

**S.C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
S.C. Department of Mental Health
Coastal Empire Community Mental Health Center
1050 Ribaut Road Beaufort, SC 29902**

February 1, 2019

Center Presentation

ATTENDANCE:

Commission Members:

Dr. Alison Evans, Chair
Ms. Sharon Wilson, Co-Chair
Ms. Louise Haynes
Mr. Bob Hiott

Staff/Visitors:

Mark Binkley	Alan Powell
Dr. Natasha Smith	Loretta Aiken, IPS
Dr. Judith Treadway	Natasha Seabrook, IPS
Walter C. Kelly	Connie Robinson, IPS
Deborah Blalock	Dave Zoellner
Terry Davis	

The S.C. Mental Health Commission met at the Coastal Empire Community Mental Health Center (CECMHC), 1050 Ribaut Road Beaufort, SC 29902, at 9:00 a.m. Dr. Alison Evans expressed appreciation to the Center for the courtesies extended to the Commission during its visit. Dr. Evans turned the meeting over to Dr. Natasha Smith, Executive Director.

PRESENTATION:

Ms. Loretta Aiken gave a presentation on the Individual Placement and Support Services (IPS) program. She stated they had a fidelity audit recently. She received positive feedback and is proud of the work IPS does and will continue to do.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) began offering IPS in 1995, in 2002 DMH received the Johnson and Johnson Grant and partnered with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, in 2016 CECMHC started their first IPS program.

In 2018, CECMHC submitted a proposal to expand IPS with two additional Performance Specialists (PS). The proposal is to have one PS stationed in Walterboro to serve Walterboro, Hampton, Allendale counties and another PS stationed in Beaufort to serve Bluffton, Hilton Head, Hampton, Okatie, Sun City, and possibly Ridgeland.

Aiken said, “Our philosophy is every person has the potential to work, and with proper employment placement and support, each can be successful.”

Per the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), it’s estimated that of the population with mental illness, only 22% are employed. And only 2% of people who could benefit from IPS have access to effective employment services. “We’ve found patients want to be productive versus being entertained or kept busy doing repetitive tasks,” said Dr. Smith.

IPS is re-conceptualizing work for persons diagnosed with mental illness. IPS tries to place patients in jobs that are a good fit. IPS staff identify the patient’s employment preferences and tries to place them in a position the patient enjoys and feels productive and successful. Most people with mental illness can and will work, if given the opportunity. Being adequately employed tends to boost patient recovery and quality of life. Aiken said, “It may take a few tries before we find the perfect fit and the definition of success varies for each person.”

Medication Monitored Only (MMO) status patients are welcome to participate in IPS, both services are non-billable.

Once patients are properly employed they tend to miss mental health appointments because they don’t want to take time off from their job, so an IPS case-manger goes where the patient is for their job coaching/counselling sessions. This reduces the number of non-compliant participants. IPS posts available jobs in the lobby of the Center for patients and spotlights one IPS participant a month to celebrate their accomplishments.

Currently, IPS has a staff of three with hopes to increase that number to five soon. There are 32 participants in the program, 22 are working, some have two jobs, and some are full-time. In January, IPS had 19 referrals, 6 great placements, and five participants transitioned out of the program. In 2018, IPS had 118 referrals, not all referrals join the program. IPS placed 32 patients last year and 46 since the program began.

Aiken is trying to collaborate with the Sisters of Charity of Columbia, SC for a grant to assist with transportation for patients and hopes to collaborate with other partners in the community to provide more support and transportation for IPS participants.

A benefits specialist works with patients on how they can work and maintain Medicaid insurance. Mr. Binkley explained that patients may maintain their eligibility for SSI and Medicaid when employed, though there may be a slight reduction in benefits. Aiken noted a major challenge in the IPS program is lack of patient follow-through, especially referring to initial appointments.

Question: Which is more challenging, determining patient interest in participating in IPS or finding appropriate job placements? Finding appropriate job placements is most difficult.

Question: How do you work with a potential employers to help them have realistic expectations of IPS employee work performance? We train employers about symptoms and potential triggers of the particular illness of each specific employee.

Dr. Evans said, “You’ve made me want to sign up for something, I don’t know what, but your enthusiasm is contagious!” Aiken replied, “It’s because we love what we do. It’s due to the respect and love we have for our patient population.”

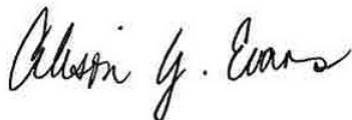
Aiken detailed some of the success stories of participants in the IPS program.

Dr. Natashia Smith, the newly appointed Center Director at Coastal Empire Community Mental Health Center took a few minutes to talk about how she got to where she is. She hopes all employees at CECMHC love what they do, like Aiken does. Originally Smith was hired at SCDMH to be a Director of a Day Program. She wanted licensure and had a degree in education, so she went back to school and eventually earned two masters and a PhD. Orangeburg Area Center Director Willie Priester hired Smith to work in their new multisystemic therapy (MST) program which collaborated with MUSC. Mr. Meyer, the Allandale Clinic Director, later asked if she was interested in coming to Allandale to be the Clinic Director, which she did. Andrea Allen was a great mentor and taught her much. Allen encouraged her to learn about evidence-based practices and child, adolescent and family services. All CECMHC psychiatrists are board certified. “It’s been a busy first month on the job. On January 1, I was hired as Center Director, January 14-16 the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) came to do a survey, and February 1 CECMHC hosts the Commission meeting. Is this a test?” said Dr. Smith with a smile.

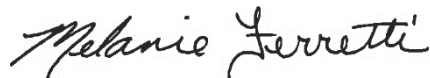
Dr. Smith pledged to maintain the CECMHC philosophy and gave credit to the efforts of the staff. She stated some of the problems in the rural areas result from lack of exposure to life experiences and she hopes to boost resource availability in the rural areas of the CECMHC catchment area. She is looking forward to leading the expansion of services.

Dr. Evans thanked the presenters for the excellent, informative presentations.

There being no further discussion, the center presentation concluded at 10:00 a.m.



Alison Y. Evans, PsyD, Chair
SC Mental Health Commission



Melanie Ferretti, Recording Secretary
SC Mental Health Commission