

# Kent County Family & Children's Coordinating Council

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**KCFCCC Meeting Minutes**  
**January 12, 2021** 12:00pm – 1:00pm  
Kent County Administration Building  
Via ZOOM

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## **Members/Alternates**

### **Present:**

Candace Cowling, Misti DeVries, Lynne Ferrell, Sandra Ghoston-Jones, Kristen Gietzen, Cynthia Gladyness, Jenny James, Maureen Kirkwood, Ron Koehler, Adam London, Eileen McNeil, Mary Mulliet, Savator Selden-Johnson, Diana Sieger, Scott Smith, Michelle VanDyke, Bill Ward.

### **Members Absent:**

Chris Becker, Tracey Fountain, Judge Gardner, Jacob Maas, George Meek, Jackie O'Connor, Jim Paparella.

### **Guests:**

Doug Booth, Heather Boswell, Veneese Chandler, Frank Florido, Jenn Headrick, Karen Lezan, Salvator Lopez, Kirsten Myers, Courtney Myers-Keaton, Sonia Noorman, Carol Paine-McGovern, Wende Randall, Annemarie Valdez.

## **1 Welcome & Call to Order**

Adam London called the meeting to order. Sandra did introductions and welcomed the new members.

Michelle VanDyke made a motion to accept the minutes and the agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> provided by Diana Sieger – Vote was unanimous.

## **2. Public Comment**

There was none.

## **3. Kent School Service Network (KSSN) Behavioral Health Update Related to COVID**

– Carol Paine McGovern provided the update. She provided a review of the development of KSSN. In 2006 there were 3 districts and 8 schools partnering with KSSN. There are currently 10 districts and 41 schools participating with KSSN, with the 1<sup>st</sup> charter school, William C. Abney Academy now on board.

COVID-19 saw the Community School Coordinators and Site Team Clinicians begin to work virtually. Carol highlighted some of the services provided virtually during the

pandemic. Mental health issues were at the top of the list of concerns. They created virtual group therapy sessions, financial assistance with copays for mental health therapy sessions, Spanish-speaking support sessions for parents and wellness checks on Wednesdays, providing teachers with breaks when schools returned in session, etc. There has been a big concentration of mental health assistance for students and families.

Currently KSSN is looking at conducting social-emotional screenings to continue to connect students to supports. Work is also being focused on providing a racism-free environment for students.

Kristen Myers from Kent ISD continued the update, providing an overview on how the ISD is leading the effort to providing the best behavioral health supports for all students in Kent County.

Kristen said they are working closely with KSSN and the mental health partner organizations. A decrease in referrals has created concerns that there will be a large increase once in-person learning resumes, so they are preparing for it. She said working with KSSN and the mental health service partners, a companion document to the Myschools Roadmap was developed around mental, emotional and social health. Kent ISD also assisted districts with moving the universal mental health screening from the Governor's document on mental health. They are exploring opportunities to look at the student referral process. Also provided was crisis management planning.

Additionally, they are seeing an increased need to support staff mental wellness and have provided resources to them.

After discussion among the group, Carol said it's important to be intentional on our own racism work and address how marginalized groups have been severely impacted by the pandemic.

4. **Crisis System Update** – Adam London reported that the work of the consultant, TriWest is complete. Their full report is complete and the priorities have been determined, with consensus approval and approved by the executive leadership team, co-chaired by Wayman Britt and Mike Jandernoa. The priorities are:

- Opening A Crisis Center, or two crisis centers, one downtown and another someplace else within the community.
- Implementing a Crisis System access phone line
- Expanding Mobile Crisis Care in the community to address adults, in tandem with the Children's Mobile Crisis Care that is already occurring.
- Improving Psychiatric Inpatient Processes

Another recommendation of the consensus workgroup and of TriWest was to hire an Administrator to take the plan into implementation, pursue the four priority areas, build a financial sustainability model, and build governance structure.

TBD Solutions from Kentwood was selected as the firm to provide these services. The hospitals are all contributing funding to help pay for the Administrator position for the coming year.

Bill Ward said the secure Crisis Center that will be built along with the Urgent Care Center required legislative action and that the Governor signed the legislation in the lame duck session of 2020. There is a path forward legally now. The stars are all aligning.

Adam plans to bring TBD Solutions to the next meeting for an update to the group.

## **5. Agency Updates:**

- Maureen Kirkwood – HealthNet of West Michigan has opened their services to anyone in Kent County by calling their number: 616-726-8204. Normally there are eligibility requirements, but due to COVID, those requirements are currently being waived through the end of March.
- Mary Mulliet – The new CEO of DA Blodgett/St. John’s Home, introduced herself and said she is excited to be part of the group.
- Bill Ward – Network180 Executive Director, announced that Network180 just closed out their budget year with a positive balance for the first time in five years. He said they are on track to have a positive fund balance this year as well. He said they are now being funded by the State at the proper level.

Bill also shared that he is also happy to announce that Bill Riley has been selected as the Interim CEO of the Lakeshore Regional Entity (LRE) while they search for a new permanent CEO.

- Jenny James – Deputy County Administrator shared that a work session on Housing with the Board of Commissioners will take place on January 28 at 10:00 AM. The Board has recognized the need for affordable, accessible housing in our community. The BOC will follow that up with a conversation, likely the end of February, on what role the County can have in supporting housing in our community. The work session will be virtual, and members of this group are welcome to attend.

Jenny also shared her contact information.

- Courtney Myers-Keaton – Coalition to End Homelessness. She is hoping the conversation on Homelessness will include some of the Continuum of Care (COC) members, since they have been having these discussions for some time now. She said they’ve noticed some trends among family homelessness and will be discussing this at their steering council meeting this week. They have not determined what the action steps will be, but the general trend they have seen though is that the homelessness numbers have doubled since the onset of the pandemic. After the Steering Council meeting on Friday, there will likely be a communication going out to develop some conversations and strategies to address this issue.
- Salvador Lopez – President of K-Connect, shared that they have been having conversation around education. He said they will be convening a conversation around the current standing of education from Prenatal to high school graduation within the County. He said they are talking about having an expert in the field join the

conversation. He offered anyone who is interested in being a thought partner, they would be welcome to join this virtual conversation. He shared his email for those interested in participating.

## 6. **Miscellaneous**

Sandra Ghoston-Jones asked the group to share how they are supporting their staff through the pandemic to ensure they feel safe and supported. What is everyone doing for self-care?

- Kristen Gietzen from Arbor Circle shared they are offering a regular self-help group on Zoom twice a month.
- Misti DeVries from the Children's Advocacy Center said they have a Morale Committee where they do monthly activities...things to engage all of the staff.
- Mary Mulliet from DABlodgett/St. John's Home said they have a solid safety plan and continue to reference back. She said she has been impressed with the organization's ongoing communication related to the pandemic. She said they are putting in place intentional engagement among staff, similar to what Arbor Circle is doing. They are going to do short clips of videos of leaders out in their daily lives, such as walks in the woods, etc.
- Karen Lezan from Bright Beginnings said they do individual reflective supervision each month, at staff meetings they try to do self-care time, they have Wellness Wednesday encouragement that goes out and have taken on grace as a theme to allow for staff to be flexible with their time to address family and personal needs. Also listening to staff as they need to decompress.
- Sandra Ghoston-Jones encouraged the group to take time for themselves, making sure they are not overwhelmed, be sure to be taking care of their mental health and to take safety precautions to keep self and family safe. She also encouraged them to take the time to thank and encourage staff.

## 7. **Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 1:15 PM. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2, 2021.