 2:20 p

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