

**WHEELING TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD MINUTES OF
SEPTEMBER 11, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

The Mental Health Board Meeting of Wheeling Township, for September 11, 2024 was held in the Paula Ulreich Meeting Room, in the Township of Wheeling, 1616 North Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois. President Susan Hayes called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Secretary Bill Dixon called the roll and the following members were present, Bill Dixon, Jeanne Hamilton, John Lubbe, Jim Ruffatto, JoAnne Schultz, Jack Vrett & Susan Hayes.

Absent: None

Also, in attendance: Wheeling Township Attorney Kenneth Florey, and Wheeling Township Director of Finance and Administration Regina Stapleton.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Susan Hayes led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance. After the Pledge, President Susan Hayes asked for a moment of silence for September 11th.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION #1: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE WHEELING TOWNSHIP
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD MEETING ON AUGUST 14, 2024.**

Motion by Jim Ruffatto, seconded by JoAnne Schultz, to approve the August 14, 2024 Wheeling Township Community Mental Health Board Meeting minutes.

VOICE CALL VOTE: ALL AYES...
NAYS: None....Motion #1 Carried.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

NONE

PRESENTATION

Dr. Sean Bailey from Harper Business Solutions gave a presentation on the Needs Assessment Report. Dr. Bailey stated that he was grateful to have worked with the Board. He shared some findings and recommendations. He said the assessment was conducted

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to evaluate the current state of Mental Health services, identify gaps and provide recommendations for improvement within the Township. A copy of the Executive Summary Report is attached to the minutes for reference.

BOARD COMMENTS

President Susan Hayes suggested that Board Members use the Needs Assessment information to formulate a one-year and three-year wish list. She also stated that they should think about where to go with the budget and proceed as if there were a levy.

Jim Ruffatto thanked the Director of Finance & Administration Regina Stapleton for all her hard work.

MOTION # 2 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jim Ruffatto, seconded by Jack Vrett.

VOICE CALL VOTE: All Ayes...

NAYES: None...Motion #2 carried

The meeting for Wednesday, September 11, 2024, was declared adjourned at 7:50 pm. The next scheduled Community Mental Health Board Meeting is set for Wednesday, October 2, 2024, at 7 pm.

Executive Summary

Overview

The Wheeling Township Mental Health Needs Assessment was conducted to evaluate the current state of mental health services within the township, identify gaps and areas for improvement, and provide actionable recommendations to enhance service delivery. The assessment focused on three primary areas: *mental illness*, *intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)*, and *substance use disorder (SUD)*. This report synthesizes findings from community surveys, stakeholder interviews, financial analyses, and benchmarking with peer communities.

Key Findings

1. **Strong Commitment to Mental Health Services**
 - Wheeling Township allocates significant resources to mental health services, partnering with local organizations such as the Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health and The Josselyn Center to provide comprehensive support.
2. **Comprehensive Senior Services**
 - The township excels in delivering senior services, including health and wellness programs, social activities, and caregiver support, resulting in high satisfaction rates among senior residents.
3. **Diverse Human Services Programs**
 - A wide range of human services programs are available, offering essential support such as emergency financial assistance, food and clothing resources, and transportation services.
4. **Opportunities for Enhanced Cultural Competence and Language Accessibility**
 - There is a need to expand culturally competent and bilingual services to ensure equitable access for all residents, particularly those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Bilingual services are the responsibility of Service Providers, with the Township's role being to provide financial support and ensure outreach materials are accessible. The assessment highlights that many residents face barriers in accessing services due to language differences. Addressing these barriers will require service providers to enhance their bilingual capabilities, especially in Spanish, Polish, and other commonly spoken languages within the township. Additionally, the Township can support this effort by translating key communications and outreach materials to ensure that all residents are informed about available services.
5. **Need for Specialized Services for SUD and IDD**
 - The assessment identified gaps in services for substance use disorders (SUD) and intellectual & developmental disabilities (IDD), highlighting the need for more targeted support in these areas.

Recommendations

1. **Enhance Funding Allocation for Specialized Services**
 - Increase funding for programs targeting SUD and IDD to improve access to specialized care and support. It is also recommended that the Township factor in the costs of staffing and administrative support, which are essential for sustaining the proposed expansions in mental health services.
2. **Expand Cultural Competence and Language Accessibility**
 - Implement training programs for staff and service providers focused on cultural competence and sensitivity, and increase the availability of bilingual services. Providers should prioritize offering mental health, IDD, and SUD services in multiple languages such as Spanish and Polish. The Township should support these efforts by ensuring that essential communications and outreach materials are also available in relevant languages.
3. **Strengthen Community Engagement and Outreach**
 - Develop targeted outreach initiatives to engage underrepresented groups, including culturally tailored health fairs, workshops, and educational campaigns.
4. **Implement Robust Feedback and Satisfaction Tracking**
 - Establish a comprehensive feedback system, including regular satisfaction surveys and focus groups, to gather insights from residents and inform service improvements.
5. **Explore Funding Opportunities for Future Expansion**
 - Seek additional funding sources, including grants, partnerships, and state and federal funding, to support service expansion and infrastructure development.

Conclusion

The Wheeling Township Mental Health Needs Assessment provides a comprehensive evaluation of the current services and identifies key areas for improvement. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, the township can build on its strengths and address critical gaps, ensuring that all residents have access to the support they need. Collaboration with local organizations, community leaders, and residents will be crucial in realizing these goals. Special emphasis should be placed on addressing linguistic barriers to ensure equitable access for all community members.

While the 2024-2025 allocations are final, there will be an opportunity for reallocations and adjustments in the 2025-2026 fiscal year to address emerging needs and service gaps.

Traits and Characteristics of a Healthy and Thriving Community

Healthy communities are characterized by shared responsibility and accountability for the well-being of all members. Best practices for serving community members, service providers, and community leaders include:

1. **Inclusivity and Equity:** Ensuring that all community members, regardless of background, have equitable access to services and opportunities.
2. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Fostering strong partnerships between public agencies, private organizations, and community groups to leverage resources and expertise.
3. **Community Engagement:** Actively involving residents in decision-making processes and encouraging their participation in community initiatives.
4. **Comprehensive Services:** Providing a wide range of services that address various aspects of well-being, including physical health, mental health, education, and social support.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly assessing community needs and the effectiveness of services, and making necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.

By highlighting these traits and characteristics, the report aims to illustrate the importance of a holistic approach to community well-being and the role of shared responsibility in achieving a thriving community. This emphasis will be reinforced throughout the benchmarking section, where best practices from peer communities will be detailed.