

Finalized during July 09,
2024 Coordination
Committee Meeting

Ashland and Bayfield County Regional
Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) Coordination Committee Meeting
Bayfield County Conference Room A
Hybrid Meeting
April 09, 2024

Regional CCS Committee:

Ashland County – Terry Barningham*, Pam Stanny, Jan Kupczyk, Billie Keelin

Bayfield County – Tom Croteau, Cecelia Webb*, Sandra Notzke, Jamie Vernon

Members-at-Large Present: Val Levno, Thomas Mittelstaedt

Members Excused: Erica Toman, Johanna Perkins

Others Present: Sarah Traaholt, De Ana Nelson*, Elizabeth Skulan, Jessica Bigboy*

*Attended virtually

Call to order and Introductions

Mittelstaedt called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Levno conducted roll call and noted that Ashland County, Bayfield County and Regional CCS Committee all have a quorum present.

Levno introduced, Jamie Vernon, Red Cliff Representative for Bayfield County to the group. Levno also introduced Teri Ovaska to the group. Ovaska was hired as Levno's successor as CCS Administrator.

Ashland County:

Discussion and Possible Action: Review and Approval of the January 09, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion by Kupczyk, second by Keelin, to approve the Ashland County CCS January 09, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Discussion and Possible Action: Ashland Comprehensive Community Services Plan & Policy update.

Levno reviewed changes and updates with the group. Mittelstaedt noted that his information needs to be updated.

Motion by Kupczyk, second by Stanny, to approve Ashland Comprehensive Community Services Plan & Policy update with updates on addresses and phone numbers as needed. Motion passed.

Bayfield County:

Discussion and Possible Action: Review and Approval of the January 09, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion by Notzke, second by Croteau, to approve Bayfield Comprehensive Community Services Plan & Policy update. Motion passed.

Discussion and Possible Action: Bayfield Comprehensive Community Services Plan & Policy update. Mittlestaedt and Notzke noted that their contact information needs to be updated.

Motion by Notzke, second by Webb, to approve Bayfield Comprehensive Community Services Plan & Policy with the updates on addresses and phone numbers as needed. Motion passed.

Discussion and Possible Action: Election of Chairperson.

It was announced the Ceceila Webb is moving out of the area and has provided notice and will no longer be able to serve on the Bayfield County or regional CCS committees. Mittlestaedt recognized Ceceila Webb's contribution to the CCS Committees. The Committee showed appreciation to Webb for her dedication and wished her well in future endeavors.

Motion by Croteau, second by Notzke, to elect Thomas Mittlestaedt as Bayfield County Comprehensive Community Chairperson. Motion passed.

Regional Committee:

Discussion and Possible Action: Review and Approval of the January 09, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion by Kupczyk, second by Keelin, to approve the Regional CCS, January 09, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Presentation: Providing Psychotherapy, in-home, in-office, telehealth, and equine therapy in CCS – De Ana Nelson, Beautifully Broken Refuge Ranch

Levno introduced De Anna Nelson, owner of Beautifully Broken Refuge Ranch to the group. Nelson is a licensed professional counselor that provides an array of services for the CCS program including equine therapy, art therapy, psychotherapy, in-home, in-office and telehealth services.

Beautifully Broken Refuge Ranch provides a unique aspect to therapy because it is on a farm setting where nature and animals are used as healing agents. Nelson noted the name Beautifully Broken was derived from there being beauty in brokenness.

Nelson wants to use her talents to help heal others. Nelson believes that a therapeutic bond between a participant and therapist is essential to creating a safe place for healing to begin. Nelson noted she also provides group services and enjoys providing care in a group setting. Groups can help participants develop friendships and facilitate healing when individuals are working together.

Nelson visits Bayfield and Drummond schools each one day a week for therapy. She hopes to incorporate the Washburn School District into the schedule soon.

Nelson is impressed by CCS and its value to the community around participants. Service Facilitators provide participants with a team of needed support and services.

CCS Program Response to Committee Recommendations of Plan & Policy Updates

Levno reviewed a letter to the committee accepting their Plan & Policy update recommendations from the January 2024 meeting.

Review Program Report

Levno noted that the Ashland County referrals have been increasing. Ovaska stated this is not unusual after a holiday. Bayfield County referrals continue to steadily grow.

Stanny questioned where CCS referrals come from. Ovaska noted that for Ashland County at least 50% of the referrals are made by the Tamarack Behavioral Health Unit. Levno noted referrals also come from Wellness and Recovery Courts, the Bad River Tribe, and through self-referrals.

Croteau stated that just over 50% of referrals for Bayfield County come from other Bayfield County Department of Human Service units or programs including Aging and Disability, Economic Support, Youth Justice, Child Protective Services, Childrens Long-Term Services, and other Family Service programs. Croteau noted many referrals for Bayfield County also come from Tamarack Behavioral Health Unit.

Croteau stated the number of children in the program continues to grow. There are currently fourteen youth in the program. Croteau noted providing services to children is more time-consuming and is more difficult during the school year. He reported that it is helpful to have additional vendor support to relieve some of the pressure off service facilitators to provide services after hours.

Levno noted there are a few staffing changes. Levno is retiring on May 3, 2024. Ovaska was promoted internally to the position of the new CCS Administrator. Restructuring was necessary when Ashland County was unable to recruit needed licensed, Masters-level staff to fill Ovaska's position of Service Director of ACCS and BCCS. Tom Croteau is taking over as BCCS Service Director. Job responsibilities of CCS Administrator and ACCS Service Director that do not need a licensed, Masters-level staff were combined to create the position of Quality Assurance and Improvement Coordinator – Ashland/Bayfield CCS. The person hired for this new position will be starting April 22nd, 2024. Bayfield is currently recruiting for a master's level mental health professional.

Levno reported CCS provider, Christian Servants Home Care, had been able to recruit and retain staff in a way that other contracted providers have not been able to due to their unique business model. Levno noted that Vista Care continues to have trouble hiring staff. Levno reported she excited about Vista Care's STAR Program. Using this model, Vista Care's staff "have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, are familiar with risk assessment and mitigation, and are supervised by fully licensed clinicians. Treatment includes trauma, interpersonal conflict, mood disorders, and grief/loss."

Levno reported the Ashland County Board has requested the Ashland County CCS team provide more outreach to the homeless. Ovaska noted staff have been present at Pearson Plaza the past few Thursdays trying to speak with homeless individuals who are present. Staff can help individuals place phone calls, provide local resources, and offer referrals to the CCS program when there is interest, and a referral is appropriate. The Brick is partnering with Ashland County to assist in providing outreach. CCS will report the impact of their outreach to the Ashland County Board at a future meeting.

Children Services

Ovaska provided a handout listing the services available to children in the CCS program. The handout provides an overview to parents, guardians, and participants new to the program.

Kupczyk asked if local transportation needs were being met. Levno noted that for medical appointments CCS participants must use MTM (formerly Veyo). Ovaska noted that BART is a good local transportation resource. Croteau agreed BART is very accommodating. Levno and Croteau continue to conduct monthly discussions with the WI DHS and MTM so local issues with the non-emergency medical transportation provide by MTM are addressed.

Stanny asked if there were still volunteer drivers to provide transportation. Croteau noted that Bayfield County has veteran volunteer services. Skulan stated that Aging and Disability also has a volunteer driver program for the elderly and disabled. However post-COVID, the pool is smaller. Levno noted that Ashland Aging and Disability has something similar. However, individuals who are eligible for transportation must use MTM when traveling to medical appointments.

Discussion and Possible Action: New Business

Levno asked the group about topics of interest for presentations at future meetings. Stanny requested a presentation regarding behavioral health inpatient availability and the impacts locally. Croteau noted it is a timely topic given the reduced inpatient availability with the renovations that are occurring at Tamarack Behavioral Health Unit. Croteau suggested Tom Jensen from Tamarack as a potential speaker on this topic. Levno noted that additional suggestions can be sent to Levno (through May 3, 2024), Ovaska, Croteau, or Service Facilitators.

Kupczyk questioned if she or anyone else should act if they are aware of service providers who are out in public and they are not working (e.g., on their phones, etc.) when they should be providing services. Levno noted that she has personally reported this. Levno encouraged “if you see something, say something”. Levno also noted that CCS participants or their parents or guardians generally voice their concerns to staff members if a service or provider is not working when with the participant. Levno also noted that if there are multiple complaints, CCS will discontinue authorizing services with the provider.

Croteau recognized Levno for her many years of service to the county, committee, and region. Levno thanked the group for their dedication to the committee. Mittelstaedt also thanked Webb for her service on the committee.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Bigboy stated she appreciated being able to join the meeting today.

Informational Items (other)

Mittelstaedt thanked the staff for making meetings available virtually as well as in person.

Future Meeting Dates

July 9, 2024 – Ashland County 12:30 p.m.

October 8, 2024 – Bayfield County 12:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Traaholt, Bayfield County Clerk