

MINUTES

Broward Addiction Recovery Center (BARC) Division
Broward County Substance Abuse Advisory Board
June 24th, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT

Christopher Checke
Jeff Greene
Linda Frohring
Matthew Hatfield
Kathy Hurt
Eleanor Nelson-Wernick
Ray Rapaglia
Charles Resnick
Garry Smyth
Jonathan Sobelman
Mark Speiser

MEMBERS ABSENT

Stephanie Coberly
Jodi Cowart

ALSO PRESENT

Jack Feinberg, Division Director
William Card, Assistant Division Director
Keith Bostick, Deputy Director Human Services
Patricia Bailey, Recording Secretary
Sal Torre, Recording Secretary

Location

Broward Addiction Recovery Center (BARC)
Via Skype

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Christopher Checke, Vice President, at 8:05 am, via Skype.

Quorum

It was determined a quorum was present.

Minutes

The minutes from the May 27th, 2020 meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Garry Smyth asked that approval of the minutes be deferred to the next meeting. He would like to see additional details surrounding the discussion of BARC's plan to reopen.

Mr. Matthew Hatfield made the Motion to table approval of the May 27th, 2020 meeting minutes until next month's meeting. Mr. Smyth seconded, and carried unanimously by all members present.

Director's Report / Dr. Dale Fahie, Medical Director

Mr. Jack Feinberg introduced Dr. Dale Fahie, BARC's Medical Director, to address the Board on the impact of COVID 19 on BARC and on the community.

Dr Fahie reported that BARC began to prepare back in the early part of the year, screening clients and making advance preparations.

Dr. Fahie stated the following:

- he praised BARC staff for their dedication and professionalism through this crisis.
- he noted the escalated stress levels both for clients and staff.
- Triage saw an increase in clients with PTSD, acting out and extreme behavior.
- from a Human Resources perspective, staff suffered great stress, with concern for family members, loss of childcare and fear of the unknown. Many staff requested time off through FMLA.
- many clients have the additional stress of being unable to work; being laid off; caring for children full time and supporting online education of those children.
- clients coping mechanism during times of such stress is to turn to drugs and/or alcohol.
- many homeless are not going to shelters and many patients not going to hospitals due to the fear of contracting COVID 19.
- witnessing an increase of clients coming long distances because many facilities have closed. BARC has been one of the only facilities accepting patients into all levels of care.

Dr. Fahie also discussed how the decrease in staffing, the need for social distancing and providing safer care for clients created the need to examine procedures throughout BARC programs. Programs such as BARC's Out-Patient and Intensive Out-Patient programs are now being conducted in a virtual format with very good response and could possibly become a new format of treatment for many.

Mr. Christopher Checke thanked Dr. Fahie and opened floor for questions.

Mr. Jeff Greene inquired about the availability of PPE supplies and if adequate for BARC's needs. Dr Fahie stated that BARC took steps early to secure supplies. Currently have good supply of masks, gowns, and shields.

Mr. Garry Smyth inquired if BARC has had any positive test results for staff and clients. Dr. Fahie reported that there has been three BARC staff that tested positive and no clients. The number of clients tested are 23 in Detox and 30 in Residential, all coming back negative.

Mr. Feinberg added the latest update on staff testing positive, with the most recent positive coming back yesterday. The immediate response was to secure the work area, all immediate co-workers sent for testing, work area was sanitized and all those who had contact were also identified and sent for testing. All of this was accomplished in approximately 15 minutes due to the quick response of Administration. All staff will remain out until a negative test result.

Mr. Feinberg thanked Dr. Fahie for his report and his dedication, then proceeded to give Director's Report.

Mr. Feinberg reported that BARC has a small percentage of staff working from home, approximately 9%, since most staff are involved with direct patient care. Those working from home including counselors providing outpatient services and finance staff.

One issue is that drug screening is currently not being conducted for outpatient clients. One likely scenario will be to have a color-based system for random screening.

All in all, services are going smoothly under the circumstances faced by COVID 19 restrictions. Some clients are not happy with having to wear masks all the times but are very appreciably for the services being received.

Mr. Feinberg concluded by expressing great satisfaction to be working in an environment that has been so progressive in dealing with the issues currently at the forefront in our society today. BARC was ahead of the game in making the necessary preparations to adjust to the COVID 19 pandemic and has been equally progressive in addressing the issues of racial equality and social justice that fueled recent mass protests. Broward County's Human Services Division has for some time conducted internal racial equity training for staff and hosts programs such as the Dismantling Racism Initiative, making Broward County a leader of communities that are advancing health, opportunity, and equity. Mr. Keith Bostick took this one step further and initiated a safe space to come together in community and expression via Skype. All staff throughout the Human Services Department were invited to attend, it was not mandatory. Managers and Supervisors are encouraged to follow his example and bring their staff together on a smaller scale.

Mr. Checke thanked Mr. Feinberg for his report and inquired if the Director feels that telehealth would continue post COVID 19. Mr. Feinberg responded that all initiatives are being monitored and evaluated. He strongly believes that telehealth will likely continue and currently provides for better attendance ratings and positive responses from clients. Urinalysis is still a big missing part of the equation.

Mr. Smyth inquired if BARC's capacity would be increasing two-three months down the road and if there have been any discussions on a public-private aspect to increase such capacity. Mr. Feinberg responded that BARC has not had such discussions, but perhaps on a department level. Care Act monies available might be too low to cover the expenses of private contractors. In addition, current demands have been low. Many are not seeking treatment due to factors such as fear of contracting virus, increased sheltering of homeless population, and loss of employment.

Judge Mark Speiser stated that recent articles in newspapers about homeless being housed in hotels throughout South Florida due to COVID 19 might be playing a part in the decreased demand for services BARC is currently witnessing.

Mr. Checke inquired if there was something the Board could do to support BARC staff, such as sending a Letter of Appreciation to all staff. Judge Speiser agreed and suggested bringing it to a higher level, to the County Commission for their participation.

Unfortunately, the County Commission will be adjourning before the SAAB meets again. Mr. Checke stated that it might be expeditious to just move ahead with a Letter of Appreciation from the board at this time. Suggested working with Ms. Patricia Bailey to draft such a letter that would then be sent out to the entire BARC staff of about 250 individuals.

President's Report

Mr. Christopher Checke delivered the Presidents Report in the absence of Ms. Stephanie Coberly, President.

Mr. Checke reported on:

- the many recent conversations within the community on identifying and addressing the issues of mental health and social justice. Recent demonstrations and protest have highlighted the need to address such issues in our communities.
- The negative impact COVID 19 was having on the community, issues such as increase in suicide rate, increase in domestic violence and child abuse, alcohol related deaths on the rise, as well as opioid related overdose cases.

Mr. Checke inquired about the board meeting during the summer, due to past history of taking a one- or two-month break. Ms. Patricia Bailey stated that it was the Board's discretion and that in the past the board has taken a summer recess during June and July.

Mr. Smyth stated that it might be best not to take a summer recess during such times, that it would be best to keep a pulse on what was taking place in the community and making sure that the citizens of Broward County were continually receiving the services needed. Numerous members agreed that it would be best to continue meeting though the summer months. No member voiced an opposing viewpoint.

Ms. Bailey stressed that county requirements state that a quorum must be met to conduct any meetings. Eight members meet quorum requirements.

All in agreement to meet through the summer months, with the next meeting to be held virtually on July 29th, 2020 at 8 AM.

Adjourn

There being no further issues, on motion made by Mr. Jeff Greene, seconded by Ms. Linda Frohring, and carried unanimously by all members present, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 a.m.