

Adult Inpatient Committee

Illinois Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council

December 30, 2019

Attendees: Andrea Cooke, Dennis Hopkins, Shirley Davis, Dr. Sidney Weissman

Andrea called the meeting to order at 10:06am. The four attendees were concerned about the absence of the other members of the committee, especially those who committed to bring data to the meeting and did not send their work in so that the committee could proceed to work with it. Those present thought that there was a lack of commitment to our committee from some members.

The committee is working on the diversion of individuals with mental illness from jails/prisons, but the problem is that we do not know where the psychiatric beds are in Illinois. One of our committee members, Dan Wasmer, Deputy Director Region Services, provided the committee with a list of psychiatric beds in the state that is nearly three years old. Therefore, we still do not have up-to-date information on how many there are and where the psychiatric beds are. Without this knowledge, hospitals housing people with mental health problems are keeping these individuals in ER beds untreated. When released without treatment, a portion of these people end up in jails and eventually prisons. So people with mental health problems then become criminals with a record that follows them for life. Now, with a criminal record, individuals find it hard to get and maintain jobs, cannot support themselves, and resort to criminal behavior to get their needs met.

The Adult Inpatient Committee believes that mental health matters are not a priority in Illinois. Dr. Weissman pointed out that psychiatric units in hospitals are not money makers. That means that state mental health facilities are important. He also stated that there are individuals on the Planning Council who feel that psychiatric hospitals are bad places and that people should be kept out of the hospital by peer support. He also feels that the structure of IMHPAC is around getting DMH their grant money. It was discussed that a reason for this is that several members of IMHPAC are interested in their own narrow niche. We feel that the silence of some committee members is the fear that DMH programs will be negatively affected if they speak up. In any event, the consensus was that how will they be affected if they speak up. We need to know how many beds there are and how they are staffed. The Council is taking care of state hospitals and their policies.

Dr. Weissman said that some hospitals have observation places in the ER, so people do not need to be admitted. Around the country state hospitals are supposed to be backups for communities, but many are not. It was also discussed that ERs are dealing with the flood of patients from nursing homes to psychiatric hospitals who have chronic problems and need to be cared for. This problems exist with other specialties and not just psychiatry. We need to make sure that data people have are not opinions and opinions need to be based on data.

Andrea brought up that we lost a committee member because Greg Donathan resigned as Assistant Deputy Director of Hospital Operations for DMH. Dr. Weissman said that he should be replaced. He also

remarked that the data that Dan Wasmer brought to the committee about hospital beds is 2-3 years old and that it is essential that data be supplied to the committee before the meeting.

The biggest need of the Adult Inpatient Committee is data – data that is timely and therefore relevant. It seems that only DMH has the data, but has not presented the material. With DMH not producing the data Dennis questions whether it is possible that DMH does not have the pertinent data. And if not, why not? He said it's the committee's job to analyze the data and then make recommendations based upon evidence. If DMH needs to provide the information by a certain date, then we need to establish a process to obtain relevant data. One committee recommendation is to pick a specific date for data to be turned into Andrea so it can be distributed to the committee before the meeting to allow for analysis, such as the second Monday of the month that the meeting takes place.

Andrea adjourned the meeting at 10:52am.