

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: September 3, 2022

To: Dennise Lavrenz, Chairperson – Community Engagement Committee

From: Brenda Wesley, Chairperson – Community Stakeholder Advisory Council

Subject: Council Activities

File Type: Informational Report

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**BACKGROUND**

On behalf of the Mental Health Board Community Stakeholder Advisory Council, I'd like to begin by sharing our appreciation for the opportunity the Council was given to tour the Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC) and Granite Hills Hospital as part of the launch of the Council over the summer. A sole purpose of the Council is to be able to collaboratively work alongside MHEC and Granite Hills Hospital to not only strategize ways to improve the quality of care but also serve as a source of outreach. I seek to share an update as Council Members are eager to make meaningful contributions to the work of the Mental Health Board.

During both tours, we readily recognized the tremendous amount of hard work and dedication done by the Mental Health Board to establish both facilities as a part of the redesigned continuum of care. The Council is very appreciative of these efforts to meet community needs. Council Members provided valuable feedback based on the tours.

**REPORT**

See the feedback below shared directly with Site Administrator Kevin Kleusner during the Council's July 25, 2022, MHEC tour:

1. Upon arrival, it's in the patients' best interest to have voluntary and involuntary entrances remain separate from one another. – The current layout has two separate entrances, but they are directly adjacent and within sight of each other thereby limiting the separation effect.
2. When a family is bringing in a loved one during a crisis, familial support throughout the intake process provides a sense of security for both the client and family. – The current layout does not offer enough opportunity for family members to stay with their loved one during the intake process.
3. The environment including the colors of patient rooms, intake and quiet areas should be calming and welcoming. – The current aesthetics are not specifically

connected to mental health design practices needed to create a peaceful environment for individuals in crisis.

The Council has made the following suggestions:

1. A partition could be constructed in between the voluntary and involuntary entrances so that clients coming in voluntarily are not alarmed by a police presence. This also affords greater privacy to individuals who are coming to the facility in police custody.
2. A waiting area or lobby could be developed for families to wait until their loved ones are officially admitted.
3. The overall design scheme could be easily remedied with new paint colors, landscaping/flowers, graphics, etc. to support wellness. Colors like blues and greens might be considered as they help to reduce stress levels and create a sense of tranquility.
4. A peer specialist is needed to work within the facility. Currently Team Connect offers this opportunity, however, that is a program that is utilized after discharge and when additional follow up is needed.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The hard work invested into building the MHEC facility for our community is apparent. We are pleased to see some of the Council's suggestions and feedback have been taken into consideration as reported by Site Administrator Kevin Kluesner during the August Board Meeting, which reflects a willingness to collaborate with the Council.

A meeting was held between the Chair of the Council; Joy Tapper, Healthcare Partnership; and Kevin Kluesner, Mental Health Emergency Center; to stress the importance of the recommendations as they relate to the community's trust and trauma. In the spirit of collaboration, we respectfully request MHEC establish a timeline for the items with updates to be provided at upcoming Council meetings.

## **REPORT**

See the feedback below shared directly with Site Director Deana Meyer during the Council's August 22, 2022, Granite Hills Hospital tour:

1. The sally port works well to provide privacy for law enforcement conducting involuntary arrivals. This quells discomfort for clients who may be alarmed by police presence.
2. The overall design scheme is very welcoming, including landscaping, murals, and warming colors.

3. The treatment rooms are equipped to provide care and treatment without the use of restraints.

Questions posed include:

1. What's the highest accepting acuity level for a patient?
2. What's the expected opening date for the Children and Adolescents unit?
3. What's the bed capacity?

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The facility is welcoming, comforting, and appears to meet a lot of the needs of the community. The amount of effort put into being receptive of creating a soothing environment for consumers does not go unnoticed and is appreciated. The Council would respectfully request an update related to the above referenced questions.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Community Stakeholder Advisory Council Volunteer Listing

### **APPROVED BY:**

Brenda Wesley, Chairperson, Community Stakeholder Advisory Council

cc: Maria Perez, Mental Health Board Chairwoman  
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
Michael Lappen, BHS Administrator  
Kevin Kluesner, MHEC Site Administrator  
Deanna Meyer, Granite Hills Site Administrator  
Jodi Mapp, Senior Executive Assistant/Board Liaison  
Kate Flynn Post, Research Analyst