

County Social Services Adult Advisory Committee  
April 27, 2022  
Meeting Notes

Advisory Committee Members Present: Craig White, June Klein-Bacon, Brittney Montross, Melody Moser, Tom Eachus, Dan Marx, Tony Thompson. Advisory Committee Members Absent: Greg Barnett, Eric Donat.

Others Present: Mary McKinnell, Karen Dowell, Jenni Stevenson, Bob Lincoln, Todd Rickert, Emma Hall, Libby Reekers, Rob Aiken, Megan Taets, Valerie Schwager, Sarah Janssen, April Kiefer, Jane Freeseaman.

1. Chair June Klein-Bacon called the meeting to order.
2. Karen Dowell presented the CSS FY2023 Annual Service and Budget Plan. Discussion was held on one-time projects that are included in this budget. There was also a discussion on the change in MHDS funding from local property tax dollars to state tax appropriation in FY2023.
3. Bob Lincoln updated the group on Elevate's youth diversion services and secondary crisis response. Jenni Stevenson gave an update on Elevate's Mobile Crisis Response services, which just had its one-year anniversary on April 1 for service to the entire CSS region. The average monthly number of calls is around 80 but has been increasing. There was positive provider feedback about how valuable the Mobile Crisis Response services are in helping individuals served and the providers working with individuals. Tom Eachus updated the group on UnityPoint's Mental Health Walk-In Clinic. It is serving adults only and is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm.
4. Discussion was held regarding housing and nutrition insecurities. It has been noted that just at the time when monthly food stamp allocations are being lowered to pre-pandemic allocations, food costs are increasing, creating more insecurity. Going to the grocery store seems to be exacerbating mental health issues due to this stress. A shortage of one-bedroom apartments has also been noticeable. One-bedroom apartments are needed for individuals who struggle to live with others. With monthly rent costs rising, there is a looming crisis for homelessness. The Black Hawk-Grundy MHC Homeless Coordinator has seen a rise in individuals needing shelter.
5. What does the end of the Pandemic Proclamation in Iowa look like? Discussion was held regarding telehealth and whether or not it will continue to be a billable service. It is felt that, once the Federal Pandemic mandate ends, payers will tend to stop reimbursing for telehealth. With staff shortages that all providers are experiencing, telehealth is one way to see more individuals in a shorter amount of time, reducing the staff drive time for individuals agreeing to telehealth visits.
6. The last discussion led into the next topic, workforce shortages/staffing issues. Klein-Bacon noted that she has heard around the state about different agencies closing service lines and asked if we were seeing that in CSS. Nobody seemed to know of agencies closing service lines. Providers present stated they have a longer wait to start services for individuals, some providers are not accepting new referrals for different

programs. Tom Eachus stated that Black Hawk-Grundy MHC is struggling to hire full-time therapists and will be without a full-time therapist by the end of June. They now send new referrals for a licensed mental health professional to the walk-in clinic. In comparison, an individual can get an appointment with a psychiatric nurse practitioner within two weeks.

7. Discussion was held on the need for an adult individual utilizing MHDS services (or involved family member) to serve on the CSS Governing Board. Eric Donat has done such a fabulous job but wishes to move on to other things. If anyone knows of someone who would like to serve in this capacity, please reach out to Mary, Todd or Karen.
8. There were no recommendations to bring to the CSS Governing Board for consideration. Brittney Montross, EPI, did mention at this point that Exceptional Persons, Inc. is launching Host Homes in the CSS Region as one way to combat the shortage of staff and yet continue to be able to serve individuals. They will be making a presentation at the May 2022 CSS Governing Board Meeting.
9. Next Advisory Meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 24, 2022, 10:00 am.