

New Trier Township
Mental Health Committee
Monday, March 6th, 2023 – 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Steven Anderson, Kate Casale MacNally, Rick Drake, Sally Anderson, Joe McGowen, Renee Cox

Approval of February Minutes

A quorum was not present and unable to approve the minutes. The motion is tabled until the next committee meeting.

Trustee report

Kate Casale MacNally:

The board was appreciative of the work the Mental Health Committee during the many nights of the funding process. The next Board meeting is the 14th in which the board will incorporate the funding decisions made by the committee and voted on by the board. Some of the youth centered groups have had a discussion whether money allocated should be sent out due to the circumstances of Warming House temporary closing. A vote was taken to approve the funding as delivered by the advisory committees. The youth centers have been struggling with attendance for the last few years. The next board meeting is March 14th.

Administrator Report

Steve Anderson:

Hello to the members of the Committee and our trustee liaison. I just wanted to say it has been a pleasure working with all of you during the last round of funding hearings. To learn to process is to see tax dollars at work and citizens in action. I'm impressed and inspired by those of you that volunteer your time and effort to make this community a better place. Seeing citizens volunteer to serve and make important decisions about where the Township's funding goes is not only matters for the many agencies that request and get funding, but for the citizens of the community who benefit from these services. To see New Trier Township, recognize the importance of mental health gives me great pride to be a part of this process going forward. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have going forward. All are invited to our Agency Partner Meeting on March 15th from 3-5.

Liaison Reports

Sally Anderson:

Report for SamaraCare is attached.

Lyn King:

Erika's Lighthouse on the Road. Our team presented at 32 conferences last year! The number of students we reach each year has quadrupled, from 110,000 in 2018, to over 400,000 last school year. Educators around the country rely on our programming to bring high-quality, evidence-informed mental health education to their students. One way we are reaching more schools is through attending conferences. In 2022, the Erika's Lighthouse team attended 32 conferences, and we are increasingly being seen as thought leaders in the field of mental health education. Our most popular presentation "Depression Education IS Suicide Prevention" explains how our programs can help schools create healthy communities around mental health.

Tracy Sommer:

Report for the Cancer Wellness Center is attached.

Joe McGowen on behalf of Lisa:

Report from Counseling Center of the North Shore is attached.

Renee Cox:

HAVEN is in the process of merging with Warming House to keep the center open and not shut down. Brian, Steve, and Gail spoke with members of HAVEN and Warming House about plans to either merge or have HAVEN absorb Warming House in some capacity. We will be in contact with them throughout the process and will resolve any finding issues once whatever merger happens is complete.

Other Business

The committee discussed how often reports are needed from each agency. It has been previously practice having a report every month, but it was suggested by several members that a quarterly report would suffice. In the non-profit sector quarterly reports are standard practice. Coordinator Steve Anderson agreed and said he would discuss with the other committees later in the month. Members of the committee suggested that future applications be done through a portal service in lieu of a paper and PDF application as is current practice. The committee will look into using either a Google or Microsoft based form that allows all members of the committee to review and make comments on applications. This will also be discussed with the other committees later in the month. There is a suggestion of creating a rubric for applications. This again will be discussed with the other committees later in the month.

Adjourn

The Committee voted to adjourn at 8:10 P.M.

Report for the Cancer Wellness Center as of Mid-February 2023:

- According to their website, they are having a 2023 Stepping Up to Wellness event coming up in April with a goal of making \$190k.
- Several of the team worked together to successfully kick off a new, unique 4-week program: Family Grief. I copy of this flyer is attaches to this email.
- January intake for new participants once again exceeded the prior year.
- In mid-January, our Intake Coordinator resigned (decided to stay home full time with her son). We were able to find a strong candidate and officially hired her as of mid-February. This will allow a seamless transition for this important position.
- According to the director, Nancy Bulzoni, Cancer Wellness finished the year strong financially, exceeding our budget. We had budgeted for a loss due to several key investments, but the team pulled together and found a way to end the year slightly positive.

I will have a report on Pickles Group next month as I have a zoom call set up with them for tomorrow, March 7th.

Thanks.

Tracy Sommer

Hi Joe and Lisa,

This provides a brief update on the Counseling Center of the North Shore.

We have seen a surge in new clients over the past few months. In fact, in January our clinical staff held more therapy sessions than during any previous month in the agency's history. For the fiscal year-to-date (July 1, 2022 to January 31, 2023), the number of clients seen is up 19% versus the prior fiscal year period, and the number of therapy sessions held is up 21% versus the prior fiscal year period.

So far, we have been able to meet the increased demand for services. Two of our part-time therapists increased their hours, and a new intern from the University of Chicago began training with us in January.

In terms of community engagement and education, we have broadened our relationship with Sacred Heart School. In November, Kim visited 6th, 7th, and 8th grade advisory classrooms at the school and spoke with the students about stress, anxiety and grounding exercises. The Sacred Heart School counselor has invited Kim back to talk with the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders about boundaries, perfectionism, and how to deal with feelings. Later this month, Kim will be on a panel presenting to parents on stress, anxiety, and trauma as part of an event at Kenilworth Union Church titled "Understanding and Supporting Our Teens Mental Health". The event is sponsored by the Alison Tobey Smart Memorial Fund, a CCNS funder.

Finally, I and our Board of Directors have begun working on a new Counseling Center of the North Shore Strategic Plan. Our goal is to have the plan completed and adopted by the Board in May.

Please let me know if you have any questions about CCNS and our activities. Thank you for your work on the Mental Health Committee and your support.

Best,
Bob

Bob Sanfilippo Executive Director
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March 2, 2023

New Trier Township; SamaraCare FY2023 Quarterly Update

Following are some of the Fiscal Year (FY2023) highlights thus far for SamaraCare.

Major Highlights of the Past FY 2023

1. New Office Location. SamaraCare moved to a new office located at Winnetka Congregation Church, Winnetka. While the former location at Christ Church, Winnetka served us well for many years, the new space will provide a better experience for the clients we serve. This new space provides adequate parking, a more direct entrance to our office, and overall is a more updated space. We are very enthused about this move both for our staff and the clients we serve!
2. Teletherapy Continues. The pandemic taught SamaraCare, and many other mental health providers, that the use of a virtual platform for therapy is effective for many of the clients we serve. Therefore, SamaraCare has continued to offer teletherapy and telepsychiatry to all of the clients we serve. This has allowed clients from the New Trier area to have access to therapists located in New Trier as well as other therapists at other SamaraCare locations, in particular psychiatric services. This has helped SamaraCare to continue to provide services, despite the continued shortage in available therapists to hire.
3. The North Region continues to be stable financially. The biggest challenge for SamaraCare, as well as all mental health providers, continues to be finding qualified licensed counselors. There is a well-known national shortage of mental health providers, as a result of a dramatic increase in mental health problems nationally. In particular, there has been an increase in reported anxiety, depression, and substance abuse. This need is present across all ages, but in particular the need is high for adolescents.
4. New Electronic Health Record System (EHR). While SamaraCare has (for over 20 years) had an EHR, after much assessment of our needs, we decided to engage a new EHR. We rolled out the new EHR system called AdvancedMD July 1st, 2022. This was a huge process for SamaraCare, taking much time from our Administrative Team, as well as our Clinical Directors. While there was the inevitable learning curve, and modifications necessary to any new EHR, the system has worked very well! The next step in this rollout is the new outcome measurement for client and therapist use. Embedded in this new EHR is a Virtual Platform, which has made both the client and therapist/psychiatrist experience of teletherapy much better and overall more effective and efficient. I am proud of our staff for this accomplishment!