

# Increase Community Services and Caregiver Supports 2019 Final Report



## Study Assignment

The task force was established to increase the capacity for transitional housing and residential services in communities to keep individuals closer to home, and develop caregiver supports.

## Summary of Interim

The task force held its first meeting on July 19 in Pierre. At the first meeting, Terry Dosch, Executive Director of the Council of Community Behavioral Health, presented on the various community-based residential services and supports provided to those with mental health issues and addictions. Amy Iversen-Pollreis, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social Services, provided information on supported housing services provided by the Department, including the Transition Age Youth Program, Room and Board Services, and the Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness. During public testimony, Jennifer Stalley representing AARP of South Dakota, encouraged the task force to search for ways to provide additional support for caregivers.

During the August meeting, Barry Tice and Stacey Fielder discussed the New Start Program and the supported housing services the program provides in Pennington County. Roger Jacobs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Field Office Director, discussed the types of assistance provided by HUD, including housing choice vouchers, public housing, project-based assistance, and tribal housing. Dr. Doug O'Neill and Craig Pahl, of the Brookings Empowerment Project, presented on the See-Do House pilot project, a short-term stay facility in Brookings and the important role of caregivers. Terry Dosch, Executive Director of the Council of Community Behavioral Health, addressed the task force regarding the questions brought up at the prior meeting regarding occupancy levels and waiting lists for housing provided by Community Mental Health Centers. Dennis Pfrimmer, President of Capital Area Counseling Services, presented on Transitional and Group Living. Amy Iversen-Pollreis, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social Services, discussed peer support specialists and what it would take to establish a peer support specialist program in South Dakota.

At the task force's final meeting in November, Cindy Heiberger, President of South Dakota Association of County Commissioners, discussed the role of counties in providing services to those with mental health issues. Matt Krogman, Relators Association Representative, discussed property manager education and agreed to take steps to implement the task force's recommendation that a mental health awareness component be added to property manager education. Alex Timperley, Legislative Attorney at the Legislative Research Council, passed along information that was collected from Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, and Wyoming regarding how peer support services are provided in those states. Representatives from the Association of South Dakota Peer Supporters, Faith Goehring, Loran Harris, and John Ferrone, discussed the benefits of peer support and provided recommendations on how to implement peer support in South Dakota.

## Task force findings:

- Short-term and transitional housing are important to the recovery of patients released from acute care, but long-term housing is critical to avoid recidivism.
- All levels of mental health care capacity are limited these limitations are exacerbated by a shortage of case managers.
- Helping recovering mental health care patients find housing and stay in their new home is intensive work.
- Solutions for housing are not one size fits all and are best developed at the local community level.
- Caregivers (non-medical professionals) providing assistance to loved ones need more information and support.

- There are capacity issues with assisted living facilities and skilled nursing homes that serve patients with long term acute mental health care needs.

Task force recommendations:

- Given the importance of long-term housing for those with mental health issues the task force recommends that information regarding housing those with mental illness should be sent to Public Housing Agencies in South Dakota and ask the Agencies to consider providing local preferences for those who have completed mental health treatment.
- The task force recommended that the Real Estate Commission add a mental health awareness component to property manager education and certification. Education for independent landlords (those not licensed by the Real Estate Commission) is also important and the Real Estate Commission should promote the inclusion of interested independent landlords in their training. Other community organizations should also be encouraged to handle education of independent landlords.
- The task force recommended that the Department of Human Services be encouraged to provide public services announcements regarding mental health and add information to their caregiver webpages specific to Mental Health Caregivers.
- The task force discussed how county funding for mental health care housing is limited. Some task force members suggested the need for additional sources of county funds.
- Recognizing the shortages in the mental health care work force and the need for more patient resources to avoid recidivism the task force recommended that a subcommittee of three task force members draft a concurrent resolution for the 2020 Legislative Session to instruct the Department of Social Services to study the possible implementation of a mental health care "peer specialist program" in South Dakota, including studying the cost, training, and certification needed to start and implement a program, and to report back to the Legislature by 2021 on the Department's findings.
- The task force discussed an idea for a potential future interim committee that would focus on children's mental health issues and needs.

### **Listing of Legislation Adopted by the Task Force**

The task force recommended that a subcommittee of three task force members put together a concurrent resolution to ask the Department of Social Services to study the implementation of a peer specialist program in South Dakota.

### **Summary of Meeting Dates and Places**

The task force met in Pierre on July 19, August 29, and November 4.

### **Listing of Task Force Members**

Members of the task force are Representative Tim Reed, Chair; Senator Wayne Steinhauer, Vice Chair; Representative Tina Mulally, Representative Carl Perry, Senator Red Dawn Foster, Jesse Bailey, Colleen Casavan, Wendy Giebink, Amy Iversen-Pollreisz, Anne Kelly, Brandy Rhead, and Pam Vanmeeteren.

### **Listing of Staff Members**

Staff members for the task force are Alex Timperley, Legislative Attorney and Cindy Tryon, Senior Legislative Secretary.

