



Eastern Iowa MH/DS  
Regional Advisory Committee Meeting  
January 25, 2021 Held Via Zoom Due to COVID- 19

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I. Introductions:

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am by CEO Elam.

Members Present: CDS Eskildsen; CDS Tischuk; CDS Bopes, CDS Toppert, Lynne Hilgendorf, Rich Whitaker, Nancy Nauman and Governing Board Representative Jack Willey

Member(s) Absent: Luana Gredell, Susie Ruchotzke, Melissa Peterson and Holly Parmer

Four vacancies-Scott, Muscatine and Cedar

Guests: None

Quorum not established

II. Discussion and Possible Action to Nominate Member to Serve on the Governing Board of Directors:

The group reviewed the members available that fit the criteria and it was determined to move this agenda item to the April 2021 meeting for further discussion as to eligibility. Governing Board Representative Jack Willey spoke up about former Governing Board member, Lynn Hilgendorf in her role as family member to the Region's Governing Board, and her willingness to share and listen as an asset that will be missed.

III. Discussion and Possible Action on the FY 20 Annual Report:

CEO Elam reviewed the requirements of the Annual Report and briefly summarized the data in the document. She noted if further questions, to please reach out to her.

IV. CARES Applications:

CEO Elam then reported on the CARES applications and spending activity on behalf of the EI Region. The Region is currently in the process of the third round of applications as we still have approximately \$391,000 remaining. The HEALS bill recently passed in early January of 2021 allowing us to extend the deadline to "spend" the money to June 30, 2021. Nauman stated the cards that were sent by the EI Region advertising crisis services were helpful. Whitaker also spoke up and said money spent on awareness of mental health during the COVID crisis makes sense.

V. Discussion about the financial status of the Region:

CEO Elam gave an overview of the current financial status of the Region. She noted revenues received, YTD, are 7.6 million with spending at 5.9 million with a projected ending fund balance of 5.1 million which is a 48% carryover although cautioned these are not final numbers as the Annual Audit is yet to be completed. She also mentioned spending is on a downward trend due to COVID. Discussion ensued amongst members with ideas mentioned to increase rates for providers so that they may increase Direct Care staff wages thus, helping with the retention issues within agencies.

CDS Toppert also remarked waiting list for Waiver services continue to be too long for families and members.

VI. Legislative Update:

No new funding has been introduced from legislatures into the mental health system reported CEO Elam. They continue to work on drafting bills.

VII. Update on Crisis Services:

Our Region continues to partner with the Robert Young Center (RYC) to oversee and manage the Crisis System. CEO Elam provided informational data during today's meeting on behalf of the Crisis System. She reported that 439 Crisis Evaluations including 87 Crisis Evaluations using Telehealth were done in the month of December 2020. She remarked still lots of stigma associated with having a mental health diagnosis.

VIII. Other Items:

CEO Elam reminded members present of the *Conflict of Interest* form that needs to be completed and returned 1x per year for individuals representing the Governing Board along with members of Adult and Children's Advisory Boards.

Members present also provided some discussion about the current crisis' surrounding COVID from their agencies perspective: Whitaker, from Vera French Mental Health Center, spoke about the hyperaware mode, which is the typical flight or fight response to a crisis. Protracted crisis, however, tends one to have magical thinking that unpleasant situations, such as bills mounting, will just magically disappear.

A glimmer of hope, per Hilgendorf, is the vaccination against COVID for some of the direct care staff. Willey noted these are frightening times for all with the new strains of the virus still on the horizon. And Whitaker also noted that the State of Iowa has a hefty fund earmarked for a rainy day and if these times do not constitute rainy days in Iowa, he doesn't know what does.

XII: Public Comment:

No comments

XIII: Dates for next meetings:

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 19<sup>th</sup> from 2-3 pm.

XIV: Adjournment:

CEO Elam adjourned the meeting at 11:59 am.

Respectfully Submitted-CDS Eskildsen, Clinton County

