**CRC Advisory Minutes**

6/11/20

**Present** (via Zoom):Jessica Clark, Hannah Perry, Kalina Sebeva, Sarah Taddei, Bianca Viazzoli, Glynis Wood.

**Excused:** Emily Doerr, Katelyn O’Connor (Intake/Mental Health- currently unrepresented)

**Advisory members’ action steps/follow-up requests:**

* **Please share minutes** in full or in part as you deem appropriate.
* Before next meeting **please ask if your team has any feedback, questions, project ideas, resource sharing or topic suggestions for staff meeting review**. (Always welcome between meetings as well.)
* **Membership rotation**- Due to COVID-19, abbreviated meeting schedule, uncertainty, hoping to delay the rotation set for September. Those scheduled to rotate off please let Ellen know if you’re able/willing to continue until our December meeting.

***Style note****- Agenda in black text; discussion, further information and tasks in* ***purple****.*

**Updates**

* **COVID-19 Resource list** 
  + **Reminder that it is COVID-specific**, not comprehensive, primarily updates. Refer to CRC (and/or website) for pre-existing resources.
  + **Will continue to email paper copies and have included a link on our What’s New page:** 
    - Latest COVID updates: see [**Paper Version**](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/COVID/CoronavirusResourceUpdates.docx) or on [**Dropbox**](https://www.dropbox.com/home/COVID%20Equity%20SDOH%20Work)
  + **Have heard from some that they are having trouble accessing- can’t see it as an option-** seems to be people who have their own Dropbox accounts. Unfortunately, I can’t fix for everyone- need to put in own Help Desk ticket or just use paper version.
  + **Reminder-** no expectation that staff search the resource list before referring. We’re here to help.

**Team feedback, questions, project ideas and/or resource sharing?**

* **From Team C:**
* It would be helpful to have more clear guidelines for patients (typically for the weekends) for **detoxes**- like if there could be a **patient handout about what they need to do to contact the facilities and what the process is as well as an overview of what a detox is.** Everyone has a different way that they approach the detox need and I wonder if it would make it more clear and less stressful if there was a clear process for staff and for patients.
  + - CRC will discuss with leadership and follow-up as indicated.
* I’m also wondering if it would be possible to expand on the find a therapist handout? It would be helpful to have info about **connecting with our department’s program and what’s available through psychiatry.** Additionally, it could be helpful to have a **handout of the larger organizations of therapists that typically have openings/ possible that accept MH.**
  + - **How to refer to SS Outpt mental health**- Ellen will coordinate with Lourdes on a patient-facing document. In the meantime there is a document **for** **staff** on our website:
      * **Refer to MGH Social Service Outpatient Mental Health**- [**Guidelines**](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/MGH%20I&R/SocSvcOutpatientMHReferrals.doc) (Staff handout)
    - **Accessing MGH Outpatient psychiatry-** Ellen(with Lourdes’ help; thanks Lourdes) received the following response from Psychiatry:
      * in general, referrals to psychiatry should be initiated by an MGH provider, usually a PCP, by Epic order. There are exceptions to this (e.g. the First Episode program and ARMS don’t require an MGH medicine connection) but for most of our services this is the case, and we do not accept self-referrals.
    - **Therapists that typically have openings/that accept Medicaid-** we share your wish foreasier to access behavioral health services for all. It’s complicated; may need additional discussion. But some background:
      * We have heard positive reports about the two matching services listed on our Finding a therapist document:
        + Therapy Matcher (formerly Social Work Therapy Referral Service) – call 800-242-9794 or email info@therapymatcher.org. More information at www.therapymatcher.org.
        + William James INTERFACE Referral Service – See if your community participates: https://interface.williamjames.edu/, then call 888-244-6843.
      * **MassHealth members** have different routes to obtaining behavioral health depending on their plan type. Patients more often than not don’t know their plan type. **For ADULT, non-emergency referrals:** 
        + MassHealth PCC members- managed by/refer through the [Mass. Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)](https://www.masspartnership.com/member/FindBHProvider.aspx)
        + MassHealth MCO Managed Care Health Plans- Contact the MCO
        + MassHealth ACO members:
* [Mass. Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)](https://www.masspartnership.com/member/FindBHProvider.aspx) is the behavioral health contractor for the Primary Care ACOs (Partners HealthCare Choice, Steward Health Care and Community Care Cooperative)
* Other ACO plans have their own carve-outs
  + - * + Those not in any of these managed care plans can see any provider that accepts MassHealth**.**
        + **Simplest advice- advise the patient to call MassHealth Customer Service** at 1-800-841-2900 (TTY: 1-800-497-4648). Which is the advice on the handout.
      * Blake 11 staff recommend trying local **community health centers or community mental health centers**. (Report that CHA accepts MassHealth Limited, as does Dimmock. N. Suffolk does not.)
        + [Mass League of Community Health Centers](https://massleague.org/findahealthcenter/index.php) “find a center” search
      * (Background/further reading for policy wonks: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/10/20/for-many-struggle-find-affordable-mental-health-care/AAK3aYmk89sRLicmTFpn6O/story.html> and <https://www.masslive.com/politics/2018/12/massachusetts_residents_mental_health_care.html>)
* **From Teams A & B** 
  + **Homeless resources**
    - **Overall shelter handout including clothes, resources for homeless** (not COVID-specific- what’s available during normal times?)
    - **Which INDIVIDUAL shelters are currently open?** 
      * **CRC is investigating –** so far not able to find single source of information. Hannah spoke with BHCHP- they don’t maintain list, just recommend we call shelters. We’ve not had good luck in past with Mayor’s Health line or Boston Public Health commission. Awaiting word from Coalition for the Homeless. In meantime we are calling all Boston shelters. So far have not found any newly opened – same as for many months: only Boston shelters accepting **new** residents are **Southampton, Woods Mullen,** New England Center and Home for Veterans (veterans) and Bridge Over Troubled Waters (youth) – though Bridge tells us they won’t accept referrals from an inpatient hospital. Ideas welcome.

**Updates, Reminders, Highlights**

* **COVID-19 Changes to The RIDE (Bianca)**
  + Processing time is 5 business days rather than 2 business days.
  + Temporary eligibility will be 90 days long, rather than 30 days.
  + Note: Eligibility criteria for the RIDE has not changed.
  + **Health and Safety Procedures**
    - Shared trips have been eliminated. RIDE customers can still bring a personal care attendant or guest on their trip.
    - The RIDE will work to eliminate transfer trips to reduce customer interaction with multiple drivers.
    - All RIDE vehicles are cleaned and disinfected every 24 hours.
    - The RIDE is asking that customers only take essential trips and wear face coverings.
  + **For the duration of MBTA’s rear-door boarding policy on our regular fixed route buses, the MBTA will not collect fares on The RIDE.** Going forward RIDE customers will not be charged a fare until the MBTA’s rear-door boarding practice on fixed route is ended. Customers will not have to pay previous fares.
    - Customers need to maintain money enough in their account to cover one round-trip
* **P-EBT (Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer)**
  + Special program to replace meals lost for children who otherwise would have received free meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
  + Separate program from SNAP
  + Those already enrolled with SNAP or NSLP should already have received either on their pre-existing EBT card or a special P-EBT card
  + **No immigration status requirements, not a Public Charge concern**
  + **If anyone with school-age children enrolled in school that participates in NSLP was not previously receiving SNAP encouraged to apply; if not eligible or concerned about applying (e.g., immigration status) apply through the school for NSLP ASAP (before June 18)**- to qualify for benefits for June. As of now will not offer summer benefits.
  + **Problems?** Initially advised people to contact Project Bread’s Food Source Hotline with questions- now if questions, particularly about PINing their card- **call DTA.** They now have low wait-times, better capacity than Project Bread.
  + **PINing the Card** – **save the letter, need it to PIN card.** If it is already gone **DTA created a portal on**[**DTAConnect.com**](http://www.dtaconnect.com/)**where families can immediately get their child's Case Number by entering the child’s P-EBT card number.**
  + **More detailed instructions/guide available from the CRC and/or the resource list**
* **Online EBT Purchasing Now Available to MA SNAP and P-EBT households**
  + To help spread the word, DTA has launched a new website: [Mass.gov/SNAPonline](https://www.mass.gov/snap-online-purchasing-program).
  + **Online EBT purchasing is currently limited to Amazon and Walmart**

**SNAP and P-EBT can be used for online purchases.**

* **SNAP EBT cannot be used for delivery fees nor any non-food items** – such as paper goods, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene.
  + **Customers need to have another form of electronic payment to pay for those items (and DTA cash benefits cannot be used at this time).**
* **Utility Shut-Off Moratorium Extended and Revised AMP Rules**
  + **The emergency moratorium on utility terminations has been extended until November 15, 2020.** 
    - **Applies to investor owned utilities** (National Grid, Eversource, etc.) **not municipals.**
    - **Need to demonstrate financial hardship -** participation on Fuel Assistance/LIHEAP or on discount rate or have a financial hardship form on file with their utility. Can submit a financial hardship form at any time.
    - **Note: as of November 15, 2020, the regular winter moratorium will kick in**, so low-income households who qualify would be protected from heat-related termination until the spring of 2021.
    - **CAUTION:  Clients who make no payments during this extended moratorium period will have very large arrearages by the spring of 2021**.  It may be very difficult for advocates to help clients in those situations avoid termination.  **Advise clients to apply for the Arrearage Management Program (AMP)**.
  + **Arrearage Management/Forgiveness Programs (AMPs)**
    - Each investor-owned (i.e., not municipal owned) gas or electric utility company is required to offer a program that**forgives past due balances over a period of time if customers pay a budgeted bill each month on time.**Each time one pays a bill in full and on time a portion of the overdue bill is forgiven. If, however, the customer misses payments they may be dropped from the program.
    - **Eligibility:**Basic requirements are that one has [low income](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/LIHEAP_FY17_IncomeandBenefits.pdf) (eligible for fuel assistance or a low-income discount) and must have a certain amount in overdue bills (for Eversource it is $300). Additional requirements may include applying for fuel assistance, participating in weatherization/fuel efficiency programs, etc.
    - **Apply:**Contact the utility company's customer service department (the number should be on the bill) and ask to sign-up for their Arrearage Management Program.
    - **Note: AMPs are usually offered on a one-time only basis. Under COVID-19 flexibilities, customers who have either completed an AMP previously, or who were on an AMP but were removed due to missing payments, will be allowed to re-enroll.**

* **Rent/Mortgage Assistance**
  + **Eviction Moratorium-** doesn’t erase debt. Concern for huge wave of evictions when it ends- likely July or August unless extended. If people aren’t paying rent at all, will be too far behind to get caught up when it ends.
  + **RAFT- available regardless of immigration status**
  + **Look for (or ask CRC for) local rental assistance programs including:**
  + **Boston Rental Relief Fund- Second Round Lottery Information**
    - The second round of funding will open on **June 5 at 12 p.m.** **The pre-screening form will be open from June 5 - 19 at 12 p.m. We will conduct the lottery on Monday, June 22**. Anyone that applied for the first round will be automatically included in the second round. The pre-screening form will be available in English, Español, Kriolu Kabuverdianu, Kreyòl ayisyen, Português, Tiếng Việt, and 中文.
    - The funds will help income-eligible tenants in the City of Boston who:
* do not have access to expanded unemployment benefits, or
* because of the nature of their jobs, the unemployment benefits they will receive represent a significant reduction in their actual income.

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/neighborhood-development/office-housing-stability/rental-relief-fund>

* **Notary Public services-** announced after this meeting that CRC staff will be rotating on campus to provide notary coverage. Announcement reminder:

1. Starting Monday 6/15/20 Community Resource Center (CRC) staff will rotate onsite to assist with patient Notary Public needs on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 10 AM and 4 PM.
2. We ask social workers to **determine in advance that requests are a** **necessity** (e.g., related to the progression of patient care and cannot be postponed).
3. While we transition back to campus we **ask that social workers plan to be present to assist** at the notarization.
4. **For COVID+ patients, our notaries public will remain outside the room** and will witness signing through doorway/window while in contact with the patient through remote communication devices such as VICS or Patient Connect. (We appreciate social work support and assistance with these devices.)

Reminders:

1. As always,**we ask that you ensure the patient has their original state or federal ID in their possession** (not a photo or photo copy); **ID also must be current**(though during the crisis we can accept some MA IDs that have recently expired)
2. Due to the personal liability risk, **we do not notarize wills**. For the duration of the COVID emergency, notaries who are lawyers or work under the direct supervision of a lawyer may notarize documents remotely.
3. **Please refer via Epic**(instructions available on the Staff Access page). If you would like to share additional information, please email all three CRC staff: Ellen Forman, Hannah Perry and Bianca Viazzoli.

**Next Meeting: Thursday September 10, 12-1, in-person/remote TBD**