

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Behavioral Health Division Administration
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: May 18, 2011

TO: Supervisor Peggy West, Chairperson, Health and Human Needs Committee

FROM: Geri Lyday, Interim Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by Paula Lucey, Administrator, Behavioral Health Division

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT FROM INTERIM DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, ON THE IMPACT OF THE ELIMINATION OF FUNDING BY MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR MOBILE URGENT TREATMENT TEAM (MUTT) SERVICES

Policy Issue

In January 2007, the Health and Human Needs Committee received an information report on the initiation of an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement between the Behavioral Health Division (BHD) and the Milwaukee Board of School Directors for the provision of a dedicated mobile crisis team and other crisis services for the Milwaukee Public School (MPS) system.

The Behavioral Health Division-Wraparound Milwaukee Mobile Urgent Treatment Team (MUTT) has provided crisis intervention services to MPS since January 2007. Due to the impending reduction in available funds in the Governor's CY2011-13 budget for MPS, the Superintendent's 2012 Budget eliminates funding of \$426,458 for these services as of June 30, 2011.

This report is intended to provide information to the Health and Human Needs Committee on the programmatic and fiscal impact of the proposed elimination of the dedicated MUTT team for MPS.

Background/Discussion

The cooperative agreement and funding of MUTT services by MPS initiated in 2007 was prompted by on-going school safety concerns and the recognized contribution of untreated and/or under diagnosed mental and behavioral health needs of some students leading to school disruptions. The MPS MUTT team was modeled after a similar dedicated MUTT team and crisis services currently being provided to the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. There was a need in the Milwaukee school system for more rapid response and follow-up from a group of specialized mental health experts who could assess mental health issues to reduce classroom disruptions and school suspensions and also link the students to long-term mental health services in the community.

The MUTT team's role with MPS included telephone phone response and consultation to

principals, school counselors and others (about 500-600 calls each school year); face-to-face crisis interventions at the schools (about 150 contacts so far in 2011 and 220 in 2010); referral to Wraparound Milwaukee and REACH or other mental health providers for longer term treatment (100 referrals to Wraparound Milwaukee/REACH enrolled annually); and training and consultation to MPS schools, teachers, counselors on identifying mental health issues, crisis intervention techniques and classroom management (10 trainings given in 2011).

The Mobile Urgent Team was also able to employ specialized para-professional staff, called crisis 1:1 stabilizers, to provide follow-up observation, supervision and mentoring to students with mental health issues to reduce repeated behavioral problems in the school. There are 13 active crisis stabilizers currently involved in such situations. Also, one of the advantages of the dedicated mobile crisis teams was the quick response time (average 20 minute response time) by MUTT on-site to the schools.

Current MPS funding for the MUTT team is \$426,458 annually with an additional \$180,000 of Medicaid funds covering the cost of crisis 1:1 stabilizers. There are no county funds involved. The MPS funds have covered the costs of four Master-level Social Workers (MSW) provided through a contract with St. Charles Youth and Family Services plus any back-up needed by the regular MUTT team, 4-8 hours per week of supervision by the Program Director or Assistant Program Director, travel and supply costs and some of the costs of the crisis 1:1 stabilizers. The balance of the crisis 1:1 stabilizers (mentors) costs was covered through direct Medicaid crisis billing.

Wraparound Milwaukee was notified by phone on May 13, 2011 by the head of MPS Special Services, Pat Yahle, that the MUTT team was not going to be funded in the 2012 school year budget (effective end of MUTT Services would be June 30, 2011). This was not an action MPS wanted to take based on any performance issue but necessitated by a reduction in state funding to MPS as part of the 2011-13 State Budget. At this time it does not appear this decision is reversible.

The financial impact of this decision will not result in any loss of county positions. The MUTT team staff for the MPS program was provided under an agreement with St. Charles Youth and Family Services. As a result of the MPS decision, the contract with St. Charles will be reduced and the displaced staff will be placed in other jobs at St. Charles.

Programmatically, the MPS MUTT team was one of the first such arrangements in the Country. It was a model for other States including Massachusetts and Maryland who have initiated similar arrangements. While the regular MUTT team will still, under our state HFS 34 requirement, offer crisis intervention services to schools in the community, including MPS, it will simply not be able to respond, 1) to all emergency situations without further triage of the intent of the request or emergency nor 2) will it be able, in all instances, to respond as quickly (20 minutes) in coming to the schools since some teams will be out on other cases.

The other loss will be reduced access by MPS to the Wraparound and REACH programs as the MUTT-MPS team was a frequent referral source of school youth to that program. There will also be an immediate drop off in the use of crisis 1:1 stabilizers to follow-up on youth needing further observation, supervision and mentoring in relationship to behavioral issues. The MUTT team initiated all such requests for this service.

Summary/Conclusion

The cancelation of the MPS-BHD cooperative agreement for MUTT services will have the biggest impact on programs. The availability and timeliness of the MUTT crisis response teams will likely be significantly reduced by the loss of a dedicated MUTT MPS program as well as easy and immediate access to referral and enrollment in other mental health services and supports. Only children with the most immediate and acute needs as determined by MUTT will be immediately seen. Children who have mental health needs, which if addressed, would prevent the potential occurrence of serious acting out, may not be seen immediately. Preventive intervention and support will not be provided as it had with the dedicated MUTT-MPS service.

However, BHD-Wraparound and the Mobile Urgent Treatment are committed to doing the best possible job to serve the entire Milwaukee Community, including MPS. To this end, the MUTT program will continue to respond to children's mental health crisis situations wherever they occur including doing phone and face-to-face intervention in the schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Geri A. Lyday", is written over a horizontal line.

Geri Lyday, Interim Director
Department of Health and Human Services

cc: County Executive Chris Abele
Terrence Cooley, County Board Chief of Staff
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