

VPCH Advisory Committee

09/27/2021

Attendees: Alisson Richards, Greg Tomasulo, Elizabeth Kanard, Heidi Gee, Sarah Sherbrook, Jeremy Smith, Karen Barber, Stephanie Shaw, Zach Hozid, Laura Shanks, Julie Vose

Medical Director Update: (Alisson Richards)

There have been a few changes to our medical staff, Sam Evenson started in July as a full-time psychiatrist and seems to be fitting in well with the psychology of care that we do. Dr. Fintak is helping at UVM, they are down a psychiatrist, so she is there on loan and helping to pick up shifts. Our physician's assistant Lola A. and Dr. Rovin are still at VPCH.

Our person-centered rounds had been put on hold due to the pandemic, but our clinical team is very interested in starting to move toward that again. At UVM they do bedside rounds and that is the direction that VPCH is headed in, Dr. Fintak has had good experience with that while she is helping at UVM and will be sharing her experience with us when she returns.

Q: How many vacancies are there currently?

A: No vacancies for med staff, at UVM they have 8 or 7 in the psychiatry department. Lola A. is helping to bridge the gap while Dr. Fintak is at UVM.

We are pushing our providers at VPCH to make sure that consistent communication is happening between us and designated agencies. Alisson is pushing her team to focus on communication with the hospitalized persons team so that they are aware of what is going on. The pandemic caused us to go to virtual meetings which has allowed us to collaborate more with the outpatient world. The designated agencies are always invited to the Team meetings, which are done for every hospitalized person, every week.

Nursing Update: (Stephanie Shaw)

We currently have 30 vacant direct care positions between the night and day shift, and 52% of hospital wide positions are vacant, all various reasons. We are looking at short and long-term strategies for employing new staff, as well as retaining them. We had a dry spell during the summer, with no travel candidates or hires, that has been resolved. We worked with our travel partners to help beef up our contracts and we had to creatively work to train staff to work into leadership roles. VPCH previously had the Vera Hanks program which allowed MHS staff to become AMHS, we reinvigorated that program. The Vera Hanks program was an 8-month

classroom session where staff completed college level course work, this required us to pull clinical staff from the units, which we are no longer able to do. We leaned into the technology we got from the pandemic, which will allow staff to move at their own pace, and that launched a couple months ago. It is important to us to give staff professional growth opportunities and we are seeing people take advantage of that and grow through the MHS ranks.

We are excited to take our EHR to the next level, John Kitonga, our Clinical Informatics Analyst, is leading this movement. The upcoming changes will alleviate the amount of time that our nurses spend in front of a computer, giving them more time in the milieu with our hospitalized persons. We also hope these new changes to the EHR will help with retention of staff.

CEO Update: (Greg Tomasulo)

We are continuing search for applicants to fill the vacant CEO position, one candidate completed a 3rd interview recently, but we are keeping the post open until filled.

Psychology Update: (Greg Tomasulo)

Psychology is fully staffed, and we are working on staff guidelines to help on all shifts with consistent therapeutic approaches. We have held more case conferences for the staff, hoping to help the newer staff who started and are mainly working the night shift. With the switch to 12-hour shifts Greg is unable to see staff like he used to; he would like to come in early a few times a month so that he is able to see those staff again.

In our Recovery Services department, we have one vacant position that we are in the process of interviewing for. We are trying to get the position filled as soon as possible and have some very viable applicants. Two of our Recovery Services Clinicians are out for various reasons, so we are feeling short staffed but keeping up our commitment of offering groups and activities both on and off the units. We have had a lot of help from the Social Work team, they help facilitate off unit groups, and it speaks to how our team works, we step up to help each other when we can.

Had a successful pizza party social to celebrate Labor Day which was a lot of fun, it was in the activity hard, and was well attended. It gave everyone an opportunity to mingle in an informal way and spend some time together, they are a lot of fun and well attended by staff from all over the facility.

Social Work Update: (Elizabeth Kanard)

Excited to announce we hired a new Social Worker, Cassia Leendertse, who is a recent graduate from UVM, making the SW team fully staffed. A new SW intern started today, Amanda

McAllister, she will pick up some patients when she gets acclimated and will be here until May 2022. We also have an intern who started today, Amanda McAllister, who will pick up some patients when she gets acclimated and will start a group.

Elizabeth and Cassie each started a group for the hospitalized persons at VPCH; Guided Meditation and Overcoming Adversity a trauma group. Social Work is actively inviting outside agencies to treatment planning meetings, we recently had a case manager join from the very beginning to the very end of a hospitalized persons stay, which was a great experience and very helpful.

DMH Update: (Karen Barber)

Preparing for legislative session right now, no big legislative bills that would hit VPCH.

We are working on new leadership at MTCR, Skip Irish is filling the position on an interim basis and expressed interest in returning to DMH.

Facilities Update: (Heidi Gee)

Our woodchip boiler has been started and will run till spring. We had a planned water outage that lasted for 3 hours, due to the culvert construction on Fisher Road.

BGS is actively working to get our sink project up and running by mid to late October, along with C/D flooring. The pond and parking lot project are delayed, we are hoping to have those done soon since the weather will be getting colder.

There was a CPSI User conference in October that we were going to send staff to, they have postponed to May which is during our Joint Commission window, so we will need to reevaluate who is going.

Our PPE supplies have been coming in steadily, we continue to keep it robust.

Dashboard Update: (Jeremy Smith)

See the attached document.