



North Alabama Mental Health Coalition
April 12, 2022

Attendees (in person):

Jessica Alford (Ross)
Annie Brasseale (VOP)
Melissa Caldwell (Wellstone)
Akeem Davis (Huntsville Hospital)
Denise Draa (Living Life Counseling)
Chief Johnny Gandy (Madison Police)
Kelly Goff (ADMH)
Johnny Hollingsworth
Michael Katschke (Heritage Church)
Lindsey Lee (Ross)
Diane McCrary (NACC)
Marcia Obermann
Mark Prescott (NAMI)
Dr. Sherrie Squyres (Huntsville Hospital)
Bryce Taets (Madison Police)
Don Webster (HEMSI)

Stephanie Allen (Madison City Schools)
Laura Burdeshaw (Decatur Morgan Hosp)
Jennifer Carlson Burba (UAB Fam Med)
Ofc. Shannon Defazio (Madison Police)
Laura Edwards (Part. Drug Free Comm.)
Jennifer Geist (First Stop)
Rachel Heard (DHR)
Sgt. Morris Holmes (Sheriff's Office)
Suzanne Katschke (NAMI)
Tammy Leeth (Wellstone)
Krista Moulton (Therapist / NAMI)
Karen Petersen (Wellstone)
Jon Savage (Huntsville Police)
Paula Steele (Wellstone Emer. Services)
Stacy Thomas (Madison Police)
Latisha Wilson (ADMH)

Chief David Bailey (Madison Fire)
Darlene Burton (Salvation Army)
Selena Carter (Huntsville Hospital)
Woodie Deleuil (NAMI)
Kevin Free (Salvation Army)
Amy Gillott
Chaniece Hicks (First Stop)
Courtney Jeffreys (Amedisys Hospice)
Katheryn Lang (Amedisys Hospice)
Pat Mayfield (Wellstone)
Jan Neighbors (HAPC)
Adina Peyton (GRAMI)
Audrey Smith (HATCH)
Kim Steigerwald (Amedisys Hospice)
LaShawn Jackson Turner
Mack Yates (SVDP/VOP)

Welcome and Introductions

Really Good News – Amy Gillott

Amy explained that, in the past eight months, Decatur West has had to turn away over 400 adolescents. They had 16 beds in the geriatric unit and they are able to convert them to an adolescent unit. They have all the staff in place and will hopefully be able to open in the next few weeks.

Amy also announced that they now have an EmPATH (EmPATH – Emergency Psychiatric Assessment Treatment and Healing) unit. This is very good news for the treatment of mental health in our area.

Mack said that this seemed impossible at first, because we have been trying to get pediatric beds for a long time. Amy took the lack of pediatric beds upon herself and her initiative and determination made it happen. Mack presented a plaque to Amy from the coalition in recognition and appreciation for her accomplishments.



Mack presenting a plaque to Amy on behalf of the NAMHC in recognition of all her work in making mental health pediatric beds in North Alabama a reality.

Wellstone - Paula Steele

Paula gave us an update on the new Crisis Center. The building is still not finished, but will possibly be completed by mid-July. The Crisis Center is currently operating in temporary facilities. Their phone number is: (256) 705-6444.

Mack traveled to Montgomery and asked for pediatric beds in the Crisis Center, but the money has not come through yet.

Mack asked how the jail diversion program is going. It is expanding and they now have five case managers. They added one for Judge Barger’s family support program. They have four co-responders that go out with the police officers and this has been very helpful for the community.

HB-70 – Awaiting Governor’s Signature.

Mack had heard that the bill was just waiting the governor's signature and asked if anyone has heard anything. It will include all relevant information and not just behavior. It has a transition clause and will recognize the lack of capacity. No one had any further news.

HPD/CIT – Officer Jonathan Savage

Officer Savage reported that the first CIT introduction class was held on March 21-22. They will be conducting the 40 hour certification class next week. This class will include law enforcement from HPD, Madison City, the Sheriff's Office and UAH. There is a great need for crisis handling at the Huntsville International Airport. The lieutenant at the airport wants everyone to attend the class, so they are trying to arrange that. They are also trying to get in with A&M, Oakwood College, and Calhoun.

Mack asked if they are still tied to CIT international. Officer Savage was unsure. The police department is still trying to hire a civilian coordinator of CIT.

Community Watch Symposium May 3 - Johnny Hollingsworth

Johnny was not at the meeting but wanted to let everyone know about Project Life Saver which has to do with community watch. There is a program May 3rd from 5-8 pm at the Embassy Suites. There will be a panel including Jeremy Blair, Rex Reynolds, Lucy Douglas, Judge Barger, and others. NAMI and our coalition will have an information table there. Please come if you can.

Autism 04/14 – Kelly Goff

April is National Autism Awareness month. There will be a program on Thursday April 14th at the main library. There will be all kinds of information available. Kelly's organization (Alabama Dept. of Mental Health) is particularly trying to help individuals that have been underserved. She had several flyers and information available to take.

Kelly also mentioned that they have an adult position available in her office.

NAMI

A mental health fair was held at Madison City Schools, organized by officer Defazio. They have plans to get in touch with a support person at AOT.

There is a NAMI fund raiser walk at Stovehouse scheduled for Oct 10th.

A Family to Family class will be starting in June. It will meet in person. Please get the word out. There are 8 modules in the class and they meet once a week for 2 ½ hours. There is no cost for the class. The class is still being presented on Zoom. Mack said it is an excellent class. Learn something new every time. Contact NAMI for more information.

A Peer to Peer class (NAMI of Huntsville is the first in the state to offer this class) is ongoing. Organizers can ask Annie to send out the NAMI schedule and we will put it on the website. The Peer to Peer class meets in person.

HEMSI – Don Webster

Don said they had the quarterly local emergency planning meeting this morning.

In January and February there were 63 ODs per month (about the same) with an average of about 2.5 ODs per day. (Note that deceased OD patients are not included in these OD numbers.)

In March the numbers increased to 84 cases (2.7). For the first 10 days of April the average has been 2.7 per day. (Don noted that these numbers do not include the deaths from ODs.)

Dr. Squyres said that Huntsville Hospital has been receiving calls about deaths every week. There have been approximately 2.5 unattended deaths per week (about 10 per month). The person died before anyone called.

HEMSI is working with Senator Butler to get funding assistance for Narcan (naloxone) because it is very costly. They are also talking with Scott Harris (Alabama Dept of Health) trying to obtain grants to pay for the meds. Someone mentioned that if you are a first responder (an individual) you can get a free dose online. Don said the Jefferson County Health Dept. will send you one for free as well.

With addiction there are usually related mental health issues. HEMSI gives the family members resource information about how to get help.

Don related a story of a lady they rescued in the morning and later that evening she was found dead at a motel.

Someone asked if there is a COVID overlap. Don said over the last 2 years the numbers have increased. He speculated that with more people at home and there are more problems. HEMSI works with law enforcement and he said that the drug trade is changing and they are being very creative with it. The ways fentanyl is getting into the community has changed. When HEMSI goes to a drug situation, the information is automatically passed on to law enforcement. They can tell when a bad shipment of drugs has come in - the OD numbers rise.

Someone asked about the educational efforts from the State relating to ODs. Supposedly Cathy House from the State Addiction Council says the State has resources for education available including posters. No one knew if those resources were available.

Jessica from Ross mentioned that she is a hospital peer specialist. Ross handles people in long term recovery. All their treatment is free and they provide support to those in recovery. Ross hires people that are all in long term recovery. They try and make sure the person can get help if they need/want it.

Selena mentioned that a lot of people know that these resources are out there, but sometimes do not want help. She said sometimes people are coming from out of State because we have good resources here. Everyone has a different level of "rock bottom". You can never define that moment when someone finally realizes that they need help.

Selena is still working on trying to get the call center started.

Next month Mack wants to have a reassessment of goals that we need to accomplish. We have made progress since 8 months ago and now we need to look at it again.

Mack feels that education for families about commitment laws, resources, and how to do a commitment is important. We need a volunteer leader to do this. It would be good to have a media specialist that is devoted to the cause.

Open Floor

Audrey with Hatch (non-profit workforce development program ages 18-24) mentioned that they are recruiting for their next class. They train individuals to get them in the work force and keep them there. We are the support system. She has flyers with information about the program.

Hatch is also seeking an intern. Contact Audrey if you know of anyone.

On April 26th they are conducting a mock program to teach kids how to interview. She welcomed anyone to come and see their program and help the kids with interview practice.

Tim (with the Sheriff's office) runs the peer support for ADC. This is a program for officers (and dispatchers or first responders) who need trauma and crisis support. He is looking for doctors and psychologists to help law enforcement officers without ruining their careers. He is trying to do a conference (hopefully next year) for peer support and needs someone to help. We can't help the community if we can't help ourselves.

Dothan already has a day conference and Tim wants to start one here. Support is available (through LEAPS) but you only get 3 sessions per year and then you have to pay. Mack suggested that he talk with UAB or Huntsville Hospital.

Kevin Free (Social Services program Director at Salvation Army) mentioned that they are hosting a graduation from a drug and alcohol recovery program for their men. He encouraged everyone to attend and support the men on Friday April 22nd at 7:00 pm at the Salvation Army Church at 2114 Oakwood Ave. The event should last one hour and refreshments will be available.

NA and AA are active at Salvation Army as well. NARANON meets at Heritage church on Monday nights.

Next Meeting

Tuesday May 10, 2022
11:00 am at Wellstone