



## Behavioral Health Collaborative Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2021

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

### Welcome & Opening Remarks

Scott Kaufmann began the meeting at 8:33am. Karen Ayala, Executive Director of the DuPage County Health Department, presented opening remarks about continuing to improve care for those with mental health needs as the COVID-19 pandemic changes forms. Remaining dedicated to suicide prevention is a relatively new focus for the BHC, but a vital one.

### Suicide in DuPage County

Dr. Richard Jorgenson was unable to attend the BHC meeting, but 2020 suicide data is available on the [Coroner's statistics page](#). Last year, there were 94 total deaths by suicide in DuPage County. 72 (76.6%) of these involved adult males, and another 16 (17.0%) involved adult females. Substance use contributed to 29 (30.9%) deaths by suicide in 2020, with 11 from alcohol, 13 from drugs, and 5 from both.

Kathy Carey from the DuPage County Health Department shared an update on the first meeting of the Zero Suicide subcommittee, which occurred on January 19<sup>th</sup>. There were 32 attendees, by far our largest subcommittee to date. The group represented several different sectors across DuPage, including education, healthcare, nonprofit, and law enforcement. Besides sharing their reasons for joining the group, everybody provided feedback on available suicide prevention resources and known gaps in systems to assist those that are struggling with suicidal ideation. Since the group was so large, the decision was made to keep a small 8-10 member core group of members to further the Zero Suicide framework goals. Beyond that group, topic-specific subgroups (such as youth suicide prevention or hospitals) will be formed so that we will still be able to have a large breadth of conversation about the many challenges in achieving our goal of zero suicides in the county. The core group will meet for the first time on Tuesday, March 30<sup>th</sup> and the subgroups will be formed in the following months.

The BHC was then split into 5 small groups to discuss improvement opportunities they observe in our communities. After the full group reconvened, representatives from each group shared key takeaways from their conversation. The full list of identified areas for improvement will be shared and discussed among the core Zero Suicide group at their March meeting, but some commonly mentioned themes are listed below:

- How can we reach people that are isolated and not actively seeking assistance?
- For someone at different levels of need, where is the best place to go? Who should you call? Is there a way to better advertise these resources?
- There is a need for more comprehensive assistance during transitions from schools or a provider when an individual's needs more help at a different location like an Emergency Department or a Crisis Center.
- How can we get young people talking more openly about their needs? Both between themselves and with family members.
- How can we make our suicide prevention more county-wide, rather than local to one or a handful of municipalities?
- We should all be more comfortable and willing to ask questions that we may at first think are obvious ('Have you had suicidal thoughts lately?').

- Identifying a universal risk assessment for use across most/all providers in the county could help streamline information sharing between agencies and sectors.

### **COVID-19 Update**

Mila Tsagalis provided information about ongoing vaccination efforts in DuPage County. The COVID-19 presentation slides have been attached to the follow-up email for this meeting. As of March 7<sup>th</sup>, 168,297 residents (18.24% of the county) have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 83,888 (9.10%) have received two doses. Vaccine supply to the county has been up-and-down, with an average of 11,496 doses made available each week since mid-December. The capacity for providing vaccines is currently over 65,700 doses per week, but the supply to reach that capacity is not yet available. Once available, vaccines will be offered at over 100 providers in DuPage, including mass vaccination sites, medical providers, pharmacies, and FQHCs.

You can sign up for the DuPage County Health Department's vaccine registration list at: <http://www.dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccine>. Beyond DCHD, you are encouraged to contact your primary care physician and look into lists at retailers like Walgreens and Jewel-Osco once you are eligible to receive a vaccine. For more information about the vaccine and for assistance registering, call (630) 682-7400.

### **2020 Year in Review: BHC Projects**

The EMS Mental Health First aid projects were paused last March due to COVID-19. This included cancellation of a planned training open to all DuPage EMS and a train-the-trainer session for an additional DuPage staff member to be able to provide EMS MHFA trainings. BHC has begun rescheduling trainings and are actively seeking EMS and Fire partners to provide EMS MHFA training to some or all of their staff. If you know somebody that may be interested in attending or hosting an EMS MHFA training, please email [scott.kaufmann@dupagehealth.org](mailto:scott.kaufmann@dupagehealth.org).

Kathy Carey provided metrics from the Mobile Crisis Response Pilot for 2020. 44 total referrals were received in 2020 across the four participating police departments. 20 referrals resulted in a crisis evaluation, 17 of which were dropped off at the Crisis Center in Wheaton. Of the 24 referrals that did not result in an evaluation, 11 only needed phone support, 7 individuals declined evaluation, and 4 individuals were deemed best suited for transportation to an Emergency Department. Despite COVID impacting referrals in April and May, the program rebounded and had roughly 10-12 referrals each quarter. The pilot program will continue in 2021 and the BCH is seeking a fifth police department to partner with.

The DuPage Correctional Center is reviewing data sharing policies for the mental health and substance use screening tools at this time. Once approved, baseline data will be collected for a period of three months, which will then be shared with DCCC staff in order to make any changes that are deemed necessary to programming.

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training was paused by the DuPage County Sheriff's Office on March 2020, but new classes have been added to the schedule in April, May, and June of this year. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office is also seeking to add an Advanced CIT course to the curriculum.

The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCPC) grant that was provided through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has been extended through the end of 2021 due to underspending in 2020 as a result of the COVID pandemic. As a result, activities funded fully or partially through this grant (including jail screening tool analysis and mobile crisis response) will continue unobstructed. DuPage is still on track to complete objectives related to the grant by the end of the funding period in December 2021.

### **Questions & Other Community Efforts**

The [BHC webpage](#) is regularly updated to include past meeting minutes and newsletters, as well as to share progress toward Action Plan objectives. Collaborative members are encouraged to use the webpage as a first step for anyone interested in learning more about the BHC.

Brian Lux from Outreach Community Ministries announced that two of their locations are now fully accredited as behavioral health clinics. This is exciting news because these two locations are now available to serve Medicaid and MCO clients. Kristin Hartsaw from the DuPage Federation shared that they are able to assist anyone that works with students that receive free or reduced-price meals. Information about P-EBT distribution can be found on DuPage Federation's [Resources page](#). The next Behavioral Health Collaborative meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 8:30am. Those that intend to attend the meeting should [register here](#).