

TOPPENISH TOWN HALL MEETING & LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST

November 14th and 15th, 2013

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

The Community Outreach Subcommittee of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) held two meetings in Toppenish on November 14 and 15, 2013, Benton Rural electric Association, 410 :G: Street, Toppenish, Washington.

We would like to make special mention of the outstanding support we received from Heidi Riojas, Executive Assistance with the City of Toppenish, Gracie Sexton with People for People, Ryan Warner with the Washington State Department of Transportation, and Christina Labra with the Secretary of State's Office. We also want to acknowledge the hospitality we received from the Benton Rural Electric Association, especially Alberta Herrera who assisted us with reserving the meeting space and making us feel welcome.

We were pleased to have over 50 individuals attend our meetings. Meeting participants represented a diverse cross section of the community. Many of the attendees were service providers from Yakima who serve individuals in the Lower Valley.

The following report represents a summary of the issues discussed with suggested actions and resources are also provided. We also included a summary of the evaluation forms; all feedback is reviewed and used to improve our outreach planning process for future meetings.

Barry Long, Chairperson of the Community Outreach Subcommittee facilitated the meetings. Participants selected the discussion topics which defined the meetings' content. The areas of concern identified were 1) transportation, 2) mental health services, 3) school to work transition and 4) medical services. During the course of our meetings other topics were discussed and are included in the report.

Major positive outcome!!!!

Possible interest in regularly convening group meetings for this area: Melinda expressed willingness to facilitate that happening. Yakima Regional would like to host the meetings. January 10th suggested as date for scheduled meeting. A Friday breakfast proposed as first one. Breakfast provided by Regional. Topics to be discussed. Therapists,

Accessible Communities Committee and grant application for that, Transportation. Auditor to be invited. Work opportunities for transition students.

BUILDING ACCESSIBILITY

Coordinator Lead, Tom Blackeagle with Catholic Family and Child Service's Volunteer Chore Services explained that they offer several programs solely through the generosity of individual and group volunteers. These volunteers donate their time and talents to help someone in need. One of their projects is building wheelchair ramps allowing people to remain in their homes. The ramps are built at no cost to the recipient. You need to make an application and meet the eligibility requirement of being over the age of 60 and low income or between the ages of 18 – 60 and low income and disabled. You can call Mr. Blackeagle at 509.865.5121 Ext 4480 for more information. Catholic Family and Child Service is always looking for volunteer and you can learn more about available opportunities by visiting their website at <http://cfcsyakima.org>.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Indirectly discussed with other topics.

EDUCATION

Blind teacher in school, vision specialist. Braille specialist. Great mentors for students with vision impairments. 25 schools across 4 counties. Lots of travel between schools. Drivers hired. Up to 60 students/specialist. Heavy loads. OT/PT/Spch therapists all needed in schools. Access for community services limited due to funding.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/EMERGENCY SERVICES

1996 floods in Zillah were mentioned as past emergency situation, but no specifics provided regarding how these were handled or if there were any concerns. There is a strong emergency management team in Yakima County. Drills: 211, whole region of infrastructure.

EMPLOYMENT

Becky: DVR won't pay for a second degree for a teacher who has been out of work due to her medical problems for years. Now ready to work and needs to get another degree to do so but DVR declines to support her since she already has a degree. Also wonders if she can work and still keep her low income housing.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) can assist with protesting DVR decisions. (1-800-637-5627)

Plan to Work program can help with benefits planning. Information provided.

Central Washington Disability Resource Center in Ellensburg also provides this service.

HEALTH CARE

OTs: There is a nationwide shortage. Real demand everywhere. Also speech pathologists hard to find. PTs: requirement for a doctorate limits the ability of graduates to take jobs in rural community settings where pay is not as good as in urban areas.

Pacific Northwest University interested in offering programs, but difficult to gain accreditation.

Hospital front door as drop off point for patients who are brought to other clinics that are in separate buildings or nowhere near the main hospital door. Patients cannot get to where they need to go, get lost, no one with them and no one to care for their needs. Is this a real rule or a mis-interpretation of a rule???? Special needs coalition invited hospital folks to attend meeting and bring up this subject, would be glad to meet with anyone with any needs related to transportation.

Ryan: Door to door vs Door through door service? Door to destination?

Try to look at who individual providers are. Each one may have different policies. Start to identify company names and then begin to work with them. Again, bring this to special needs coalition meeting.

HOUSING

There is not enough accessible affordable housing. (Marj Henderson MD)

Not always a long wait list....Zillah, 1 to 6 months. Yakima 2 to 3 years. Even bigger issue in Seattle, 8 years. Big problem for every community.

DD Yakima: working with people to purchase their own homes. Success story: Yakima specialties client who got a job at Walmart, was later supported to buy his home near his job so that he could walk to work.

MENTAL HEALTH

Comprehensive mental health services in Yakima, “builds beautiful buildings, but none of our clients can get into them.” Comment from Yakima Specialties.

Pockets of excellence but also gaps in services.

Why? Possibly because so many are dual diagnosis clients (alcoholism AND mental health diagnosis). Assessments are very expensive.

Many people need help to break the cycle.

There are psychiatrists in Yakima who take Medicare payment.

DDA and mental health are trying to work together on diversion, keeping people out of Eastern State.

Creative Options program for people with DD and mental health problems, a day treatment program.

CWMH, Yakama Nation, Childrens Village have all partnered with schools.

Toppenish police: Not enough support from mental health services, only for people who are an immediate danger to themselves or others. Transfer to county often necessary.

Long waits for hospital beds at Eastern State, even if court ordered. Then they must be housed at the county/city level.

Shortage of alcohol and drug treatment, especially complicated by a disability. Drug and alcohol programs do not know how to treat people with both diagnoses. CMH has a short

program for these. Especially for Deaf and HOH this is difficult. Individualized treatment usually needed due to difficulty with translation for group treatment, not as effective.

Info below from Paul, VP at CMH:

Two Rivers Landing built for residential youth program, to allow inpatient treatment in this community. Now consistent census. Took a while to get from building to

Pathways inpatient treatment for dual diagnoses, psych diagnosis and chemical dependency treatment, integrated treatment, 16 beds, almost always full. 2 on wait list currently. (Note: This is 2 fewer beds than the hospital unit has)

Adult evaluation and treatment facility, Memorial hospital getting out of inpatient psych treatment, CMH will take this on. Adult inpatient treatment.

Other CMH program:

Adult crisis, 16 bed facility in Sunnyside.

Supported living: 50 apartments.

Group home: 12 people, older house

There are more above, I could not catch them all.

Funding is the main issue that has blocked people from getting services. GAU program participants were all turned away due to lack of funding. Medicaid expansion and affordable care act will be a **big** help. Mental health parity.

“Yakima County jail is still the largest treatment facility”. Reducing the size of that population is a goal, diverting jail population to treatment instead. Trying to keep people out of the legal justice system.

Shortage of psychiatrists nationally, improving a bit locally. Hard to find child psychiatrists. Recently recruited an ARNP from Michigan.

New approach: Walk-in appointments with people seen the same day as much as possible, helps to arrive early.

Partnering with Neighborhood health: Opened a primary care clinic in the mental health facility.

Creative Options program: for people with dev disabilities and mental health issues

Question: Mental health treatment, possibly integrated counseling, into DD facilities?
Issue from ARC representative. “Relationship counseling” is what she states is needed.
How to integrate into programs?

Cristina Labra: Crossing Borders program for Sexual abuse recommended.

Ryan: State sexual assault commission, worked on intersection between sexual assault and disabilities. Sue XXX?

Question regarding Medicare coverage for mental health: Covers providers but not case managers. Garden Village in Yakima is local treatment facility for elders with mental health issues.

SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION

HS students with special needs are not ready for work when they graduate, typical student usually with a specific learning disability. Tribal program tries to help.

Yakima Specialties: Has sheltered program, in past some people would stay for life. New focus to shift people out to the community, some people not more than 1 to 2% productive, some people just not ready for community employment.

Barriers: Time away from academics to focus on work preparation, difficulty getting teachers to go out to find job placements. Right now only food business or cleaning business opportunities. Pockets of good things going on, not well distributed through the districts, transportation often gets in the way.

Barry: WTA guidelines on face time, time off site, etc. Some schools say “somebody else has to do it”, not a teacher.

Yakima Specialties: David HS teacher on-site, supervised employment.

School districts in the area meet monthly, Wednesday 9 to 12: Invitation to come to present programs and solutions. Meets at ESD.

This week: Lower Valley districts planning to do a joint transitions job fair.

Junior Achievement World: mentioned as a “city in a building”, integration into community focus, schools might explore job training and placements with this program

Hospital volunteer services: a good option, but Yakima Services has had difficulty with contacting. Teresa from Regional and one of the Yakima Services folks will talk and connect to right person.

Yakima Services working with the school district for transition students with guaranteed job placement for those who want to work there. They make wood products, assembly work for apple industry, tree spreaders, gluing boxes for Costco, labeling bags, some community opportunities International Paper.

Youth Build: 18 to 24 year olds, training program. construction and tools, has built some ramps for chore services program/Yakama nation, has done good work for community, employs some PWD.

Again, emphasis on shortage of therapists of all types, new requirements for doctorate for PTs, then those grads do not want to work for a school district salary. Staffing companies taking 40% upcharge to place one. Difficult to get rid of underperforming therapists.

Heritage University is interested in starting a program. Pacific Northwest University partnering with Heritage. Medical students, Masters in Health Sciences then transition to Med school. PA program being started here after UW program taken away. Many health needs not being met in this community, these schools interested in being part of the solution.

TRANSPORTATION

Budget cuts have had a big impact. Hard to get someone to a job...after they actually get the job. Barrier is to get people to Yakima or Tri-Cities for work.

Hours cut back with budget cuts, low ridership on many routes lead to further cuts.

For a few years the Yakama nation filled some of the gaps. Tribal services helping but more needed. Outlying rural areas like Goldendale even more challenging but all areas need to work together.

Driver's license very important here. Relicensing program taken on by NW Justice project.

Tribe (PAHTO): Map 21 funding (federal funding for transit), recently obtained. Manpower needed to translate funding into vehicles rolling. Routed service. No eligibility to use that service, anyone can. Currently has 2 buses. Planning to purchase more. Will offer Dial-a-Ride Service. Yakima and Grant county.

People 4 People: 8 am to 6:30 pm, door to door, community connector last run 8 pm. Fixed route, public transportation, no eligibility, I82 corridor area, coordinated with Walla Walla and east.

Job access reverse commute (JARC): Transpo for DD with jobs, Yakima county, WSDOT funded.

Volunteer chore svcs provides door to door transpo for seniors >age62, WA DOT grant recently received to extend services coverage area. Elders or PWD, possible connections planned with other programs.

People for people provides an excellent service, also PAHTO! (kudos)

All of the above programs know about each other and attempt to coordinate and work with each other. Special needs coalition group, helps programs and people work together. Understand what is determined by legislation and what can be changed (or manipulated).

Question from schools district: Mattawa has difficulty getting transportation for medical appointments, even for those eligible.

Children's Village: Policies regarding who can be transported to appointments limits transportation availability. Issue: parents not allowed to bring other children.

Question re: seniors and driving: AAA senior driving program. recommended by Ryan. Travel training programs in some communities, assigned trainer to individual. Report to DMV can be done. Local therapists, UW driving program.

EnTrust has program in schools, travel trainers. (Note: I'm not sure I have the name correct here.)

Universal Design for street planning, Marj Henderson asked about examples of cities with ADA accessible streets as a model. Lynden and Sequim mentioned. Need for Disability Advisory Committee in Yakima. Melinda reviewed Affordable communities act and grants available. County legislative body needs to create one OR through a non-profit and approved by the commissioners. Can expand role of accessible voting committee or another entity.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY:

Are there any VA programs working with TBI that we should know about?

In Yakima there is a VA clinic but no other services. DOT partnering with VA for transportation for homeless and rural vets.

Barry: Networking program, how to get work when you have always just done what others tell you to do.

John Eisen, Work Source Yakima previously, now Act personnel planning job placement course for Vets.

Gap between active service and VA services: High suicide rate, 360 days until VA services begin.

VOTING ACCESS

SOS rep, Yakima county: vote by mail, three accessible voting sites also available.

Available 18 days before an election. Anyone can use them. Very low usage, 4 voters total in most recent election. Disability advisory committee meets once/year, everyone invited.

Anyone can vote if registered. Only a court can take away that right if person deemed incompetent.

Memorial hospital invited Yolanda to come to support groups to talk about the units and their use, voting in general.

Ideally, the units could be transported to the person, but no staffing/funds available for that right now.

DEAF Interpreting

Yakima Specialties struggle with DVR for paying for interpreter for a class. Trying to use phone translator, FCC would not allow this.

TOPICS NOT DISCUSSED:

ADVOCACY

COMMUNITY ACCESS

DISABLED PARKING

FOSTER CARE

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

RECREATION AND FITNESS

RESPIRE CARE SERVICES