

Region 7E Governing Board Meeting
May 19, 2025; 10:00am – 12:00 Noon

Attendees:

Affiliation		Governing Board Members		Directors
Chisago County	x	Kelly Ihrke, 2025 Vice Chair		Robert Benson
Chisago County		Jolene Thorsen		
Chisago County	x	Stacy Johnstone, Consumer Rep		
DHS Liaisons		Abbie Franklin, Pam Sanchez, Andrea Abel		DHS
Isanti County	x	Emily Hawkins, Member & Fiscal Host		Jodi Donnay
Isanti County		Ashley Wright, Consumer Rep		
Kanabec County	x	Katie Heacock	x	Chuck Hurd
Kanabec County	x	Cassie Dahlberg		
Mille Lacs County	x	Jessica Andrich		Char Kohlgraf
Pine County	x	Barb Schmidt		Becky Foss
Region 7E Planner	x	Amanda Stevenson		

Guests: Mike Harper, Rise

MOTION: Isanti County made a motion to approve the April minutes, Kanabec seconded. All aye. Motion carried.



Consumer Rep, Stacy Johnstone

RSI Community Connections program starts Sidewalk Talks, monthly program to discuss important topics such as technology, loneliness, relationships, resilience, success and more. These will be virtual events for anyone who wishes to attend.

Case Managers Update, Cassie Dahlberg

- Cassie shared AMHI resources with case managers
- Feedback was positive for the civil commitment training

Directors Update, Chuck Hurd

- Brief discussion about the 72 hour holds
- Medicaid cuts will affect people with mental illness
 - Eligibility status, 6 month review
- Meeting with Region 7W in July

Budget Items/Funding Requests

- The current Brass 438 flex funds budget is \$21,816.67.
- ACT service contract to end on June 30. Amanda would like to maintain \$5,000 for flex spending for existing clients.
- After the \$5,000 for ACT Flex, the Region will have \$124,583 unallocated, in addition to the \$21,816 in flex funds.
 - No rollover with either contract at the end of this year.
- Amanda's understanding is our 2025 and 2026 funding is safe from cuts because it is State funds. However, there are many unknowns. Any monies we send back at the end of this year will go into to the general fund.
- Regional Flex Fund Requests:
 - Isanti: purchase new bed and remove old mattress \$604.97

MOTION: Chisago made a motion to approve the Isanti request in the amount of \$604.97, Pine second. All ayes. Motion carried.

- Amanda submitted a funding request for the PICK'M Up Coalition in the amount of \$500 to print resource materials. She has received a quote from Sunshine Printing. Also working on creating a rack card and flyers for the 5K run, costs to cover printing of these items is within the \$500 request. Over 20 people attended the last PICK'M Up Coalition meeting.
- Wellness in the Woods- **Warmline request: \$30,000 for 2 months operation**
 - On Friday, March 28, 2025, WITW was issued a stop work order as a result of federal funding cuts. They made the decision to stay open as long as possible.
 - Overall, Region 7E has low utilization compared to some others (11 calls/0 texts = 0.2% of the total)
 - Chisago: 0
 - Isanti: 8
 - Kanabec: 1
 - Mille Lacs: 0
 - Pine: 2
 - Overall Warmline Call Utilization, January through March 2025: 5,534
 - Overall Warmline TEXT Utilization, January through March: 153
 - Missed calls January through March: 3,337 throughout all shifts. WITW stated this indicates a need for additional funding to increase the number of operators on specific shifts.
 - Region 5+ allocated \$50,000 to them to fund three months' worth of operations.
- A Place for You Funding Request: **\$20,900 to continue Shelter Based Mental Health Support July through December 2025** (request mistakenly submitted through Jan 2026).
 - Mental Health services provided by Empower Recovery, onsite one day/week.
 - Provides 1:1 support and assessments for shelter residents.
 - Empower meets weekly with APFY's mental health practitioner and resource navigator.
 - Only 10% of hourly costs have been reimbursed by insurance, creating a funding gap
 - January through April 2025: 20 unique clients; 35 1:1 sessions; 41 meetings. Of these, 10 were confirmed to have SPMI.
 - Expect the requested funds to serve +/-100 individuals
 - Expected outcomes:
 - Improved access to MH support
 - Strengthened relationships between clients and providers
 - Reduction in emergency service utilization and hospitalizations
 - Early identification and stabilization of MH concerns
 - Increased likelihood of long-term stability and engagement with services

Cost	Expense Items
\$1,900	Administrative expense 10%
\$19,000	Hourly rate of \$114 x 52 weeks x 8 hour days
\$20,900	Total

- Amanda asked APFY to track SPMI individuals. Brass 403 client outreach to identify SPMI adults, Amanda more concerned with the mental health position which seems to be more about a homeless shelter position.
- Current total funding \$29,974, including admin, supplies, and funds for clients. Licensed mental health professional from Empower one day/week, it helps get pp eligible for other funding and services as well as assessments. Invoices range from 3,636 to 4,138

MOTION: Isanti County made a motion to approve \$500 for the PICK'M Up Coalition, Pine second. All ayes, motion carried.
 MOTION: Isanti County made a motion to table APFY and have Matt come to the June meeting. Second by Kanabec. All ayes, motion carried.

Emily is not in favor of supporting WITW, other supervisors agreed. The request dies for lack of a motion.

Rise, Mike Harper

- The housing quarterly report shows total 20pp YTD; rental subsidies, security deposits, utilities, furnishings. Two people YTD in transitional housing, one in Mora and one in Pine City. A new federal grant through HUD, Rapid Rehousing grant has served 2 people in our region in the first quarter. There will be 10 people. HUD has had struggles

because of funding cuts and system shut downs. Lots of upfront costs and then receive the reimbursement afterwards, so that's concerning for a non-profit.

- HSS, housing stabilization and supports, had access problems. TSA is now doing this work and that has sped up the process, the holdup is at DHS. Very low rate of \$17 every 15 minutes and doesn't include travel; thus if the staffer has to drive 20 miles to serve someone at a rate of .56 per mile, the entire rate is consumed in travel time (plus staff expense). Documentation is required as a statement of need from a mental professional or medical professional.
- Mike reviewed the staffing report for all programs.

Vocational

- Two vocational programs.
 - New Millennium funded by Region 7E billed hourly at \$56/hour. The rate has stayed the same since about the year 2000. Served 98pp in the first quarter, 63 active. The Rise program sees a higher average hourly rate and average hours compared to the other programs in the state.
 - IPS, Individualized Place Support. Served 57pp YTD. 72% placement rate. Average hourly rate and average hours are higher than other state programs.
- The Region had asked Mike for the length of time clients stay on the various programs and he cited several examples of how people worked, then stopped, then came back. Also, questions about how people move from program to program.
 - For the IPS grant, the person has to be immediately ready for employment within 30 days (if not it lowers the Rise score). If they need a work eval or training, it would be within New Millenium, not through IPS. So, they may be transitioned to New Millenium if they need such items, or they may be transitioned to IPS from New Millenium if they are ready to work.
 - Good practice to get people involved with VocRehab. VocRehab is going through a significant financial crisis. They had 4 categories and are closing 3 of the categories. Generally, the people Rise serves are category one and that program will remain open. A wait list is started based on the application date so there could be a delay, unless they are IPS and then they are mandated to serve them. There are reasons to shift people from one cost center to another. Once in IPS and placed, they are rolled over to New Millenium to not create a wait list in IPS.
- IPS cuts. There are two money sources, we are in the "old money", the State funds. Expansion dollars will be cut which will affect many projects.
 - The IPS grant is only for SMI, but since the Region is partnered with Rise, they only see SPMI clients under the Region's grant dollars.
 - IPS provides VocRehab resources: uniforms, shoes, training, transportation costs, etc.
- Mike got all 22 IPS programs to collaborate with the purpose of collectively advocating to the legislature.

Mike needs clarification on what tracking the Region wants to see. Discussion included the following options.

- How long has the client been with the agency or with a specific program
- Track totally new people into Rise each quarter
- Track referral sources in each program
- Mike suggested they could add the info to the billing sheet or at the interdisciplinary meeting.
- Another data point would be the number of cases closed per quarter; with the number of times they were in the program.
- Need to define what "closed" means.
 - If closed in IPS and opened in NM record that, and vice versa.
- Who is on the wait list and for how long, are they a new person or someone coming back to the program.

If housing stabilization is insurance billable, they should be using insurance first and then the grant dollars.

LAC updates or feedback

Statewide LAC Advisory Workgroup meeting. An agenda item for the meeting was to discuss and provide feedback about a draft letter created for LACs to communicate to County Boards. It was noted that delegating tasks for follow up after the meeting has not worked well, what has worked well is working on tasks during the meeting time. Sierra (chair) is seeking needs assessments, surveys, and bylaws from LACs throughout the state. Discussed that AMHIs are champions for LACs; LAC involvement is a required area within AMHI grant application. WITW is supporting and promoting LACs in Region 5 using a variety of methods. The importance of compensation for members with lived experience was again highlighted. Updating of the LAC guidebook continues.

Region 5+ is investing in promoting LACs, through Brass 402, community education regarding SPMI services and supports and it's not an MHIS reportable outcome.

Emily encouraged supervisors to attend the next statewide AMHI meeting and ask those questions to DHS.

Chisago LAC is offering free mental health support groups the first and third Wednesdays
Mille Lacs LAC is meeting at Lighthouse

Quarterly/Monthly Reports (vendors exceeding \$50,000)

- ECCS/Canvas Health:
 - We discovered that Region 7E Crisis Services was shorted \$138,314 for our State MH CrisisGrnt30 Q424 Reimbursement.
 - No reimbursement received as of 5/8/25. We expect an answer by Friday, May 23 as to the status. It's because we paid the \$138,314 in 2024 for 2023 and we were told that underspending could be spent in the second year.
 - Update: Notice/Letter received from DHS BHA stating Mobile Crisis Funds in 2025 will not "roll over" into 2026; following the AMHI grant.
 - Canvas Health is considering an office rental space but will incur renovation costs and the space is a bit too large. They wanted to put up a wall and add a restroom. Question about whether it's allowed, but we can't do anything until we do a revision to the contract and receive approval. They are already allocated the full amount of the crisis grant, AMHI funds cannot be used for capital improvements. Amanda believes it would be best if Canvas asked the GB where they would like the office. GB concurred that having an office in North Branch and in Cambridge is too close together. They could use their 10% admin if they wish, but the Region cannot provide additional funding. The Governing Board would support a more northern site to accommodate the rest of the region.
 - Amanda would like to establish a work group with a delegate from each county to focus on mobile crisis services. The group would work on an RFP, brainstorm ways to improve the service, and provide their county's perspective as to how crisis is going in that county. We will push out an RFP in 2026 for 2027. Chuck will bring to the directors to see if they want to be included in the work group. Members may be supervisors or their assigned staff. This would be a quarterly meeting, held virtually.
- LSS/Willow Grove: Needs Survey created and shared. Pooled funds from CHP is \$125,000.
- Lakes and Pines/Regional Housing Coordinator:
 - If staff are referring to Deb and funding for hold fees or application fees is approved, please ensure that a Regional Flex Fund form is included in the referral. This will allow the R7E Planner to authorize fees in real time and provide a guarantee of payment letters, up to \$540 (as discussed at the Bridges meeting). Amanda will add to the referral form that the Regional Flex Fund Form needs to be attached.
 - Goal is 25 Total Households; plan is to start with 5 additional and then review budget and assess how many more (3-5) can be taken on easily. It is not clear cut as the rents will vary, depending on household size, etc.
 - Landlord seminar. Ten landlords attended in person, 2 case managers attended in person, and over 20 people attended online.
 - Bridges vouchers. They wrote the next grant for 25 households. The current plan will onboard 5 people July 1 and then do a budget review because the actual rent costs will determine how many more could be served. One per county. Once opened, a group will triage those applications to identify who has the highest need. Submit names in June, only taking Priority One.
- Kanabec County Medication Management:

This is a request for payment of April 2025 services.

Description	Billing Rate	Total
30 Apts. – No Insurance	\$371.30/Apt.	\$11,139.00
28 Apts. – Medicare – Unable to Bill	\$371.30/Apt.	\$10,396.40
Admin. Fee	10% of Total	\$2,153.54
Invoice Total:		\$23,688.94

- Growing Connections: Princeton full. There are a few openings in North Branch in the 2nd and 3rd programs.
- RADIAS Health/ACT: Amanda proposed a contract amendment which terminates the \$124,000 portion of the contract and to provide \$5,000 in flex funds for the people they are currently serving.
- APFY: Will present today at Regional LAC.

PICK'EM Up Coalition Update:

- 5K Suicide Prevention Walk 9/13/25 in Pine County.
- Resource materials need printing: the Board approved a funding request earlier in the meeting.

New Business for JUNE.

- Updated pocket Resource Guide review
- Website Review
 - Website redesign?
 - Potential cost
- Bylaws
 - Already reviewed
 - Signed copy on file needed?
- July meeting with directors
 - Linda will send out calendar invite with rough draft agenda
- 2026 Budget meetings
 - Schedule the budget meeting date(s) during the July meeting with directors. Looking at an early October time-frame.
 - Amanda will coordinate when sending out the notification letter with the application form to providers
 - Communication of allowable expense changes will be available after the Statewide meeting.
 - Amanda asked the Board if they want to RFP for anything in 2026

Meeting adjourned 12:05pm. Isanti made a motion to adjourn, Chisago seconded. Motion carried.

June Agenda Items – START AT 9:30AM AND INVITE DIRECTORS

- *APFY, Matt will join at 10:30am*
- *Resource Guide Review*
- *Website Review*
- *List of new business items*