

Social Worker/Outreach Meeting Notes
Thursday, May 3, 2018
Wellesley Health Department
(No Board of Health quorum)

Attendees: Shepard Cohen, BOH; Carol Hannenberg, BOH; Lenny Izzo, WHD; Ann Marie McCauley, WHD; Krisann Miller, WHD; Cheryl Lefman, WHD (note taker); Rob Evans, HRS; Mark Kline, HRS; Allison Ertl, HRS; Allison Arrigg, HRS; Linda Corridan, WPS; Lori Cimeno, WPS; Sara Berenson, WPS; Gayle Thieme, COA; Mary Gard, Advisory

Welcome Remarks

Shep Cohen, Chairman of the Wellesley Board of Health welcomed the attendees and began the meeting by describing the perceptions in the community around social workers and social services/resources. He noted that some in town think there are too many social workers/services and others believe there aren't enough. Mr. Cohen said the goal of the meeting was to gain a full understanding of the roles/responsibilities of the town's social service personnel, identify challenges and ideas to meet those challenges, as well as to leverage services and resources.

Attendees Remarks

Gayle Thieme, Director of the Council on Aging (COA) described the work that Kate Burnham, LCSW is involved in. She provides social services to those 60 and older: conducts home visits, works with caregivers and family members, WHD, case managers, crisis teams, and participates in Senior Issues meetings and Keep Well Clinics. Ms. Burnham also provides public benefits, SHINE and referrals. Ms. Thieme noted that they have seen a 63% increase since the Tolles Parsons Center opened.

Sara Berenson, a Social Worker at the elementary schools said her position was created three years ago to address the needs of low-income students and their families. It is now a full-time position and the needs of the population continues to grow. She addresses homeless families, those living in poverty in the community, and those in the Housing Authority. Rob Evans from HRS noted they will have more capacity to meet with families in the future.

Lori Cimeno, Director of Student Services at WPS discussed the legal mandates for children without means, as well as referrals for mental health services for children with means. Ms. Cimeno stated there remains a challenge with cases when a child goes to the ER, is discharged, returns to school, and then goes back to the ER. She also mentioned finding time to meet with students at the Middle School is a challenge.

Carol Hannenberg, Board of Health member said people don't understand the state mandates and the number of hours it takes to fulfill them; it doesn't leave a lot of time for those who are not in Special Ed.

Allison Aarig is an Outreach Worker at the Middle School. She provides service to low income children.

Allison Ertl is an Outreach Worker at the High School. She provides services to their population (except for those in Special Ed.), is part of a crisis team, attends meetings to discuss students they are concerned about and meets with students during "blocks" throughout the day. She noted that she is at capacity.

Linda Corridan is the Director of Nursing for WPS. She said that nurses provide social services during student's visits to the nursing offices; this is done to support the students at the time of the visit. In 2016-2017, there were 3,000 social/emotional visits to the nurse's offices. Ms. Corridan said there are around 380 kids seen each day at WPS. She noted that kids at younger ages are presenting with social and emotional issues.

Lenny Izzo, Director at the Health Department said that the social worker/outreach position at the Health Department was created to address those under 60, and those at Barton Road and other public housing locations. He provided historical background about the resident coordinator position at the Housing Authority, who addressed the needs of the residents. Laura Veligor was hired as a social worker/outreach worker at the Health Department to provide social services and outreach for the community (including Barton Road/public housing sites); she recently vacated her position. There are 26 hours available for this non-benefitted position, to be filled by two people.

Rob Evans, Executive Director at HRS noted that there has been a steady upward climb in the needs, as well as in the severity of those seen. Intakes in Wellesley have risen 40%. Dr. Evans said there are fewer providers who will take insurance and work with families, due to the red tape, as well as the low reimbursement rates. Mark Kline, Clinical Director at HRS described the incredible effort and access issues encountered when trying to use insurance; he cited a case using Fallon insurance as an example.

Additional Issues Discussed

- Address question whether we are wasting resources
- Identify populations missed or underserved
- Additional social workers needed
- Re-entry process needs work/improvement (legal mandates)
- Metro-West – better chance of obtaining a spot (bed) there

Next Steps

Shep Cohen recommended that a report (possibly prepared by a consultant) be available. Mr. Cohen suggested a forum with panelists and/or guest speakers in the fall of 2018. The attendees will continue to have conversations about the above topics and collaborate when needed. Mary Gard, Advisory Board Member suggested that the group be proactive.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lefman

Community Health Coordinator, Wellesley Health Department