

MINUTES

Increase Community Services and Caregiver Supports Task Force



Representative Tim Reed, Chair
Senator Wayne Steinhauer, Vice Chair

**Third Meeting, 2019 Interim
Monday, November 04, 2019**

**Room 362 – State Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota**

The third meeting of the SCR 2 Task Force 5, Increase Community Services and Caregiver Supports, was called to order by Representative Tim Reed at 10:00 AM (CST) in room 362 of the State Capitol in Pierre. A quorum was determined with the following members answering the roll call: Representative Tina Mulally, Representative Carl Perry, Senator Red Dawn Foster (via phone), Jesse Bailey (via phone), Colleen Casavan, Wendy Giebink, Amy Iversen-Pollreisz, Anne Kelly, Brandy Rhead, Pam Vanmeeteren; Senator Wayne Steinhauer, Vice Chair; and Representative Tim Reed, Chair.

Staff members present included Alex Timperley, Legislative Attorney; and Cindy Tryon, Senior Legislative Secretary.

NOTE: For purpose of continuity, the following minutes are not necessarily in chronological order. Also, all referenced documents distributed at the meeting are attached to the original minutes on file in the Legislative Research Council office. This meeting was webcast live. The archived webcast is available at the LRC website at sdlegislature.gov.

Welcome and Introductions

Representative Reed welcomed the members of the task force and those in the audience and listening online. The task force members introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Representative Perry, seconded by Senator Steinhauer, to approve the minutes of the Thursday, August 29, 2019, Increase Community Services and Caregiver Supports Task Force meeting. Motion prevailed on a voice vote.

Counties' Roles in Community Services

Ms. Cindy Heiberger, Minnehaha County Commissioner and President of SD Association of County Commissioners, Sioux Falls, talked to the task force members about Minnehaha County mental health providers ([Document #1](#)). All counties have residents who suffer from mental illness. Mental illness plays a significant role in driving the costs for public safety, human services, and other forms of county aid which counties are mandated by the state to provide. Minnehaha County helps fund Southeast Behavioral Health services. The county also pays fees for services such as the Human Services Center, Redfield, and others. The budget for services provided by Minnehaha County in 2018 was over \$1,386,000 for individuals with behavioral health diagnoses and does not include costs for those with co-occurring substance abuse diagnoses. Another \$756,000 is added to the budget amount for addiction services.

Minnehaha County's general fund budget for 2020 is \$64.7 million of which 94% is for programs and services required by state statute. Public safety expenses comprise approximately 66% of the county's budget. Ms. Heiberger said in the nine years she has served as a County Commissioner the amount of funding given to non-profit organizations to assist with citizen services has been reduced significantly.

The Minnehaha County mobile crisis team has been in place for eight years. The team is utilized by law enforcement as a way to assist with crisis situations. The mobile crisis team is a contracted service by Southeast Behavioral Health and is deployed on calls with a mental health professional who is on call 24-hours a day. The county pays an annual administration fee and is charged an hourly rate for this service.

Several agencies, governmental entities, and service providers in Minnehaha County are collaborating on a triage center currently in the planning stage. The triage center will help reduce the incidents of mentally ill people ending up in the emergency room. A McArthur Foundation grant called the Safety and Justice Challenge is helping to fund moving this program forward. The triage center should be open late summer or early fall of 2020.

Ms. Heiberger pointed out that other counties face similar funding challenges which for many counties are exacerbated by flooding issues. Finances are stretched thin by growing mental health concerns. Additional funds to the counties for mental health providers could help ease some of the burden on the counties. All counties have similarities but also have many differences.

Representative Reed thanked Ms. Heiberger for taking the time to travel to Pierre to talk to the task force.

Review Scope and Discuss Task Force Findings

Representative Reed presented the updated task force scope document ([Document #2](#)). Representative Perry said the task force has learned of some positive changes coming forward regarding the issue of community services and caregiver supports.

Senator Steinhauer said the housing piece of this issue is the most elusive. The task force has learned there is a greater need for long-term and permanent housing.

Representative Mulally suggested considering an incentive program for landlords that would encourage them to rent to people with a mental illness. The incentive program may be some type of property tax relief. Representative Mulally said it would be beneficial to offer training to private landlords as to how to better understand and best work with tenants with a mental illness.

Representative Reed said the Governor's House's multi-family units may be another possible option to address the housing shortage.

Ms. Giebink asked about the caregiver support part of the task force's assigned scope. Representative Reed said a peer services program could be of assistance to caregivers. Providing more information to caregivers through state agencies is another option.

Property Managers Education & Certification

Mr. Matt Krogman, SD Association of Realtors, Brookings, said realtors are allowed to be property managers. There is a separate property manager license. Licensed property managers have to attend continuing education classes, as do realtors. The SD Real Estate Commission is responsible for making sure the licenses are kept up to date. Mr. Krogman said the Executive Director for the SD Association of Realtors is interested in putting a class together regarding tenants with a mental illness. The association will check with other states to see if this type of class is available elsewhere.

Ms. Giebink offered to find out if NAMI may provide this type of education and let the Realtors Association know if NAMI could be a resource when developing these classes.

Representative Reed thanked Mr. Krogman for taking the time to come to Pierre to meet with the task force and thanked the SD Association of Realtors for their willingness to work on developing a class for realtors and property managers regarding providing housing for persons with a mental illness.

Peer Support Services

Mr. Alex Timperley, Legislative Attorney, LRC, presented information received from other states regarding peer support programs. Mr. Timperley contacted several states requesting information and shared the following documents with the task force members:

[Montana Peer Support & Montana Peer Support Specialist](#)
[Wyoming Peer Specialist Snapshot & Wyoming Peer Support Performance Report](#)
[Philadelphia Peer Support Toolkit](#)
[Georgia Peer Support Outcomes](#)
[Mental Health America Evidence for Peer Support](#)

Mr. Loran Harris, Ms. Faith Goehring, and Mr. John Ferrone, Association of SD Peer Supporters (ASDPS), Northern Hills Area, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the committee ([Document #3](#)). The organization is a group of people who have come together as a support group for the mentally ill. This group put together the first suicide prevention program in Belle Fourche. Mr. Harris and Ms. Goehring said a person with mental health challenges chooses to engage in and receive offered non-clinical supports through a peer program. This choice is based on trust which comes from shared lived experience. Peer support is a missing asset in South Dakota, and there is a real need for peer to peer action.

Mr. Ferrone, Management Consultant and SAMHSA TA provider, said peer support is something Mr. Harris and Ms. Goehring do every day, meeting with people to listen, going out when law enforcement calls, understanding what recovery is, and knowing the tools needed to obtain recovery. Peer support plays a role rather than being a service.

Ms. Iversen-Pollreisz said peer support is a non-clinical role helping someone in treatment to stay engaged. In order for peer support costs to be reimbursed through Medicaid there are specific requirements including training.

A motion was made by Senator Steinhauer, seconded by Representative Perry, to prepare a concurrent resolution for the 2020 Legislature requesting the Department of Social Services prepare a plan to implement a peer support program for Legislative consideration during the 2021 Legislative Session. Motion prevailed on a roll call vote with 11 members voting AYE, 1 EXCUSED. Voting AYE: Mulally, Perry, Foster, Bailey, Casavan, Giebink, Iversen-Pollreisz, Kelly, Rhead, Steinhauer, and Reed. EXCUSED: Vanmeeteren.

Representative Reed said he will work with Senator Steinhauer and Dr. Kelly on the wording of the resolution and send the draft to the full committee for consideration.

Housing Choice Voucher Preferences

Representative Perry said he visited with Ms. Jody Zager, Aberdeen Housing Authority, about the Housing Choice Voucher program, also known as Section 8. Aberdeen has 389 units available for the Housing Choice Voucher program. Vouchers can also be used to purchase a home which has been done six times in the Aberdeen area. The Aberdeen Housing Authority started in 1969 and adopted the Housing Authority program for the city of Aberdeen. Commissioners were first appointed in 1970 and commission meetings are held monthly. The staff completes verification of each applicant prior to approval. The Aberdeen Housing Authority does have problems with porting the vouchers.

Senator Steinhauer met with the Minnehaha County Housing and Redevelopment Commission. Minnehaha County has 881 vouchers. The Housing Choice Vouchers are based on need with only one preference category and that is for veterans. There is a waiting list and can take several years for someone to receive a voucher.

Representative Mulally met with the Pennington County Housing Commission. The waiting list in Pennington County is much shorter than in Minnehaha County and Pennington County does not give preferences. If asked to give preferences, Pennington County's first choice would be to give preference to veterans with a mental illness. Pennington County also has problems with porting of housing vouchers.

The task force members discussed how best to approach the county housing authorities regarding consideration for Housing Choice Voucher applicants suffering with mental illness. Representative Reed said he will send a letter to the county housing authority board members informing them of the findings of this task force related to the voucher program.

Committee Discussion

Representative Reed said the committee discussed the long term housing needs for the mentally ill and one possible solution is using the Governor's House program. Representative Reed said he will contact the Governor's Office regarding this issue. Ms. Rhead said the housing needs are unique for each community, so it is difficult to address on a statewide basis.

Representative Reed thanked the members of the task force for sharing their expertise and taking part in this important study. This topic of mental health is going to continue to be discussed and the members' resources may be requested again.

Ms. Giebink said January 24, 2020, is Mental Health Day at the Capitol and would be a good time to have the Task Force's resolution heard in committee.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Senator Steinhauer, seconded by Ms. Vanmeeteren, that the Increase Community Services and Caregiver Supports Task Force meeting be adjourned. The motion prevailed on a voice vote.

The Task Force adjourned at 3:15 PM.