Meeting summary for Dukes County Health Council Meeting (09/19/2024)

Quick recap

The newly formed mental health and substance use disorder work group presented a draft charter outlining their planned work and direction moving forward. The team discussed the need for a comprehensive list of mental health-related entities and programs on Martha's Vineyard, the importance of understanding available services before launching a public awareness campaign, and the need for long-term planning and budgeting for translation services. The meeting also covered the challenges faced by the island's growing population, the need for better communication and support for patients, and the importance of prioritizing essential services like food, fuel, and medicine.

Next steps

• Dan to meet with Jim Malkin next week to discuss healthcare-related transportation issues.

• Bob to capture and save the chat from the meeting for record-keeping.

• Lisa Belcastro and Susan to form a mental health working committee of 5-7 people.

• Lisa Belcastro and Susan to compile a list of all mental health-related entities, clinicians, and programs on Martha's Vineyard.

• Dukes County Health Council to explore options for posting mental health resources on their website or the Dukes County website.

• Jim Malkin to work on creating a phone hotline for medical transportation issues with the Steamship Authority.

• Lea to update the acute respiratory illness website with current data.

• Marina to distribute flyers about the upcoming Vax bus on October 27th for COVID and flu vaccinations.

Summary

New Mental Health Work Group Charter Discussion

Lisa and Susan, the newly formed mental health and substance use disorder work group, are presenting a draft charter. They aim to outline their planned work and direction moving forward. Kathleen notes that while there is limited time today, they expect to revisit this topic in more depth later.

Mental Health Education and Advocacy Strategies

Lisa Belcastro discussed the mission of the Dukes County Health Council, emphasizing the importance of mental health education and breaking the stigma around it. She proposed the formation of a working committee to identify gaps in services and potential areas for improvement, and suggested creating a comprehensive list of mental health-related entities and programs on Martha's Vineyard. Lisa also highlighted the need for advocacy and awareness of local, state, and federal policies related to mental health, suggesting the use of email campaigns to support legislation. She proposed using social media to raise awareness, connecting with organizations like NAMI to share resources, and incorporating mental health into total body health discussions. Lisa also suggested organizing fun events like contests or movie nights to raise awareness.

Comprehensive List of Island Organizations and Services

The team discussed the need for a comprehensive list of organizations and services on the island, with a focus on mental health support. They considered changes to the Dukes County website to better serve the community and the potential for bilingual resources, particularly in Brazilian Portuguese. The Mental Health Committee was invited to join by email, and the importance of understanding available services before launching a public awareness campaign was emphasized. The need for long-term planning and budgeting for translation services was also highlighted.

Language Planning and Cultural Accessibility Discussion

Kathleen, Lenore, and Lisa discussed the importance of planning for language needs on a daily and long-term basis. They agreed on the need to build infrastructure for language services across teams to ensure cultural accessibility and fiscal responsibility. Marina suggested the Communications Ambassador program as a potential resource for language access. Kathleen expressed a desire for more information on mental health and wellness, suggesting the idea of sending out book and website recommendations on a regular basis. Lisa agreed to this idea and encouraged others to join the committee. The conversation ended with Lisa mentioning a book she recently finished and plans to discuss with Susan.

Mental Health Initiatives and Steamship Authority Challenges

Kathleen and Christine discussed creating a repository for mental health initiatives. James Malkin from the Steamship Authority addressed challenges faced by Martha's Vineyard's growing population, including transportation issues and scarcity of medical professionals. He expressed dissatisfaction with the Authority's management, communication, and IT infrastructure. The website project was shelved due to poor supervision, and a new general manager will be hired.

Prioritizing Essential Services and Healthcare Challenges

James Malkin discussed the importance of prioritizing essential services like food, fuel, and medicine, and the need for the Steamship Authority to manage its resources effectively. He also encouraged the Communications Group to provide clear information to address concerns raised by islanders. Dan and Marina, both healthcare professionals, expressed concerns about the challenges faced by their patients in accessing medical appointments and services, particularly those with high medical needs. They highlighted the need for better communication and support for these patients, and the potential impact of these issues on their patients' health and wellbeing.

Island Infrastructure and Financial Framework Discussion

Marina expressed concerns about the island's infrastructure changes and the need for the Steamship Authority to adapt to the increasing population and travel pressure. She also raised questions about the long-term financial framework for these changes, particularly in the context of climate change and sea level rise. James acknowledged the complexity of the issue and agreed to discuss it further with Dan.

Balancing Growth and Community Capacity

He encouraged the group to support a priority order and to consider the character of the community. James discussed the balancing act between growth and finite capacity, and the need for better communication and alternative strategies. Christine highlighted the issue of getting Hospice patients off the island for long-term care, which James agreed to discuss with Dan. Cindy, representing the Healthy Aging organization, shared their experiences with the Steamship and their plans for a concierge program to assist older adults.

Ferry Transportation Challenges and Solutions

Cindy and James discussed the challenges and potential solutions related to ferry transportation on the island. James explained that the number of trips is fixed due to concerns about the island's character and the need for limited access. He also highlighted the issue of inconsistent communication and inaccurate information, which he believes is a significant problem. Cindy suggested the creation of a phone hotline for medical transportation, which James found to be a good idea. They also discussed the possibility of limiting trips to islanders only to manage demand.

Addressing Medical Capacity and Communication Challenges

Lisa Lavine stressed the need for increased medical capacity and better communication systems to address the community's challenges, particularly in medical emergencies. She suggested hiring a person to handle all medical matters and proposed expanding the current system immediately to address the issue of people being unable to get off the island for medical issues. Christine thanked James Malkin for his work and encouraged further communication. Lea provided updates on the risk levels for mosquito-borne illnesses in various towns, highlighting an increase in risk levels for West Nile virus in Barnstable, Sandwich, Mashpee, and Yarmouth. She emphasized the severity of Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) and the ongoing risk of mosquito-borne diseases in Massachusetts, urging preventive measures and sharing risk maps from the state.

Website Updates, Vax Bus, and Tick-Borne Illnesses

Lea presented two regularly updated websites on acute respiratory illnesses and the Cape and Islands, suggesting their embedding on individual websites. Kathleen proposed linking these resources to the Health Council website. Lea also introduced a new website format for her manual emailed updates, to be updated every two weeks. Marina announced the arrival of the Vax bus on October 27th and encouraged the distribution of flyers. She also mentioned a discussion on tick-borne illnesses at the Chilmark Library, where she would be selling permethrin-treated socks. Lisa and Marina discussed the use of pesticides and the importance of using permethrin-treated clothing to prevent tick bites. Dan added that while permethrin creams are sometimes prescribed for severe tick infestations, they should only be used once and not applied daily. Kathleen expressed satisfaction with the meeting's progress and encouraged continued work on the discussed projects. The next meeting was set for October.

AI-generated content may be inaccurate or misleading. Always check for accuracy.