Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group – Youth and Young Adult Continuum of Care (YYACC) Subgroup

May 9, 2024

Glossary of Terms

CTE: Career and Technical Education
DCYF: Department of Children, Youth and Families
HCA: Washington State Health Care Authority
HMIS: Homeless Management Information System
MRSS: Mobile Response and Stabilization Services
OSPI: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
SOC: System of Care
SPARK: Students Providing and Receiving Knowledge

Meeting Topics

SHB 1929 Updates and Expansion
Youth Peer Network
WA State Landscape Report on Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult Homelessness – Findings and Next Steps
Youth Wellness Zones
YYACC Priority Tracking and Open Call for New Items

Discussion Summary

SHB 1929 (2022) Updates and Expansion

Jim Theofelis, Northstar Advocates jim@northstaradvocates.org

1. Overview of the plight of young people exiting inpatient behavioral health treatment in Washington.
   a. Historical context: 2018 report titled "From Inpatient Treatment to Homelessness" highlighted significant rates of homelessness among young people exiting behavioral health treatment.
   b. Established the Bridge Coalition in 2022 with funding from Senator Carlyle to address these issues.
2. Bridge Coalition
   a. Monthly meetings with providers, young people with lived experience, discharge planners, and managed care organizations.
   b. Focus on creating cross-system connections and addressing immediate housing needs for young people.
3. SHB 1929 (2022): establishes two housing programs, one on each side of the state, providing 6-10 beds for 90-day stays.

     a. Programs targeted at young people aged 18-25 experiencing unaccompanied homelessness.
     b. Includes 24/7 housing with behavioral health support, both on-site and in the community.
     c. Flexible funding to support young people in transitioning to stable housing with family or other support systems.
     d. Emphasizes voluntary clean and sober housing environments, with policies allowing for managed relapses.

4. Implementation and Future Plans:
     a. Full funding for both houses secured, with ongoing budget provisions.
     b. Funding flow starts July 1, with North Star providing technical assistance.
     c. Initial housing and behavioral health funding disbursements expected by January 1, 2025.
     d. Plans for expansion include potential programs for minors and young people connected with families.

5. Interested parties in providing or supporting these services are encouraged to contact Jim for potential collaboration, more information, or involvement opportunities.

6. Additional Legislative Efforts and Community Involvement:
     a. Representatives Cortes, Eslick, and Davis played significant roles in supporting and passing HB 1929 (2023).
     b. Continued advocacy and meetings with stakeholders to ensure successful program implementation and future expansions.

7. North Star designated as the technical assistance provider starting July 1.

8. It is greatly important to address the homelessness crisis among young people exiting behavioral health treatment.
     a. Commitment to learning from initial programs and expanding based on lessons learned and community feedback.

Youth Peer Network

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1. Youth Peer Support Specialist Curriculum Implementation
     a. Students Providing and Receiving Knowledge (SPARK) Peer Learning Center is collaborating with Thriving Together to develop a new peer support specialist curriculum.
     b. The curriculum targets juniors and seniors in high school, allowing them to earn traditional credit for the course.
     c. It includes a Career and Technical Education (CTE) component and certification testing.
     d. The aim is to empower students with lived experience to become pillars in their communities and reduce stigma.
     e. The current certified peer counselor training has two tracks but will integrate core curriculum and youth and family curriculum.

2. Youth Network Overview
     a. Youth Network is designed to be youth-led, youth-directed, and youth-driven.
     b. The network aims to involve youth with lived experience in mental health, behavioral health, juvenile rehabilitation, child welfare, and homelessness.

      c.   The network provides education, skill learning, and networking opportunities.
      d.   Spark Peer Learning has been awarded the contract to lead the Youth Network, integrating youth peer work into broader initiatives.
      e.   The network aims to engage youth and relevant community partners across the state through various platforms and events.

3. Integration with Existing Programs
   a. The Youth Network will support and collaborate with existing efforts rather than taking over, enhancing synergies with various youth-serving systems.
   b. Participation in System of Care (SOC) Grant activities and the Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) implementation is ongoing.
   c. Spark is actively involved in ensuring peer comfort and willingness to participate in these spaces.
   d. The network will provide youth voice and direction in policy changes and system improvements.

4. Structural and Operational Details
   a. The Youth Network is intended to be 51% youth and young adult-driven, with current involvement exceeding this target.
   b. Development team members have lived experience within the systems they aim to improve.
   c. They are participating in subcommittee meetings, tabling events, and collaborating with community partners.
   d. The network is focusing on connecting youth from diverse backgrounds, including those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

5. Future Plans and Engagement
   a. The network will continue to provide education, skill learning, and networking opportunities.
   b. Plans include creating a "third space" for youth to decompress and connect outside of home and school.
   c. The network's development team is actively engaging in project planning and community outreach.
   d. Upcoming events and activities are scheduled to increase visibility and engagement.
   e. To be a part of curriculum development, reach out to Sam Captain: captain@peerwd.org

6. Questions:
   a. Youth Network: No deadline for joining.
      i. Development of specific events and activities is ongoing.
      ii. Focus on providing support, not clinical resources.
      iii. Opportunities for youth and young adults to participate and support each other.
   b. Stipend and Compensation – priority during planning process.
      i. Stipends are included in contracts for those involved.
      ii. Efforts to ensure proper compensation for youth and adults participating in events and trainings.
   c. Events will be hybrid, combining virtual and in-person formats.
      i. Official kickoff in September will be hybrid due to the large geographic area.
      ii. Request of a one-pager or flyer to provide concise information of program that can be shared at events.

d. Is the program in any specific schools? No specific schools yet, but efforts to partner with schools and communities are ongoing.

WA State Landscape Report on Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult Homelessness – Findings and Next Steps

Kim Justice, OHY kim@officeofyouth.org
Alicia Pritchett, A Way Home WA alicia@awhome.org
Washington State Landscape Report on Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Homelessness – A Way Home Washington

1. Report Overview: co-produced by the Office of Homeless Youth and A Way Home Washington, with research conducted by Change Partners.
    a. The focus was on unaccompanied young people aged 12-24 experiencing homelessness, including pregnant and parenting young people.
    b. The report defines homelessness broadly, including unsheltered, sheltered, at-risk, and unstably housed situations.
    c. An update to the 2016 landscape scan, using 2014 data, with over 100 interviews conducted for rich qualitative data alongside quantitative data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).
2. Key Findings
    a. Decrease in Homelessness: A 40% decrease in unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness from 2016 to 2022.
    b. Snapshot Data: Best available data, providing twice-yearly estimates, integrating health, homelessness, and social benefits data.
    c. Demographic Disparities:
        i. Clear racial disproportionality: 62% of the 10-24 age group is white, but only 43% of those accessing homelessness systems are white.
        ii. Black or African American youth access the system five times more than their proportion in the general population.
        iii. 50% of unaccompanied young people accessing the system are BIPOC, 19% minors, 12% pregnant/parenting, 36% disabled.
        iv. LGBTQIA+ youth likely undercounted due to safety and privacy concerns.
    d. Mental Health and Access to Care:
        i. Significant inequities in mental health, especially among LGBTQIA+ and disabled youth.
        ii. 150 per 100,000 young people aged 14-17 lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19 in 2021.
        iii. Structural inequities result in greater loss for Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous families.
3. Areas of Progress
    a. Service Gap Closure: Increased investment and focus have led to services being available in all but two counties.
    b. Innovative Housing Solutions:

       i. Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund: Flexible funding for young people to address housing instability. 92% of those served between 2022-2023 remained stably housed within 12 months.

       ii. Arlington Drive Youth Campus: 58 apartments for 18-24 year-olds and 12 crisis residential center beds for minors.

   c. Prevention Efforts: Initiatives driven by House Bill 1905 (Year) focused on addressing homelessness for youth exiting public systems of care.

   d. Community-Driven Initiatives: Programs like Anchor Community Initiative and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program emphasize local ownership and collaboration.

4. Continued Gaps and Needs
   a. Housing Crisis: Structural issues with lack of affordable housing and wages not keeping pace with living costs.
   b. Mental Health Crisis: Significant need for on-site mental health care for young people.
   c. Culturally Appropriate Resources: Essential for building trust and providing effective support.

5. Proposed Solutions
   a. Flexible Funds and Direct Cash Transfers: Providing young people with financial support to prevent homelessness.
   b. Population-Specific Resources: Tailored support for pregnant/parenting youth, minors, BIPOC youth, LGBTQIA+ youth.
   c. Policy and Practice Recommendations:
       i. Utilize the report to create shared understanding and drive action.
       ii. Elevate youth voices in decision-making processes.
       iii. Promote community care to support those involved in addressing youth homelessness.

Youth Wellness Zones

Sarah Walker, UW CoLab

1. Funding Source and Purpose:
   a. This initiative was funded by the last legislative session's proviso.
   b. Aimed at building ecological community-driven solutions for youth mental health and wellness.

2. Challenges and Objectives:
   a. Mental health is impacted by various factors such as walkability, housing, clean water, and access to mental health services.
       i. Historically, efforts have been siloed, despite excellent work being done.

3. The goal is to create more integrated solutions, enabling communities to address mental health needs at all levels effectively.

4. Zones Concept:
   a. Zones are geographically defined areas focusing on community-driven care.
   b. Inspired by past initiatives like Promise Neighborhoods and the Family Policy Council.
   c. Efforts are now focused on making these approaches more resilient and sustainable.

5. Examples of Zones and Efforts:
   a. Parkland, Pierce County:

        i.   Youth participatory research informed the zone's boundaries.
        ii.   Focus on leveraging community resources to improve health.
- b. Northeast Spokane:
  - i. Long-term place-based effort with community outreach and data-driven actions.
- c. Renton Innovation Zone Partnership:
  - i. Traditionally focused on educational outcomes, now expanding to youth mental health.
- d. Yakima Valley Partners for Education:
  - i. Emphasizing mindfulness training and community mental health support.

6. Strategic Planning and Recommendations:
   a. Use of data from interviews, surveys, and health assessments to identify needs.
   b. Example from Parkland: adolescent depression identified as a major need.
   c. Recommendations include after-school activities to combat depression, obesity, and high screen time.
   d. Goals include 100% participation in after-school activities to strengthen youth wellness.

7. Sustainability and Scalability:
   a. Support through an existing network focused on educational outcomes, now shifting to youth mental health.
   b. The objective is to create a stable and scalable community-driven mental health support system.

8. Discussion and Feedback:
   a. Questioned if the budget funds will support the strategies identified.
      i. Confirmation that the 2024 budget will fund on-the-ground strategies.
   b. Mentioned funding for 4-H programs at Boys and Girls Clubs in Snohomish County, aligning with the initiative's philosophy.
   c. Noted the lack of mention of early episode psychosis programming in early intervention services – important component but not explicitly listed.
   d. Inquired about helping young children vocalize their mental health needs and barriers.
      i. Emphasized the need for outreach methods that allow young children to express their feelings and mental health challenges.

9. Key Points:
   a. Focus on community-driven, integrated solutions for youth mental health.
   b. Targeted support and funding for specific zones across Washington State.
   c. Emphasis on sustainability, scalability, and leveraging community resources.

YYACC Priority Tracking and Open Call for New Items

1. The agenda for the next meeting, originally scheduled for June 13, has been moved to June 11 to avoid conflict with a large behavioral health conference on June 13-14.
2. The work on Discovery Sprints related to the subgroup will begin in August.
3. Strategic planning work is restarting this year, focusing on multiple topics including transitioning youth, which will start in the second set of Discovery Sprints in August.
   a. More info on strategic planning coming out in June.
   b. Discovery Sprints involve intensive 8-12 week deep dives engaging people with lived experience.

     c.   Topics covered will generate actionable recommendations for both immediate and longer-term strategic planning.
4. Importance of capturing qualitative data from lived experiences to inform service development and avoid unintended consequences.
5. Issue of high-risk youth stuck in hospitals due to inadequate services, referencing HB 1580 (2023), which created a team to coordinate care and navigate systems for these children.
     a.   Despite this, gaps in the system persist, and more services are needed.
6. Need for continued discussion on the challenges faced by transitioning youth.
7. Increasing issue of marijuana-induced psychosis among teens and young adults, emphasizing its connection to broader behavioral health and criminalization issues.
8. Current lack of data collection on failed adoption youth by Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), highlighting the need for spaces and services for healed voices and older youth to share their experiences.
     a.   Many former system youth are hesitant to have children due to mental health barriers and fear of continuing cycles of trauma.

Look Ahead: 24/25 Schedule

[Insert YYACC Meeting Schedule]
Next meeting 6/11 4:00-6:00pm