

**Town of Barnstable
Human Services Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2015**

Names in BOLD indicate action items.

Present:

Charlie Hetzel, Scott Fitzgerald, Heidi Nelson, Roy Richardson (members).

Absent:

Paul Thompson, Jen Cullum

Guests:

Vaira Harik and Samantha Kossow, Barnstable County; Jack Reilly, Learn to Cope

Order:

The meeting came to order at 4:05 p.m.

Future Direction of the Committee

Heidi began the discussion by reminding the group of our accomplishments over the past 18 months, and drew the committee's attention to the inventory of youth substance abuse services available in the Town of Barnstable. This discussion today is to identify gaps in services and identify possible future directions for the Human Services Committee.

Vaira and Samantha explained the purpose of the Barnstable County Regional Substance Abuse Council. The purpose of the council is to develop a framework for planning to address the problem of substance abuse and establish priorities. The first year we started with a baseline assessment which has been published as a report available on the County website. Cost of the problem in Barnstable County is \$110 million per year, with only \$1 million spent on prevention. Bulk of spending is split by treatment and law enforcement. Re-entry services are also a need and under-funded. Ray Tamasi of Gosnold describes prevention and re-entry into the community the bookend services which are usually underfunded. The report also says that seventeen thousand Cape Codders are addicted to alcohol, rates of death attributable to drugs and alcohol are about the same, but the rate of increase in drug addiction has risen very, very quickly. This is what attracts a lot of attention in the community. Jack shared that research shows that alcohol is the leading cause of death in the world; a major carcinogen.

Charlie asked if insurance parity has made a difference. Light has been shed on limits placed on treatment paid for by insurance companies. Samantha responded that last year there was a bill passed that limited the requirement for prior authorization for substance abuse treatment in Mass.

Roy asked about current models for substance abuse prevention. The Council of Churches formed something in the seventies called Project Hope, with street outreach workers. Unfortunately since then services became medicalized. Heidi stated one of the recommendations of the RSAC is to identify best practices in prevention to promote.

Vaira added that Barnstable is rich in services that are available in the town- one is the Community Impact Unit. EMTs are important to connect with families Jack added. Cheryl Bartlett who is heading a substance abuse initiative for Cape Cod Healthcare and local foundations is involved on the RSAC and is working in parallel by funding models that work.

Charlie seconded the importance of the police and Samantha added that there are school resource officers that also play a role. Jack suggested adding community police to the list as a prevention service. Vaira highlighted the District Attorney's office diversion program.

Jack talked about how it feels to be a parent going to the ED with a child in crisis, and leaving without any resources. The focus of the emergency department is to treat and send them home. Parents have no idea about what to do regarding treatment, and there is shame in pursuing help. Parents try to find beds without knowing what a bed is, insurance is limited or hard to navigate, the court system is confusing. Kids need to feel valued through the process. Connectivity/case management in the hospital is an important idea- provide information, give ED staff a script. There needs to be continuity as the addicted person returns into the community, Roy added.

Charlie wondered about JRI and what triggers their involvement. He concurred there are no resources for parents to help them navigate the system.

Jack mentioned that to use Section 35 for involuntary commitment in Barnstable County, every case goes through one psychologist. There was discussion of video connection. Vaira said in her experience this is not complicated to initiate.

Are we advocating for prevention or services. Samantha said there can be overlap. Jack advocated for prevention services to include parents- signs to watch for, support needed after problems are identified.

Heidi summarized our ideas as follows:

- Study recommendations of report and figure out our role in advising the town of Barnstable
- Invite JRI to a future committee meeting
- Advocate for expanding sectioning services
- Navigators for parents- parents need services, parents as a focal point
- Stopping the cycle with an intervention- especially for low-income and disenfranchised families
- Hearing stories that give hope- video-tape stories from those in recovery
- Lack of youth treatment services on the Cape

Re-Cap of Youth Summit

Samantha reported lots of people attended and it was a great event. Thursday evening (parents and community night) about 100 attended, including political dignitaries. The students were vocal and presented themselves well. Charlie attended the Thursday night meeting and also reported on the success of the Youth Summit event and detailed what occurred including the

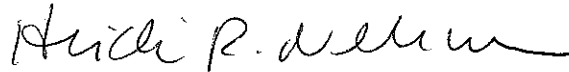
contributions of a number of citizens who spoke with deep emotion about their own families and the unmet needs of so many kids and families for help in the areas of drug abuse.

The committee gives kudos to Jen and Patty Machado for organizing the event. Thursday evening speaker for parents was great- spoke on how to deal with your kids around substance abuse issues. Jack wondered if there will be new faces at the Learn to Cope meeting this evening as a result of the forum.

Future Meetings

EVERYONE Study the RSAC report.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heidi R. Nelson".

Heidi R. Nelson
Secretary and CEO, Duffy Health Center