

Whatcom Community Health Workers' Network

General Membership Meeting Minutes

October 25, 2019 at the 800 E Chestnut Building in Bellingham

Present:

Alesha Harrison, Sea Mar/Pathways
Alexis Fenton, Unity Care NW
Anayelle Lopez, Community Health Plan of Washington
Carmina Cisneros, Villa Sta Fe
Christina Vega, Sea Mar/GRACE
Claudia Aviles M, Sea Mar/Pathways
David Roehn, SeaMar/Pathways
Derek Devalle, Unity Care NW
Elma Dellogado, Sea Mar
Gabriela Cardona, Sea Mar
Grace Thoerner, Unity Care NW/Community Connector at St Joe's
Greg Smith, Opportunity Council
Julie Donath, Eleanor Apartments/Mercy Housing
Katy Hetterle, Molina Healthcare
Kevin Pringle, Lydia Place
Lara Welker
Laura Reardon, Unity Care NW
Mary Irons, Opportunity Council
Mary Jo Durborow, Arc of Whatcom
Megan Stephenson, Unity Care NW
Michelle Cook, Unity Care NW
Rochelle Hollowell, WFCN
Samantha Gailey, Sea Mar
Starleen Lewis, North Sound Accountable Community of Health
Yolanda Rodriguez Soriano, Sea Mar

Megan Stephenson welcomed the group. Everyone introduced themselves and shared their favorite color, and why they like it.

Updates on the CHW Network:

- Megan shared a draft brochure for the CHW Network and invited comments and feedback.
- Right now the Network is still getting established in Whatcom County, with no near-term plans to expand (in response to a question about expanding the Network to a bigger region).
- The Whatcom Family and Community Network is now the fiscal sponsor for the CHW Network (they don't give funding to the CHW Network, but will hold and manage whatever money the CHW Network has). The Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA) was previously the backbone organization.
- Please like the new Facebook page! *Search Whatcom CHW Network*
- The statewide Washington CHW Association (WACHWA) needs more participation! Joining WACHWA is just requesting to get on the list; there is no application or membership fee. There are monthly statewide phone calls. *Email chwsowfa@gmail.com to join the list.*
 - Lara and Megan will share the emails of everyone on today's sign-in sheet with WACHWA so they will get emails directly (unless someone doesn't wish to have their email shared)

Spotlight: Pathways Program

Information shared by Starleen, David, Claudia, and Alesha

Washington State is part of the federal Medicaid Transformation Project, which is working to change Medicaid (Apple Health) healthcare from "fee for service" to "value-based services." The

goal is giving better health care and improving health in a way that costs less. Part of this involves addressing the social determinants of health (housing, education, employment, etc.).

Washington set up regional “accountable communities of health” (ACHs) around the state. Whatcom County is in the North Sound ACH (NSACH). The NSACH is addressing all eight project areas (defined by the federal government), which are condensed into 4 areas:

1. Care Transformation
2. Care Coordination (includes Pathways)
3. Care Integration
4. Capacity Building

The NSACH is using the Pathways model of care coordination. This is the implementation year and 112 clients have participated so far. This model has been successful in other parts of the US, and has 20 different defined “pathways” (examples: behavioral health, adult learning, family planning, housing, health insurance, tobacco cessation, social service referral). Each pathway is series of steps that a CHW helps a client complete. The pathways are chosen based on what a client needs; they can have one pathway “open” or many at the same time, and can repeat pathways if needed.

The HUB is “care traffic control.” Referrals come in and Starleen (the HUB Manager) verifies the client’s eligibility and assigns them to Care Coordination Agencies. Currently those are Sea Mar, Compass Health, and the San Juan County Health Department. Next year Unity Care and the Opportunity Council will be added.

Any organization can be a “referral partner” – they just need to get approved and get a log-in from Starleen (HUB@northsoundach.org). Referrals are entered on-line into the Care Coordination System (CCS). CCS has the ability to track a lot of data and generate reports.

To qualify for Pathways, a person must be eligible for Medicaid (any kind of Medicaid, including a spenddown) and have a behavioral health concern. A whole family can be served if one person in the family has Medicaid. A “behavioral health concern” doesn’t have to be a diagnosis, the person can just be dealing with issues like housing, not enough food, or family issues. It’s based on what the client says is going on for them (“self-attestation”).

Health Homes Program and Pathways:

People can only be served by one or the other, not both at the same time.

Some differences between the two programs:

- Health Homes clients are identified by a PRISM score from the Medicaid system (based on behavioral health issues). The level of contact and care is more defined. Health Homes uses Care Managers and “Community Connectors” (basically CHWs).
- Pathways clients can be “anyone overwhelmed with life” who has Medicaid, and they can be seen as much (or little) as needed that will fit in the CHWs schedule. Pathways uses just one “level” of CHW.

In the future, the HUB might be an umbrella for Health Homes and emergency medical care coordination. This is under discussion.

Another feature of the Care Coordination System is Health Bridge, which is a web-based resource/information center. The Whatcom Family and Community Network recently launched an effort around getting a coordinated, community-wide system for Whatcom County, and is looking into Health Bridge as an option.

CHW Holiday Social:

Instead of regular meetings in November and December, the CHW Network will have a holiday social potluck in the evening. The invitation has been sent – *Nov. 14 from 5:30-8 p.m. at the Roosevelt Resource Center, 2303 Moore St, Bellingham.* We will have some food and raffle prizes, please join us!

Announcements and information sharing:

Megan shared information about the [Community Partnership for Transition Solutions](#), which is agencies and individuals working together to support successful transition for people returning to our community after incarceration. It's a statewide organization with local chapters; the Whatcom Chapter meets the 4th Tuesday of the month, 1:30-3:00 PM at WCC's foundation building. For more info, email Ashley at goerkeaa@dshs.wa.gov.

Mary Jo said that Census jobs are opening up. They can be full time or part time. Requirements are to be at least 18 years old, be a US citizen, have a social security number, and have an email address. Call 1-855-JOB-2020 or apply on line at 2020census.gov/jobs. (This website says the pay for Whatcom County is \$18.50/hr).

Mary and Greg described their roles with several different programs related to housing: GOSH (Governor's Opportunity for Supportive Housing, which assists people transitioning out of Western State Hospital); Foundational Community Supports (housing and employment); Veterans' housing, and others.

The best way for clients to get information about the programs and what they might be eligible for is to have an assessment, which they can get by walking in to the Opportunity Council. Monday-Friday. It is first-come, first-served and people may be given an appointment for later that day. Appointments are not made for future dates.

Rochelle announced several events:

- 1) Walk in Poverty
- 2) Special County Council meeting at the E County Regional Resource Center Nov 29 at 6PM. This is a great opportunity for East County residents to ask questions and voice their concerns!
- 3) Positive Childhood Experiences – Nov 7, 3- PM at WECU. We know about adverse childhood experiences – this is about POSITIVE childhood experiences.

Julie said that February 3 is Housing Advocacy Day in Olympia. The Whatcom Housing Alliance is looking for real stories from real people about housing issues. Contact Julie if you can help! idonath@mercyhousing.org

The next CHW Network meeting will be the Holiday Social!