

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
April 15, 2025

Present: Jessica Moser, Chair; Thomas Kalamas, Vice-Chair; Josh Leviker; and Barry Lyndaker. Vincent Nortz was excused.

Legislator Moser called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Legislator Moser moved to approve the March 18, 2025, committee meeting minutes as recorded, seconded by Legislator Kalamas and carried.

Jefferson-Lewis Mobile Crisis – Anna Platz, Director of Lewis County Community Services; Tim Ruetten, Director of Jefferson County Community Services; and Michelle Monnat, CEO of Children’s Home of Jefferson County

Jefferson and Lewis County Community Services have been funding 24/7 crisis hotline services to community members, each utilizing different, subcontracted behavioral health providers within their respective counties. Unfortunately, mobile crisis services were not currently available in either county at the time. Through collaboration between both counties, they contracted with Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO) to provide the project management for the implementation of a bi-county mobile crisis service.

FDRHPO completed a data and stakeholder assessment to inform mobile crisis implementation. The assessment included the 2023 911 Mental Health Call data; Crisis Hotline data; Stakeholder discussions; and other discussions. The FDRHPO data assessment showed that the highest call volume of need for crisis services for all of Jefferson and Lewis County was within the Watertown zip code, a majority of the calls were limited to ten communities to include Watertown, Lowville, LeRay, Carthage, West Carthage, Brownville, Philadelphia, Clayton, Glenfield, and Adams, and of the top 75% of in-person responses, one-way travel time was within about a 30-minute radius of Watertown except for Glenfield.

The 911 Mental Health Calls data showed that both weekend days had less mental health responses than weekdays, the highest volume of calls is between 3:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and the lowest volume is between 12:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., typical range is zero to six calls per day but did see as many as 11 calls in one day. The Crisis Hotline data showed that the highest volume of calls occurred from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and the lowest volume of calls occurred from 4:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., when reviewing call volume per day it varied as low as one call a day up to as many as 19 calls, the highest volume of calls occurred on Saturdays, followed by Sundays, the average duration of all calls was 10.5 minutes.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) included a \$600,000 amount for start-up funding from Office of Mental Health (OMH), billable services, up to \$450,000 available annually, administrative requirements, telephonic triage, mobile crisis intervention, follow-up crisis services, and reporting requirements. The timeline for this entire project began back on January 15, 2025 with the RFP being sent out, February 15, 2025 with the RFP bid opening, March 4, 2025 the Mobile Crisis selection committee meets, March 7, 2025 the selection was made, April 1, 2025 a contract was approved by Jefferson County Board of Legislators,

April 2025 the County Mobile Crisis Plan was submitted to OMH, 2nd quarter 2025 the community education and outreach plan development and implementation will happen, and by July 1, 2025 the Mobile Crisis services should be up and running.

The Children's Home of Jefferson County (CHJC) operates an OMH clinic, Therapeutic Crisis Respite program, school-based mental health clinics and several other community-based services. CHJC opened a satellite clinic in the Human Services building in September of 2024 seeing clients two days a week and hopes to expand to three days a week in the upcoming months. CHJC provides additional crisis services in Jefferson County through the Community School Liaison program, which addresses acute mental health needs in schools and reduces unnecessary police involvement in youth crises and works with the Watertown City Police to provide mental health needs to community members via the Mobile Access program.

The purpose of Jefferson-Lewis Mobile Crisis services is to deliver person-centered, trauma-informed, high-quality and effective behavioral health support to those in the community experiencing a behavioral health crisis and offer alternatives to hospitalization when appropriate. Services may be provided to children and adults who are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, a behavioral health crisis which may include all or a subset of the following services: telephonic triage and support; a mobile crisis response line in the community; telephonic crisis follow-up; and in-person follow-up from the initial crisis. The goal of this program is to maintain people safely in the community, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and reduce the risk of future crises.

County Manager Tim Hunt updated the committee on the Copenhagen Meal Site. The site will remain open until the end of this year but the discussions on the future should be started so there is a plan for 2026.

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Moser moved to adjourn at 2:30 p.m., seconded by Legislator Lyndaker, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board