

Plumas County Behavioral Health Commission Annual Report to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors – July 2019-June 2020

The Plumas County Behavioral Health Commission is required to give an Annual Report and evaluation on Behavioral Health Services and county needs to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors.

The Behavioral Health Commission has eight Consumer, Family and Community seats, plus an appointed Plumas County Supervisor. All Commission seats were filled at the beginning of the year, but four members subsequently resigned for various reasons.

Members of the BH Commission attended required Ethics Training, various local agency trainings and groups like the Plumas-Sierra Housing Continuum of Care, Cultural Competency, Suicide Prevention, Quality Improvement Committee and the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions. Members also viewed and attended online webinars on various issues concerning mental health and substance abuse and shared the information with others.

Members of the BH Commission also followed California State Legislature on certain bills concerning mental health, substance abuse and homelessness. They discussed important issues like the new Sheriff's Office response to suicide crisis calls.

In August 2019, the BH Commission had Theresa Comstock – Executive Director of the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions attend our monthly meeting and share resources and training opportunities.

Members of the BH Commission also served on Ad Hoc Committees such as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Steering Committee with the MHSA Coordinator. With support from the Plumas County Counsel's Office, the Commission updated their By-laws to reflect current membership needs and the combining of the past Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board with the Behavioral Health Commission.

At each meeting, Commissioners heard detailed reports from the Behavioral Health Staff including the Executive Director, Quality Assurance and Patients' Rights Advocate. Quality Assurance staff reported to the Commission with monthly numbers on open charts, ages, hours, tele med services provided, jail hours, and hospitalizations. They also reported the outcomes of the Behavioral Health Department audits.

The Patients' Rights Advocate reports on numbers of grievances filed, phone calls, and visits.

The Department Administrative Services Officer presented to the Behavioral Health Department budget the Commission in November 2019.

Some of the Behavioral Health Director's highlights included:

- April 2019 External Quality Review showed there were good impressions with the Wellness Centers that are located throughout Plumas County.
- The Triannual Quality Review noted outdated policy and procedures and provided suggestions for adjustments which have been implemented.
- Plumas County was the 1st county in the state to implement AB1810 (court ordered treatment).
- BH Director and Fiscal Staff brought a \$5.6 million budget deficit to 1.1 million resulting from restructuring and prioritizing. Contract agencies, Environment Alternative and Plumas Rural Services are now drawing down Medi-Cal money.
- Environmental Alternatives was funded \$600,000 for transitional living.
- Alcohol and Drug applied for Medi-Cal billing approval.
- New Tele Med provider "Alighed" was contracted with for licensed psychiatrist.
- Plumas County was 1 of 5 counties selected to participate in the Sequential Intercept Mapping Event pilot which the focus is on preventing people from going to jail when they need BH services instead. This helps with receiving technical services on the Data Driven Recovery Project.
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) started in October 2019.
- BH Director works with schools and other agencies on safety and threat issues.
- January 2020, a new answering service for crisis line calls was implemented with Auburn Counseling.
- Credentialing process at Plumas District Hospital for telehealth providers to prescribe medication faster in the Emergency Room to help possible 5150 clients.
- February 2020 – Quincy Pharmacy agrees to provide medications audits for Plumas County Behavioral Health.
- February 2020 – Rethink Industries becomes a provider for the DUI Program
- February 2020 – Behavioral Health received \$ 468,000 from the California Department of Healthcare to provide the Whole Person Care pilot project.

In March and April, the COVID 19 pandemic hit Plumas County. We had to cancel the April 2020 BH Commission meeting. We heard from the BH Director that all group counseling was suspended due to COVID 19 and instead telehealth was being used. Open access client services were also suspended and phone intakes were done instead. Telepsychiatry was used in the jail and emergency rooms. The Wellness Centers were open but by phone or appointments only.

The Behavioral Health Commission had to move to online meetings as most of the nation did. It was an adjustment, but we worked through it as best we could.

We continue to seek new members for the Commission to fill some of the vacancies we currently have and to support and advocate for Behavioral Health Services for our county residents.

We need to have Brown Act training for our members and have been working with County Counsel on that issue.

We are glad to see the stigma of mental health and substance abuse being lifted as the nation and world address these serious issues. We would like to see another NAMI group in Plumas County for family support.

Our Wellness Centers are doing great and are appreciated in our outlying communities. We are also looking forward to more housing opportunities for our mentally ill, some of which are homeless.