**Beaverhead County Mental Health Local Advisory Council**

January 12, 2018 from Noon - 2:30 p.m.

Library Conference Room – second floor, UMW Library

**Members Present:** Chairman Lynn Weltzien, Jenny Given, Rick Hartz, Julie ingram, Kim Martinell, Jeanette Prodgers, Commissioner Tom Rice, Melainya Ryan, and Katherine Buckley-Patton.

**Members Absent**: Vice Chairman Jerry Girard and Beth Sullivan.

**Others Present:** See the sign-in sheet from the public meeting.

**Noon - Welcome and Introductions -**Establish Quorum

Lynn welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly explained the mission of the LAC. (There were around 34 people in attendance so many were new to the group.) She further explained we would not have a usual meeting, so we could make more time for Director Sheila Hogan of DPHHS. Lynn had the voting members of the LAC introduce themselves. A quorum was established.

**Explanation of Today’s Special Agenda Format –** Lynn Weltzien, Chair

Lynn explained that she would be asking the Director questions prepared by the LAC and sent two weeks ago to DPHHS. At 2:00 or the end of these questions, which ever comes first, we will open the meeting up to questions from the public.

**Introduction of Guest, DPHHS Director, Sheila Hogan –** Katherine Buckley-Patton, former colleague. Katherine introduced Sheila and commented that they have known each other for over 20 years. Katherine stated that DPHHS is the largest department in the State of Montana government.

**Opening Remarks** – Director Sheila Hogan

Director Hogan talked about growing up in Butte and her subsequent career. She previously worked for HRDC in Butte. She shared that this is a difficult time for her department and their budget. She wants to be able to take care of the people in Montana. She reported that 24,000 kids are on the CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program) program. She stated that DPHHS has 3,000 employees and a big budget. There are 4,000 kids in the foster care system in Montana and she talked about the struggles with families and kids. She said she is impressed with our LAC and that we are a good example of what others should be doing in their communities. Sheila said to call her with roadblocks and problems and she will work with us.

**Prepared Questions** – facilitated by Lynn

Lynn pointed out that these questions have been printed on the reverse side of this page for your convenience. Once Director Hogan has concluded her response to each question, comments are encouraged. These will be limited by time restraints, if necessary.

**QUESTIONS:**

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**COMMUNITY**

**What are DPHHS’ plans to address the needs of vulnerable adults and children impacted by these community-based mental health cuts?**

Sheila responded by asking questions about targeted case management. How do we direct our funding for coordinated care? How do we work together with the department? She talked about fewer resources going to the communities. She spoke about the need for tele-medicine and primary care to play a bigger role. DPHHS is planning for the next legislative session as she

feels, as a state, we have to look at the system differently. To prepare she wants to talk on the local level about the needs.

**Rural communities struggle with the reality of not having ‘back up resources’ when funding cuts occur while some form of ‘back up resources’ often exist in larger communities.**

* + Beaverhead County has a higher than average suicide rate, a sad reflection of our state being in the top five national rankings of suicide for more than 40 years. Beaverhead County residents’ risks will likely escalate due to these mental health cuts. Do you have suggestions/recommendations for ‘back up resources’ to fill in the gaps in services?

Sheila talked about suicide in Montana and the SB18 suicide prevention bill. RFP’s were requested from communities to fund evidenced-based programs. She noted that Beaverhead County did not submit a RFP. Montana is ranked #1 in the county for suicide. Veterans and vulnerable groups such as children and indigenous people living on reservations are at high-risk..

Karen Zaspel asked what services can we expect to be implemented to help with suicide prevention. Sheila said she was not involved, but there will be press on this soon.

Mary Jo asked if no local agency or institute had applied for the RFP. Sheila said the school did not apply but she didn’t know if anyone else in the community did. Sheila said there is a pot of $500k for resources and encouraged us to be involved the next round. Lynn explained that often such RFP’s require a year, or more, of preparation in order to have the data expected when applying and that, in addition, this particular RPF was for a research oriented project to create a new evidenced-based program not simply implement an existing one. As such, the LAC had not felt prepared nor qualified.

Sheriff Kluesner said they had applied for a grant in the detention system for CIT (Crisis Intervention Training). They did not get the grant. He thinks other programs are being funded, that do not necessarily help meet our needs in Beaverhead County.

Sheila said the budget has impacted what is available to communities.

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Val Neeley asked if Montana is considered unique in our needs and if there are other resources regarding suicide. Sheila said that we are looking at other states and what they are doing in regards to suicide.

Javier Negron asked how much of the money cut from communities is being used for research rather than actually being used for programs to help people. Sheila said there is a lot of programming being done through SB18 and that not a large amount is being used for research.

A citizen talked to the group about how he was a suicide attempt patient and wanted to know if there was a possibility to get our area a psychiatrist. Sheila said there is a shortage of psychiatrists in not just the state but all over the nation. She encouraged the use of tele-psych.

* + When a county resident with ample income, decent health insurance, and a support system must see a specialist in Bozeman, Butte or Missoula they find a way to navigate the obstacles and make the trip happen. However with the loss of both case management and a local facility to go to for assistance, how will those who are among our counties most compromised, i.e. those with a crippling mental illness, navigate their way?

Sheila said she wished she had answers. Medicaid will help with transportation, but the application process is slow. She said she really didn’t have answers. A discussion took place about the delays with Medicaid.

Jenny Given asked for more generalized information about how our legislature got us to this critical point. Sheila explained the money issue by simply stating that the fire season cost the state about $83 million from the general fund this year. Most of DPHHS money is federal yet has to have a match from the State. Due to the costly fire season, the state would not have their part of the match and so cannot utilize the federal dollars. She pointed out that Montana legislators did not think we needed revenue boosters such as a five cent tax on a glass of wine and so none were passed. She further pointed out that both Beaverhead County representatives, Tom Welch and Jeff Welborn, voted for the budget cuts and that we needed to talk to them. Further discussion took place about budgets and money.

* + Since local case management services won’t exist, what recommendations do you have to keep clients stable in their own community? As you know Beaverhead County is facing the triple threat of addressing targeted case management cuts, the closure of the WMMHC office and day treatment program, and the Office of Public Assistance closure.

Tom Welch said that in the budget, we are forecasting revenue. He said, “You pick a number and then look at the reserves.” Based on this the forecast was for more revenue, but not necessarily the amount the legislature thought it would be.

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* + There will be instances when Beaverhead County residents will need services not locally available. When the state hospital is at maximum capacity, where will Beaverhead County residents go when their mental condition deteriorates? How will they get to that alternate treatment facility? What funding resources will exist to assist in that transport and treatment?

Sheila said she would like to learn from a community like ours that works together. She said they would help with our problems. She urged that the State hospital should be a last resort for treatment. She said they are braiding resources on the state level.

Mary Jo asked if there are problems at the state level and what about case management. Sheila would support us getting a grant. She said she will sit down with our community and the Montana Healthcare Foundation to discuss a grant. She said the available funds from MHCF are smaller but, because we have the most active LAC in the state, we should be a good candidate.

* + When parents decompensate (without services), what services are available for their children?

Sheila said that she hopes CHIP will be reauthorized. She encouraged people to call Senator Daines, Senator Tester and Representative Gianforte. Lori Roberts, the City of Dillon librarian, talked about the library and the services they are being asked to provide now that the OPA and Job Service offices are closed. Sheila said training is available for advocates at the library, or elsewhere, and urged us to stay in touch with her to acquire that.

Amber Spencer and Kendra Church, employees for the OPA office in Dillon, spoke about the situation in Dillon and what to do. They talked about how they are willing to d some volunteer work and want to work together with other agencies.

There were several critical comments from the audience regarding the state abandoning vulnerable people.

Rick spoke to the group about how we are going to have to work on “home grown” solutions and work together to figure out the problems rather than wasting energy complaining. Sheila again said they can help train. Rick said “the ax has fallen” and we need to move forward as best as we can. Sheila said our community should gather data on what is needed with specifics on how DPHHS can help, and bring that to her.

**ALTERNATIVES**

**What ideas/programs are other communities in Montana implementing to meet the needs of the case managed patients who no longer have access to case management?**

* + Are there examples from other states we might learn from?

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* + Are there pilot programs in the state that address mental and integrative behavioral health from which we can learn, model, be a part of, i.e. satellite program, or relevant grants to apply for in the future?

Lynn asked if there other rural states had innovative ideas that we could learn from, if there were any pilot programs in Montana that we could be a part of, or any other grants to apply for. Sheila

said they are working on foundational pieces for a new infrastructure in which tele-health would play a big role.

Jana Barnes said the PCP’s at Barrett’s are working with Dr. Arzubi in the ECHO Project for psychiatric consultations. They also have a Tele-psych service but it is about 6-8 weeks to get help. Sheila said our community impresses her. Sheila said DPHHS can help with infrastructure.

Kim Martinell asked about having a tele-help to help people with filling out application forms and getting appointments in Butte. Sheila really supported this idea.

Stacy Fisk asked about CPS and the audit that was done in 2015 and how the department is dysfunctional.

Pat Carrick said legislation and DPHHS were irresponsibility in making “crisis cuts” with poor planning and poor transition. Yet ultimately, the responsibility comes back to each of us as citizens and voters.

Sheriff Kluesner talked about how the cuts will negatively affect Beaverhead County’s law enforcement.

**STATE-WIDE**

**What is the complete listing of specific child and adult services impacted/reduced/affected by mental health related budgetary cuts in the 2017 Legislative Session, Special Session, Governor’s Budget reductions, and within the DPHHS budget?**

Sheila said she will get the list to us for planning.

**How discretionary can DPHHS be in making choices about where to make cuts? Can programs already cut in the first series of 2017 Legislative reductions not be included in subsequent budgetary reductions, that came out of the 2017 Special Session or Governor mandated budgetary cuts?**

Sheila said proposals are created within the executive planning process. That group then goes to the governor with a list and they then decide what to take on to the legislature. In legislation,

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there are typically further additions and deletions. There is some discretion, for her as director, regarding which of different programs to cut but it is minimal.

**Since Congress did not reauthorize the Children’s Health Insurance Plan for more than a few months, please explain DPHHS’ planned steps in notifying CHIP families their children’s health coverage may end. If/when long-term re-authorization occurs, will MT**

**provide coverage retroactively to those same families to their date of termination so their children experience no gap in health care coverage? If not, why not?**

Sheila said CHIP has enough money to get through March 15th so there is to immediate crisis. DPHHS is banking on this program being reauthorized by the federal government. So, DPHHS chose not to notify families that it may not be reauthorized when she, and others, are so optimistic that it will be reauthorized.

* + What percentage of Healthy Montana Kids/Healthy Montana Kids ***Plus*** expenditures goes toward behavioral health expenses? What is the projected change in those percentages based on the proposed cuts?

Sheila did not know the percentage, but said she would find out if we want. Lynn said she would like to know the percentage.

Mary Jo O’Rourke talked about how the smaller cities seem to be taking the brunt of the budget cuts. She said we need these services back and that we cannot take further cuts.

Sheila said that Billings and DPHHS would not agree with what Mary Jo said. Sheila said that there has also been a workforce reduction and that “they also feel the pain. Sheila talked about a 111 page document that was submitted from DPHHS that explains exactly where the cuts were made and that it does include the larger cities and DPHHS administration salaries. It is on mt.gov. The cuts were proposed at $75 million and they were able to get it approved at only $49 million. She is grateful that they could work with this amount.

Tom Welch talked about the situation and how hard it was to deal with all of this. He again referenced anticipated revenue.

**What is your recommendation for the most effective thing(s) Beaverhead County residents and the LAC can do to advance our concerns to those who make these difficult budgetary decisions? What can we do to be more effective in representing the integrative behavioral health needs of county residents?**

Sheila said we need to continue doing what we are doing. She talked about the programs in the school system. She encouraged the legislators to be invited to see what is being done.

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Sue Hansen said the LAC and others have done a great job in supporting mental health in Beaverhead County. She said the PHD is going to be doing another community needs assessment this summer and will need help from the community to get this done. This data is used by Public Health to get grants from the state and can be available to other groups too.

Katherine Buckley-Patton said that the Human Service Network is another group concerned about the closures. They meet monthly in the Episcopal Church. They talked about different subjects but have agreed that for the next three (3) months the discussion will be focused on the closures of OPA, and WMMHC and concerns with CHIP. Others are invited to be a part of this group.

George Johnston – Community Health Center. He talked about denture coverage and how it may be cut from the state program.

Rick asked Sheila if Kenny Bell, our Program Officer from AMDD, will be able to come to future meetings. Sheila said no one is allowed to travel and no new employees are being hired. She said, however, that if she comes to Dillon again, he could possibly come with her. Sheila will look into this.

Tom Rice thanked everyone that came to the meeting, the LAC, WSAA representative Rick Hartz, and Representative Tom Welch. He also thanked Director Hogan for coming to Dillon. He commented about the fact that the commissioners have had to make local in-county budget cuts too and stated he would be interested in learning more about tele-help.

JP Plutt, from the Dillon Tribune, who had attended the whole meeting, was asked if he would provide weekly updates in the paper. He would not agree to weekly updates but did say he will write an article on this meeting for the Dillon Tribune and do some follow-ups.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 2:10.

*The next meeting will be on February 9, 2018, noon - 2:00 pm*

 *Tom Welch Conference Room, Beaverhead County Treasurer’s Building*