RSA 126-A:13
Health and Human Services Oversight Committee
June 8, 2018
LOB 205

Present: Representatives McMahon, Kotowski, James MacKay, Byron, Senator Reagan
Absent: Representative LeBrun, Senator Bradley, Senator Fuller-Clark

1. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes

Rep. Kotowski called meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM. The minutes of the May 11, 2018 were reviewed. Senator Reagan made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Rep. Byron. The minutes were approved.

2. Annual Maternal Mortality Report: Patricia Tilley, Deputy Director, Division of Public Health Services

Deputy Director Tilley summarized the annual Maternal Mortality Report for the Oversight Committee (see attached). She explained that no state or federal funding is dedicated to this issue, and that work is done collaboratively due to shared understanding of its importance. The Department is working to develop data exchanges with surrounding states. Suicide and overdose deaths have become major issues. The next report will focus on evaluating the impact of the closure of in-state birthing hospitals in recent years.

Rep. Byron asked if suicide related maternal mortalities were linked to depression. Ms. Tilley replied that as with suicide more generally, professional help for depression had not been sought beforehand. The Department is looking at whether screening/care could catch more people in need through primary care/OB GYN interactions. Rep. MacKay asked if post-partum depression would be an appropriate focus for improvement in primary care, and Ms. Tilley replied that their focus is on working with primary care, OB GYN and family support providers around awareness and screening on behavioral health issues.

Rep. Byron asked if current data has enough depth to measure the impact of Medicaid expansion. Ms. Tilley answered that it does not yet. She explained that eligible pregnant women were already getting some care through Medicaid pre-expansion, and that anecdotally the impact of expansion has come through the availability of mental health and substance abuse treatment for partners, which benefits maternity care indirectly.

3. DD and ABD Waitlist Quarterly Report: Christine Santaniello, Director LTCSS; Sandy Hunt, Administrator, Bureau of Developmental Services

Director Santaniello presented the quarterly report (see attached).

Rep. MacKay asked if the waitlist was increasing. Ms. Santaniello replied that at the beginning of last year there were already 227 individuals waiting for services, but that with the recent approval of $5.4 million roughly 170 individuals would be off the waitlist as of July 1st.

Rep. McMahon asked if the goal of having a maximum wait of 90 days for newly eligible individuals to receive services had been realized, or if it remained a challenge. Ms. Santaniello answered that it remained a challenge, but with the new funding the goal was within reach. Rep. McMahon observed that the 90 day goal had been set three sessions ago and asked where the Department was experiencing difficulty. Ms. Santaniello explained that it was a question of resources, which is why the new funding should have a big impact.

Rep. McMahon asked if the rate of pay was being addressed. Ms. Santaniello said that the rate had not been increased last year, that there was a big need, and that it would be factored into next year's budget discussions. Rep. McMahon asked if there was still a challenge in getting service workers which an increase in the rate of pay would impact. Ms. Santaniello replied that the rate had not increased since 2006, and that it needs to be increased, but that it alone is not a decisive factor in finding workers. They are working with agencies to build off family networks and reviewing whether regulations that might unduly prevent individuals from being hired can be waived. Rep. McMahon observed that in the past discussions about the issue had been over whether to set a ceiling or a floor, and asked if the legislature needed to spend time on the rate issue. Ms. Santaniello replied that the legislature could help by making appropriations and setting parameters that didn't tie the hands of the agencies.

Rep. Byron asked for clarification on the different categories of the DD waitlist, because all categories appeared to be newly eligible. Ms. Santaniello explained that the categories come from RSA 171-A, and that newly eligible individuals are those who have never sought any services in the past. Of those already receiving some services, many are cared for partially by their families, but now their parents are aging and need more help.

4. HB 400 (section 2) Development of a 10-year Plan for Mental Health Services, Second Interim Report: Julianne Carbin, Director, Bureau of Mental Health Services and Erica Ungarelli, Director, Bureau for Children's Behavioral Health.

Directors Carbin and Ungarelli reviewed the interim report and explained the process being used to create the new 10-year plan (see attached). Common themes that have emerged in working group discussion have been workforce issues, rates and alternative payment models and the development of peer supports. After the experience with the last 10-year plan, which was partially derailed by the economic impact of the 2007/8 recession, the intention is to re-evaluate/re-prioritize the plan every two years concurrent with the budget cycle.

Rep. McMahon asked what new facilities were needed and Ms. Carbin answered they planning wasn't at that stage yet.

Rep. MacKay commented that he served in one of the work groups and that he was concerned about ensuring the level of training in peer support groups, and making sure funding was well used. Ms. Carbin observed that the peer support communities for mental health were very different from those for substance abuse. Ms. Ungarelli explained that standards had been put into place for both groups, and that they are trying to align them a little more.

Rep. MacKay commented that he liked the idea of the built-in two year review process, and asked if it would include people from outside of the Department. Ms. Carbin answered that it would. The plan is being developed with consultants from Antioch and they would be involved in the subsequent reviews. Ms. Ungarelli added that in addition even the internal Department groups would include members of the legislature and other external partners.

5. DHHS Commissioner's Update on the Dashboard Report: Commissioner Meyers

The Commissioner was unavoidably detained and unable to attend the meeting. Rep. Kotowski asked committee members to review the dashboard report and have any questions ready at the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned 10:57.

Next meeting to be held September 14, 2018 at 10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

D.C. Bates
House Committee Research

Appended Documents

- 2018 Maternal Mortality Report
- Wait List table April 30, 2018
- Quarterly DD Wait List graph 3-31-07 through 3/31/18
- Second Interim Report on the Development of a 10-year Plan for Mental Health Services
- May 29, 2018 DHHS Dashboard