Region 7E Adult Mental Health Initiative

**Regional LAC Meeting Minutes**

September 28 2026; 1:00pm – 2:00pm; In Person at Isanti County Family Services and via Zoom

Present:

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| B., Rhonda | Kanabec County LAC |
| Baade, Ahnnica | Fernbrook Family Center |
| Corbin, Eli | MN Adult & Teen Challenge |
| D., Deb | Kanabec County LAC |
| Hawkins, Emily | Isanti County & AMHI GB |
| Janke, Lainie | Therapeutic Services Agency |
| Johnstone, Stacy | R7E Consumer Rep |
| K., Joel | Pine County LAC and Regional LAC Chair |
| Kendall, Amanda | Rise |
| Klanderud, Nicki | Allina Health |

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| Lind, Nicole | Residential Services, Inc. |
| Lussier-Erickson, Katrina | Empower Recovery Services |
| Lutz, Deena | Recovering Hope |
| Matthewson, Natalie | Central MN Council on Aging |
| McGonigle, Emily | Sagent Behavioral Health |
| O., Michelle | R7E Consumer Rep |
| Stans, Alicia | Residential Services, Inc. |
| Stevenson, Amanda | R7E Planner |

Joel K. called the meeting to order and opened with introductions. Eli Corbin and Amanda Kendall were asked to share their contact information so they could be added to the distribution list.
Review of the July 27 Regional LAC meeting minutes.
A motion was made by Emily Hawkins and seconded by Michelle to approve the minutes. All ayes, motion carried.

**Governing Board Updates, Amanda Stevenson**

- The Governing Board is reviewing 2026 spending to determine whether funds are available for reallocation before year-end. The all-day 2027 budget meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 2.
- Provider monitoring, site visits and financial reconciliation are underway, along with monitoring and reconciliation with the DHS. Amanda reported that the process has gone well so far.
- The Board is reviewing how much uncompensated care funding remains for 2026 and looking for ways to simplify the request process for uncompensated care and flex funds. Providers will be notified as changes are made. The region has provided more direct assistance this year than in prior years.
- The Governing Board is accepting applications until November for a consumer or family member representative. The three-year term runs January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2029. The representative attends Governing Board meetings, votes on policy and funding decisions, and brings the perspective of someone with lived experience or a family member. Contact Amanda for the position description and application.
- Region 7E will offer an 80-hour virtual Certified Peer Specialist training November 9–20 for up to 11 participants. Certified Peer Specialists use their lived experience to support others in recovery. Amanda discussed how peer services can be used in programs such as ARMHS, mobile crisis and substance use disorder services. The application can be completed online or downloaded from the Region 7E website.

**Consumer Representative Updates**

Stacy Johnstone

- Stacy shared an example of how agencies worked together to support an individual's transition to assisted living. The individual was involved in the decision, and case management, ARMHS, in-home services, nursing staff and the assisted living provider helped coordinate the move. Stacy noted that regular communication and the team's longstanding relationships with the individual helped the transition move forward.

Michelle O.

- Glad to have Chisago Drop in Center and LAC back again.
- No additional update.

**County LAC Check-ins**

Kanabec County LAC, Rhonda

- Operation Community Connect (OCC) was reported for October 15, the same day as Chisago County's event.
- The LAC is preparing for its holiday celebration and plans to hold its annual auction. Donations are being accepted.

Isanti County LAC, Emily Hawkins

- The LAC is putting together a group to represent it at Operation Community Connect. New LAC flyers are being prepared, and the group expects to continue meeting every other month.
- The Drop-In Center meets on the first and third Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Common Ground Church in Cambridge. Attendance was lower over the summer, and the group hopes to see more people this fall and winter.

Pine County LAC and Drop-In Center, Joel

- New participants have been attending the Drop-In Center. The group recently visited the Minnesota Zoo and is planning a movie outing in Cambridge on October 6. Regular activities include Uno, cribbage and occasional movies.
- Monthly workbook groups are available to those who want to participate. A recent group discussed setting boundaries and how to respond when someone asks for a favor.
- The group discussed attending the NAMI Minnesota conference in the St. Cloud area on Friday, November 6. Registration begins at 8:00 AM and the conference ends at 4:30 PM. Those interested were directed to the NAMI website for registration, fees and any available assistance.

Chisago County LAC, Amanda Stevenson

- The LAC plans to resume meeting in November.

Mille Lacs County LAC and Regional Transportation

- A presentation at the Mille Lacs County LAC covered how self-driving vehicles could help address transportation barriers. Listening sessions were expected in Mille Lacs and Kanabec Counties. Information had been forwarded to those counties and could be shared more widely upon request.
  - The group discussed inviting a representative to the next Regional LAC meeting to share more about the project and its potential use for rides to medical appointments and other transportation needs.

**Provider Updates**

Empower Recovery Services, Katrina Lussier-Erickson

- Immediate openings were available for outpatient substance use treatment and chemical use assessments. Thursday appointments were available from noon on for diagnostic assessments or therapy.
- A free tobacco treatment class was scheduled for October 13 from 2:00 to 3:00 PM at the Lost and Found Recovery Café, 545 3rd Avenue SE, Pine City.
- Family Game Night is free and open to the public and generally held every other Thursday from 5:00 to 7:00 PM on October 7, 15, and 29. A public Halloween party was tentatively planned for October 30.

Allina Health, Nicki Klanderud

- Allina is reviewing applications from area schools for its Change to Chill program and expects to have an update on local school partnerships at the next meeting.
- Allina and Thrive are offering an evening training on October 15 on substance use prevention and recovery. Community partners and the public are invited.

Recovering Hope Treatment Center, Deena Lutz

- Openings were available in residential treatment and intensive outpatient treatment with lodging for women, including pregnant women and women with children.
- Free adult GED classes are held on Wednesday evenings and are open to the community.

Therapeutic Services Agency, Lainie Janke

- Samantha Parch returned to the Cambridge office and is seeing children and some teens in outpatient therapy. Several supervised interns are also working in outpatient clinics.
- TSA updated its website to make referrals and inquiries easier. Jim retired in August after more than 25 years with TSA.

### Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge, Eli Corbin

- Openings were available in the men's and women's programs. Wellcome Manor Family Services, near Mankato, serves women and can accommodate up to three children age five or younger per mother. Transportation is available statewide for mothers entering treatment.
- Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge treats co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions and has licensed mental health therapists at all its centers.

### Fernbrook Family Center, Ahnnica Baade

- Fernbrook continues to offer the services previously provided by Lighthouse Child and Family Services. Most area school-linked positions are filled or have staff onboarding.
- A Cambridge outpatient provider has openings, and new home and community staff are starting in the Cambridge and Milaca areas. Referrals can be made through the Fernbrook website.

### Central Minnesota Council on Aging, Natalie Matthewson

- Natalie reminded the group that Medicare open enrollment begins October 15. Minnesota Aging Pathways, formerly the Senior LinkAge Line, also has resource coordinators who work one-on-one with older adults and caregivers to connect them with local services. https://aging-pathways-referrals.powerappsportals.us/
- Individuals and providers can submit referrals online. Providers should discuss the referral with the individual first so the resource coordinator can confirm they want assistance. Natalie offered to share the referral link in the meeting chat.
- The Chisago Age Well Coalition's Age Well Expo is October 16 in Lindstrom and includes presentations, resources and health screenings. Age Friendly Princeton is holding a health fair on November 5.

### Residential Services, Inc. (RSI), Alicia Stans

- RSI reported four residential openings in Mora, including an accessible space and an opening for a girl age 10–17. Contact Alicia or use the RSI website to make a referral.

### Rise, Amanda Kendall

- Rise provides employment, housing and ARMHS services across Region 7E. Amanda is based in Pine County and can answer questions about employment supports.
- Amanda reported that a diagnostic assessment completed within the past year is required for employment supports. Staff help individuals find jobs in the community based on their interests, preferred work setting and hours.

### Sagent Behavioral Health, Emily McGonigle

- Outpatient therapy openings were available for adults, couples and children. An in-person psychiatry provider also had openings.
- ARMHS had a short waitlist, and Sagent may add staff to help reduce it. Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS) in Cambridge also had a short waitlist and was able to schedule people fairly quickly.

**Agenda Suggestions for upcoming meetings**

- Invite a speaker to discuss self-driving vehicles and how they might help address transportation needs in the region.
- Review the outcome of the October 2 Governing Board budget meeting and plans for 2027.
- Discuss a new Regional LAC Chair for January. Anyone interested was asked to contact Joel before the November meeting.

The next Regional LAC meeting is scheduled for November 23, 2026.

**Adjournment**

Joel adjourned the meeting.