

Summary of Platte County CHIP Activities in support of Identified Priorities of Behavioral Health

The Platte County CHIP group that addressed the priorities outlined in the 2021 CHIP underwent leadership and structural changes during the 2021-2024 period, but were able to make significant progress towards creating positive change in the area of Behavioral Health.

Determination of Priorities and Structures

- The May 5, 2022 meeting of the Platte County CHIP group determined that the focus areas for the project would be behavioral health and dental health. The CHIP group was particularly interested in determining what community resources are available, and what resources are lacking so as not to create duplicate programs within the county. After discussion of how to best obtain input and information that would allow the group to look beyond 5 years for a long term community improvement goal, it was determined that Barlow McCarthy Physician Relationship Solutions would be contracted to provide a gap analysis regarding behavioral health.
- At the July 7, 2022 meeting of the Platte County CHIP group Columbus Community Hospital presented the bids for the outside analysis, with the goal to have the report done by August or September.
- The October 6, 2022 meeting of the Platte County CHIP group was focused on the review of the Barlow McCarthy report. The report contained a number of recommendations that included both short- and long-term strategies to “leverage existing behavioral health providers in the area and other community resources to better meet the needs of Platte County residents.”¹
- At the November 3, 2022 meeting of the Platte County CHIP group the decision was made to form two committees to carry out the work to support the priorities identified by the 2021 East Central CHNA and the Columbus Community Hospital Behavioral Health Assessment compiled and written by Barlow McCarthy Physician Relationship Solutions. The committees and their priority areas were:
 - Provider Education and Retention.
 - Education and promotion around mental health.

It was decided that the CHIP committees would meet back-to-back on the first Thursday of each month, with separate meeting times for each committee, as well as time set aside for combined discussion.

Committee Work and Progress toward Goals

The committees continued to further gather information and build capacity during 2023. Efforts during this time included:

- Determining provider needs with a survey asking about current and future staffing needs and barriers to filling open positions.

¹ Columbus Community Hospital Behavioral Health Research Report, Oct. 5, 2022, Barlow/McCarty, Kent, Mitzi, pg. 8

- Recruited several community behavioral health providers to the committees.
- Surveyed local behavioral health providers on their educational and certification needs.
- Conducted a mapping of mental health services and efforts happening in the county.
- Planned and executed a mental health planning meeting facilitated by East Central District Health Department.
- Formed a task force to gather information about incorporating a district suicide prevention coalition as a 501(c)(3).
- Worked with other area mental health efforts, coalitions, and task force groups to consolidate and coordinate meetings to increase efficiency, collaboration, and participation.
- Verbally mentioned the “How Are You Really” campaign and where to find the information about it on the United Way website during Thriving Families, Safer Children presentations.

Measurable Outcomes

Through the work of the committees and dedicated staff members at partner/collaborator agencies, awareness of and support for mental/behavioral health needs rose to a new level. Outcomes included:

- Engaging in quarterly meetings with the Community and Family Partnership, where mental health is one of their top three priority issues. Community and Family Partnership gave 16 presentations of Thriving Families, Safer Children between Jan. 2023 – April 2024. Presentations were given at 26 schools, and 634 people heard the information.
- Monthly Mental Health Classes
 - Seekers of Serenity offered monthly classes focusing on mental health topics in English. An average of 25 persons attended classes each month.
 - Schuyler Community Schools offered monthly mental health classes in Spanish to reach the local Hispanic community. There were an average of 10 persons per session.
- Health promotion campaigns were conducted once per quarter.
- A QPR (questions, persuade, refer) training session funded by the Columbus Area United Way and facilitated by Luz Colon Rodriguez was offered to residents of the four-county ECDHD jurisdiction. The purpose of the training was to equip community members with skills to address mental health crises. A dozen people attended the session.
- The formation of a new non-profit, Hopeful Horizon, dedicated to promoting suicide prevention, intervention, and behavioral health needs by providing (i) an association for those organizations, entities, and individuals in the area that have an interest in suicide prevention, (ii) a means of networking regarding suicide prevention and (iii) suicide prevention, intervention, and behavioral health needs for service organizations, healthcare organizations, schools, and the general public.
- Mathews Thampi, Project Coordinator has become a board member of Big Pals, Little Pals, and will work to deliver mental health information and resources to children and youth of the organization, as well as the mentors who work with them.
- ECDHD is working with the Columbus Area United Way to restart the “How Are You Really” campaign using ECDHD funds.