

Mental Health and Wellness Action Team

August 2017

S A I N T P A U L – R A M S E Y C O U N T Y P U B L I C H E A L T H

Call to Action

Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health (SPRCPH) is forming an authentic community engaged Mental Health and Wellness Action Team that informs the work of our department in responding to the integrated health care needs of Saint Paul - Ramsey County residents and greater communities. *Ramsey County Mental Health and Wellness Action Team (MHWAT)* is one of 5 SPRCPH Community Health Improvement Goals.

Group Charter and Composition

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is designed to be implemented in by community members and agencies throughout Ramsey County. Action teams will be the primary vehicle to bring individuals and groups together to achieve the goals identified in the Plan.

Role/Responsibilities Action Team Member

- Identify additional community initiatives or individuals working towards the same goals/objectives/strategies and create connections
- Participate in strategy refinement and work plan development
- Implement activities in work plan
- Identify current data sources or develop new data collection methods to measure progress towards meeting goals/objectives/strategies
- Assist in development of annual progress report
- Host a meeting at your location as possible

Meeting Frequency and Structure

Ramsey County Mental Health and Wellness Action Team meets once a month (1-2 hr.)

Compensation

Participation in the Ramsey County Mental Health Action Team is voluntary, with no financial compensation. However, light snacks may be provided.

Background

In 2014, The Ramsey County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was created by community members who met and went through a dynamic group process to answer two key questions:

- *What can we do collectively to foster conditions in which people can be healthy?*
- *How can we collectively achieve measurable improvement and confront health inequities?*

Over 80 residents and community leaders from private, public and nonprofit sectors shared their expertise and resources during these meetings. Five action teams have formed from this process and the resulting plans can be found at:

https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Departments/Public%20Health/CHIP_report_rev_june2016.pdf

Three areas of focus were identified by the Community Health Improvement Plan Committee to improve Mental Health and Wellbeing in Ramsey County. Included are 24-hour Resources, School Linked Mental Health and Stigma.

24-hour Resources

Data tell us that adults with serious mental illnesses are dying, on the average, approximately 25 years earlier than the general public – mostly from various common medical conditions that are inherently preventable or treatable, including co-occurring mental health/substance use disorders. Barriers to care, coupled with challenges in navigating complex health care systems, are major obstacles. A solution lies in integrated care - a “health home”- defined as the systematic coordination/continuation of health care.

School Linked Mental Health

In Ramsey County, there are large differences in school mental health staffing and capacity across school districts and even among schools in the same district. There is a need for an increased exploration, awareness and sharing of successes of different school-based mental health models that incorporate culture and community based participatory action, including restorative justice healing circles which ensure that students have access to effective mental health programs and prevention services within school settings.

Stigma

Data suggests that individuals typically wait approximately 10 years before seeking mental health treatment for symptoms. Research informs us that there is a correlation between health and wealth. Likewise, there is a significant correlation between adverse childhood experiences and the presence of chronic health conditions of a population throughout the lifespan. Mental health stigma delay diagnosis, treatment and prevention options which impacts one’s overall wellness.

In Summer 2017, over 17 community organizations and government agencies participated in a series of community engagement meetings to help define the following three strategies to address 24 hour Resources, School Linked Mental Health, and Stigma. Those three strategies include:

Increasing Collaboration and Linkages among existing organizations

Strengthening Relationships between Safety and Mental Health

Creating a Resource Hub of Wellness Opportunities

Community and Government Participants

Co-Chairs: Deatrick LaPointe and Eugene Nichols

Achievement Plus/Wilder Foundation. African American Leadership Forum. American Indian Family Center. Catholic Charities. Chinese Acupuncture and Herb Center. Department of Human Services. East Side Mental Health & Stress Resilience Partnership. HealthPartners. Lutheran Social Services of MN. Minnesota Department of Health. Open Cities Health Clinic. Ramsey County Adult Services. Ramsey County Children’s Mental Health Collaborative. Southside Community Health Services. St. Paul Public Schools. Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative. West Side Community Health Services. University of Minnesota Extension

Contact:

Roshani Saraiya, Public Health Nurse
Family Health Division
Community Outreach & Family Wellness
roshani.saraiya@co.ramsey.mn.us
651-266-1581