

VPCH Advisory Committee

01/31/2022

Attendees: Greg Tomasulo, Heidi Gee, Sarah Sherbrook, Linda Cramer, Karen Barber, Laura, Stephanie Shaw, Alisson Richards, Anna Strong, Grace Winters, Laura Shanks, Julie Vose

Medical Director Update: (Alisson Richards)

We currently have 21 beds operating but that could change, our census is below 21 but our acuity has been high lately. With the stress and strain of COVID weighing heavily on healthcare workers, we have been trying to create a balance for our patients and staff to help ease some of that. We have the units converted so if we have a COVID positive case we can continue operations for that unit, this has worked well. We had some hospitalized persons test positive for COVID not that long ago and we learned a lot from that.

The medical staff recently invited the Howard Center Medical Director and members of the medical staff to meet with our medical team. Trying to facilitate coordination of care and making sure we do everything we can to make it a smooth transition. Social Work Chief and I have been working hard to make sure patients have secured appointments prior to discharge. Include the outpatient team in the discharge plan with the patient has been implemented. This is all part of a performance improvement plan for the medical staff.

Our three medical staff are taking person centered care to heart, they do a lot of dialogic type meetings with Greg Tomasulo.

Nursing Update: (Stephanie Shaw)

We are still navigating our way through the continual staffing challenges, currently working with our many travel nurse partners to help cover our gaps. We have recently implemented a financial incentive for our permanent staff that took effect a few weeks ago. When looking at the dashboard pay attention to four months ago when we shifted to 12-hour shifts, you will see that reflected in the dashboard.

Operations Update: (Heidi Gee)

We have had issues with an odor that we could not locate in our sensory room, and we finally figured out it was the glue under the carpet. We replaced the carpeting yesterday and hoping to start using it again very soon.

There have been some ongoing issues with radios and dead zones in the building. On 02/03/2022 we will be installing a repeater and all the radios will be reprogrammed which should eliminate the dead zones in the facility.

Psychology and Recovery Services Update: (Greg Tomasulo)

There has been a vacant Recovery Services Clinician position for a few months, but we are hoping to have it filled very soon and our RS team back up to full strength.

Currently working on a performance improvement project for psychology, which is to create guidelines for effective communication around the treatment plans. The 12-hour shifts can cause staff to sometimes be out of work for up to four days and there have been some challenges with communicating the most up to date care plans. One of the solutions we have found is to create staff guidelines on types of interventions to manage difficult behaviors, we do this with those who have more acute recovery. We start this process when we see three consecutive high-risk notes or EIPs. Collaboration with our nursing staff has helped, we sit down with those who work closely with the hospitalized person and find what works to help manage their stress and emotions. Once the information is collected, we make a reference sheet and give it to the assigned nurse, EHR, and the clip board MHS staff reference. In the beginning we had written three sets of guidelines and after six months of implementing this process we have written a total of seven. We have heard from staff that it is helpful especially after having been off for a few days.

Social Services Update: (Given by Greg Tomasulo for Missy McGibney)

We currently have a vacant Social Work position, in the process of advertising and trying to fill that position.

DMH Updates: (Karen Barber)

Commissioners' office has extended an offer to a CEO candidate for VPCH, we are still finalizing paperwork and hope to have an announcement out by the end of the week.

DMH has a new Medical Director, Kelley Klein, who will be starting at the end of next month full time, she is currently part time while she transitions from her current job to DMH.

DMH is busy with the current legislative session, the department itself is not putting forth any proposals other than the budget.

Continue to facilitate work for the Forensic Working Group.

The new secure residential started in October of 2021 and continues its progress. Pictures of the new facility can be found in House Corrections and Institutions, go to the Wednesday meeting, and locate the BGS PowerPoint. The secure residential facility is slated to opening in the new quarter of 2023 and will start recruiting for staff soon.

Quality Update: (Sarah Sherbrook)

Dashboard is located at [VPCH Advisory Committee | Department of Mental Health \(vermont.gov\)](#)

Questions or Comments:

Q: Possible to get a copy of the Dashboard?

A: Yes, I will email it to you.

Q: Do I still contact Peter Mills Brown about coming to speak to orientation?

A: It is Rhett Williams you would want to speak to, email Stephanie Shaw and she will make sure they touch base about orientation.

Linda wanted to add that it has been a long time since she attended advisory or been to VPCH and she is seeing a lot of changes and improvement plans. Laura agreed and wanted to add that we are always cooperative, and she never has too many complaints regarding VPCH.