



Whatcom County Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC)
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time/Location: April 27, 2020 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Held Remotely via GoToMeeting

Members Present: Wendy Jones, Dave Reynolds, Anne Deacon, Dascomb Jamison, Michael Massanari, Chris Phillips, Susan Wood, Kathy Kershner, Mullane Harrington

Members Absent: Bill Elfo, Erika Lautenbach

Health Depart Staff/Guests: Jackie Mitchell, Health Department BH Program Specialist; Tammy Axlund, Health Department Office Coordinator; Joe Fuller, Health Department Program Specialist

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
1. Welcome and roll call of members	Jackie completed a roll call of committee members.	Jackie
2. Brief instructions for virtual meeting	All members were asked to mute their devices until time for open discussion.	Jackie





<p>3. 2019 Review of Revenue and Expenditures of the Behavioral Health Program Fund</p>	<p>Anne provided an overview of the Behavioral Health Fund balance sheets distributed prior to the meeting. In 2019, we spent about \$200K less than we budgeted. Anne is working with Finance to ensure our numbers are consistent for the 2020 budget so these are not final numbers. We used the Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Aftercare (PITA) continuum to design and allocate funds for this program.</p> <p>Anne reminded the group of the following decisions the committee made during this budget period to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place approximately \$490K in Behavioral Health funds into housing because document recording fees had dropped significantly.• Allocate less to treatment and more to in prevention/intervention on the PITA continuum. <p>Most of funds in the treatment category are for behavioral health services in the jail and this does not include the full amount needed to ensure Compass Health, the contractor, can provide services through the end of the year.</p>	
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<p>3. 2019 Review of Revenue and Expenditures of the Behavioral Health Program Fund (continued)</p>	<p>The amount listed for the courts is for Drug Court/ Family Treatment Court personnel and services, the Behavioral Health Unit of District Court Probation, the Mental Health Court Program Manager salary, and a few small contracts.</p> <p>The amount in the Jail line covers a portion of psychiatry services and psychiatric medications.</p> <p>Housing funds supported 24/7 staffing at 22 North, Francis Place, City Gate Apartments, and Sun House. The City of Bellingham also contributes funding for these programs.</p> <p>The amount shown for the GRACE program is that which is covered by the BH Sales tax. It does not include the amount billable to Medicaid, or the amount contributed by the City of Bellingham and the hospital. GRACE is currently serving over 80 clients and GRACE is also helping to staff the isolation and quarantine facility. We may be able to use other funds to pay for the isolation and quarantine services, which would reduce the amount currently reflected for this line item.</p> <p>County Facilities Division charges the BH Fund for repairs, maintenance, and support of the Crisis Stabilization Facility. Maintenance costs could increase from 90K to \$180K a year in when the programs are moved to the new building. We can ask the city to pay for more of the facility costs. The amounts that providers can bill insurance and Medicaid are less than the costs of operating the facility. We are working with the State to find solutions for this shortage. We can assume we will need to cover six months of the facility fee and a onetime amount of up to \$50K to buy kitchen supplies which would remain with the building.</p> <p>Amounts do not include Human Services Staff salaries. The County charges Administrative fees for Human Resources, Finance, Prosecuting Attorney, the Treasurer, etc. The County increased our indirect rate more than we expected and this will cost close to \$800K from this BH fund.</p>	<p>Anne</p>
<p>4. 2020 revenue projections/decrease due to COVID-19 pandemic</p>	<p>Since many businesses are closed because of COVID-19, the County believes we will collect 25-30% less in sales tax revenue than in 2019. This results is a \$1.5 to \$2 million dollar deficit in revenue toward the expenditures that were originally budgeted. The committee will need to decide what programs to reduce and where to make these reductions.</p>	<p>Anne</p>





5. Discussion to devise strategy for how we approach possible program reductions

The following clarification was provided in answer to questions raised.

- Human Services funds are “dedicated funds” that must be used according to a specific statute. Mental Health millage can be used for many of the same services, but all of those funds have already been allocated to support people with Mental Health disorders.
- Agencies can sometimes include funding for their administrative services and support in their contracts. There is a formula they must follow to justify what they are asking for and it must fall within Federal Government guidelines.
- We are not aware of the County taking indirect funds from the amount provided by the BH Fund for the court programs
- The \$1.5 to \$2M deficit includes the \$800K indirect rate. The difference might be reduced further by internal reallocation of salaries. Indirect cost is adjusted every year based on information from a couple of years prior. We were informed about the last adjustment in April of 2019, when we were well into figuring out our mid-biennium budget.
- The increase in expenditures from 2018-2019 includes the GRACE program and the additional money we put into housing.
- Even though schools shut down in mid-March, case workers and prevention health specialists are at work with alternative methods to reach their case load via phone, video, etc.
- Almost everything we’ve invested touches one or both of two major community priorities: children and families, and diversion from the criminal justice system.

In determining how we can make up the budget deficit, Anne recommends we:

- Consider where we can make reductions across the board.
- Look at prevention and intervention and possibly renegotiate with the school districts.
- Look at what we put into housing last year for those with behavioral health disorders.
- Ask the County Executive, if we will be expected to continue assisting County programs at the same level. This includes: \$700K a year to jail services and \$700K a year to courts. The only other way to pay for these is from the General Fund, which will also be impacted by the pandemic.





<p>5. Discussion to devise strategy for how we approach possible program reductions (continued)</p>	<p><u>Other Suggested Strategies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate using metrics • Avoid across the board cuts except if it works across a category or with the school districts because they may have other funding available. • Consider how our community will look like next year after COVID crisis, and what behavioral health needs might we need to include • Consider the immediate effects on the community. Long term programs may need to be delayed for now as long as they are not damaged them beyond repair by this crisis. • When contracts leave unexpended funds determine if there is a trend where less funding can be budgeted in the next cycle <p>Based on the information gathered today, Health Department staff will work with the numbers and craft a strategy for where we can make changes now and in 2021. We will call a brief meeting to touch base at the end of May or beginning of June.</p> <p>Chris acknowledged and thanked the Health Department for what they are doing through these difficult times.</p> <p>New committee members, Kathy and Mellane were welcomed.</p>	
<p>6. Public Comment</p>	<p>Harriet: If the committee met more often they could come up with a list of weighted values, so County administration and HS would have an idea of what to do under varying revenue scenarios. We are likely to see heightened anxiety and addiction problems from the pandemic. This flows down to children. What kind of agencies, and intervention can we provide to support the clinical scenarios we anticipate?</p> <p><i>Anne: When this committee was created through ordinance and County Code, we poetized uses for this fund: Criminal justice diversion and families with children are both community priorities. Medicaid expansion meant we felt we could put less in treatment and more in intervention and prevention.</i></p> <p>Harriet. Concerned families won't get wrap around services via Medicaid/care as priorities shift.</p> <p>Arlene: Supports what Harriet said. As a provider, she is seeing increased anxiety and depression, and sudden experiences of grief. It is important for treatment to be available for families as soon as possible</p>	
	<p>Meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.</p>	



WHATCOM COUNTY
Health Department



Erika Lautenbach, Director
Greg Stern, M.D., Health Officer

Next Meeting:	July 27th, 2020, 3:30-5:00 311 Grand Avenue Whatcom County Courthouse Room 514 Bellingham, WA	
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509 Girard Street
Bellingham, WA 98225-4005
360.778.6000 | FAX 360.778.6001
f WhatcomCountyHealth
t WhatcomCoHealth



Whatcom County
HEALTH
Department

1500 North State Street
Bellingham, WA 98225-4551
360.778.6100 | FAX 360.778.6101
www.whatcomcounty.us/health