

Minutes for Latino Health Council- 3/23/23

Icebreaker- Naming good emotions

Introductions- Patricia Tellez-Giron, Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, Lourdes Shanjani, Mildred Bautista, Moranda, Julio Molina, Jacqueline Rodriguez, Juan Carlos Cabrera, Alejandra Najera Olivas, Fernando Cano Ospina, Brittany Brooks, Nikeya Bramlett, Nazka Serrano, Sheila Olk Martin, Victor Petrusevicius, Laura (GHC), Jhonatan Real, Kenton Zink, Araceli, Sachin Gupte, Maria Mora Pinzon, Judith Rasmussen, Kirsten Norslien, Holly Krook Castaneda, Elizabeth Ringle, John Hausbeck, Roxana Vega

Announcements- Gilda's Club has hired Rosa Rhoden as a bilingual facilitator

Kenton Zink- one of three Elder Benefit Specialists with the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). A statewide program, their focus is on connecting people with benefits and making sure they are aware of their legal rights. They help determine eligibility/accessibility for different benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare, Senior Care, and Disability. The only requirements to receive services are that they must be 60 and older and live in Dane County. Individuals without legal status and insurance can call for assistance too.

They help with Social Security overpayments (a large part of their caseload nowadays). They have program attorneys, a legal services program, that they consult with, i.e. for a Medicaid appeal, or the attorney may accompany an individual to a hearing or provide administrative relief. They also have a presentation they can deliver called Welcome to Medicare (maybe around 3 hours long). Often they provide support once the "train has come off the tracks".

They are funded by a variety of sources: State, Federal, and County. This year there are new special enrollment periods for Medicare part B, or for people who have Medicaid and didn't sign up for Medicare. One example is that you're not eligible for Medicare and Badger Care Plus at the same time, so those who are on Badger Care Plus and have turned 65 and are due to receive Medicare will no longer be eligible for Badger Care. They also have an underutilized program called MAPP (Medical Assistance Purchase Plan) – a disability Medicaid program for seniors or adults with disabilities who are working or want to work (the work can even be informal like helping a neighbor with trash or selling crafts). There are many confusing upcoming changes that require stewardship. They can provide assistance with eviction cases and public benefits. They can assist with legal action for people below 125% of the federal poverty level. The new premium for Medicare Premium Part A is over \$400, so the consumer may look to the Marketplace. They may also require work quarters to continue receiving the premium for free, otherwise they would have to pay.

Kenton speaks Spanish, but doesn't see many Latino clients coming through. He could be a good point of contact to reach out to. His email is Zink.Kenton@countyofdane.com and phone number is 608-240-7449. Individuals can also contact the ADRC and be referred to a Specialist. However, Kenton said it is okay to reach out to him too. Additionally, Marcos Rios, Information Assistant at the ADRC, can also assist in Spanish. Below is the link to the Elder Benefit Specialist program:

<https://www.danecountyhumanservices.org/Disability-and-Aging/Senior-Services/Elder-Benefit-Specialist-Program>

Shiva Bidar Sielaff- Federal Public Health Emergency, which began in 2020, is set to expire on May 11th. The emergency extended certain levels of benefits without having to reapply; it expanded and made it easier to stay on benefits.

For individuals, the biggest impact will be with Medicaid and Medicare. During the federal emergency, once an individual became eligible for Medicaid, they could not be taken off regardless of income and other changes. After the emergency is lifted, many people who are currently on Medicaid are going to drop off. Biggest impact may be that it will create a lot of confusion and will probably result in many people becoming uninsured because they didn't know their benefits would end. Also, COVID coverage: tests, vaccines and treatments will not be available as before. It will be a more difficult process to access these coverages, much like the processes for other vaccines with higher costs, or access through PCP.

For systems, things were certain things that were made easier to approve during the emergency, such as Paxlovid and COVID vaccines. They will become more difficult to approve again. Then there's Telehealth-mental health visits, tele appointments. Over the pandemic, prescriptions could be prescribed over a telehealth appointment—that's going to go away. This will lead to more barriers as we return to pre-public health emergency times.

Patricia- COVID is still abundant in the community. She is worried that the message the public is receiving is that it's over. With limiting access, when can we hear more from Public Health?

Lourdes- Public Health Madison & Dane County has announced it will close the doors to its community COVID testing clinic on April 14. Access to COVID tests through the website will only be available through the end of May. These changes will create barriers of access to medication resources for Covid-19. Public Health will be putting out new information beginning next month to be shared community-wide. "The end of the federal emergency declaration will also lead to changes to COVID vaccination and contact tracing efforts at Public Health. More information will follow on our end in the coming weeks."

Patricia- The barriers will most affect underrepresented communities. Any way that we can advocate for services would be amazing. We have a population that is arriving, new immigrants that may not have had access to COVID resources in their home country. We are all in this together. Many times people here may think "it's not my problem", but if one segment of the population is at risk, we are all at risk. We anticipate things will get worse again after the federal emergency.

Latino Mental Health Community Conference – will be held at Luther Memorial Church (downtown) on Saturday, April 22nd. There will be four workshops and a primary presentation. Workshops to include Nutrition. Zumba will only be offered to the youth this year. We have most of the presenters that we need, but are still looking for a few more. Yolanda currently making calls to recruit attendees (timely process because they ask for other resources or just need someone to talk to). Fernanda and (hopefully) Martha Saucedo will be giving the main presentation. Lourdes may be a presenter too. Jhonatan with UNIDOS will have a panel for UNIDOS and Rise. Mexican Consulate will also have a resource table (they will be in town on Sunday). Maria Mora Pinzon and her team has been super helpful and provided grant money. They will provide screenings, lectures, and basic care coordination. Transportation can be provided to the event and there will be learning opportunities for youth (not daycare but actual learning). Event is in Spanish for the adults, in Spanglish for the kids. Lunch and mariachis provided.

Roxana Vega- No more emergency benefits for Foodshare as of March 28th, back to pre-pandemic eligibility requirements. The last batch of emergency benefits will be issued on April 8th for those who

missed it in February. About 225 cases that would have required to verify citizenship at the end of the month—they will not be closing. New paperwork is triggering many people to submit renewals early. Those early renewal applications could lead to benefits ending *earlier*—wait until you receive the letter that your benefits will be ending (June). About 100 early applications coming in daily, please help advocate to wait until your renewal time. Same day rides are ending May 31st, people will have to schedule themselves after that date.

Katie Beckett is a program for children up to 19 years old. They will stay enrolled until January 1st, 2024, as well as premiums for MAPPs. Caseload is about 115,000 cases (that's how many people are going to be losing benefits), Economic Support Specialists will be reviewing 12–15 thousand renewals monthly to catch up. All of the Economic Support Specialists will be working overtime. Roxana is a long-time ally of the LHC. Any questions, reach out to her at Vega@countyofdane.com.

John Hausbeck, Environmental Health Services Supervisor at PHMDC- PFAS first got on our radar in 2017-2018. PFAS is a group of chemicals per- and polyfluoroalkyl. Used in products since the 1940s; they had an ability to repel water and oil. 4,000+ different PFAS compounds (some estimates as high as 9,000). Used in firefighting, non-stick pans, food wrappers. We're finding that it's starting to show up everywhere in the world, even in remote areas with no recorded use of it. Knowing where it is in our environment will help us control how much we are exposed to it. DNR created a resource that shows where they have tested for PFAS as well as a Fish Consumption Advisory. Biggest source of contamination that we have at the County (that we know of), is at the airport and surrounding area, where firefighters trained with burn pits and used foams to put out fire. That's getting into our water. How does this affect our health- PFAS is an emerging contaminant. PFOA. Increased cholesterol, decreased immune function, decreased fertility, etc.

What can we do to reduce our exposure? The drinking water that Madison is providing has very low PFAS- it does not appear to be a source of concern. Surface water contamination around the airport, i.e. Starkwater Creek. Biggest source of exposure is through fish consumption. DNR information is not really centralized. PHMDC is working to centralize to get information out, such as signs around Yahara and Lake Monona. Still working with surrounding communities to put up more information signage. PHMDC is providing guidelines for which fish to eat and how often in order to reduce exposure. If you are using non-stick cookware, make sure it is not deteriorating. If it is, throw it out! Cast iron, stainless steel, ceramic cookware all avoid using PFAS.

What can PHMDC do? Disseminate- working with others in the community to provide information. Educate. Offer support. (Private well testing is only done if owner wants to.) Everyone is doing their part, frustration with the process is normal. Community engagement is paramount, there will be PFAS Community Engagement Grants. RFP process. John will let us know when the RFP is available. JHausbeck@countyofdane.com.

Fernando- Do you recommend reverse osmosis for homeowners?
John- Not at this time. May not stop the PFAS at these low levels either.

PFAS webpage: <https://publichealthmdc.com/environmental-health/environmental-hazards/pfas>
In Spanish: <https://publichealthmdc.com/es/salud-ambiental/peligros-ambientales/pfas>

Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC) - Brittany Brooks and Julio Molina- work with people to identify and remove barriers. Don't just provide a list of resources, they try figuring out what people need and provide a warm transfer for those services. The center was new in 2020. It's a voluntary service designed to help all Dane County residents access Mental Health and Substance Use services, regardless of age, ability, insurance or legal status.

In 2021, BHRC opened 1,942 cases and served 1,881. The largest barriers are waitlists. BHRC attempts to provide wraparound services such as referring to support groups. They have case managers, peer coordinators, behavioral health leads, and specialists. In 2021, they had over 500 referrals for peer support, which helps during wait times or to educate on health advocacy.

The BHRC is not a crisis service (that is Journey Mental Health). BHRC does not provide direct (clinical) services. No consumer will wait longer than 24 business hours to hear back from BHRC. Staff will continue follow ups until consumer receives the services they are looking for and for as long as they want. There is Alcohol Anonymous as well.

What does BHRC actually do? Helps connect people to different health providers, support and assist in finding specific mental health providers that meet the preferences of the consumer, can help find substance use residential services, peer support. Functions as a *prevention* service, connecting people to resources *before* they reach a point of crisis. Does not do outreach to consumers because it is voluntary. Does not offer intervention services.

Spanish language line: 608-267-1746 and select option 2. (Julio often answers.) Despite Latinos being 7% of the Dane County population, in 2021 Latinos made up 12% of those assisted by BHRC.

Julie Clayton (they/them), Community Outreach Coordinator at BHRC- available in person on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am to 2:30pm. 818 W Badger Rd, Lower level. Office hours also available on Wednesday or by request.