

Attendees: Madison Peterson (BBPH), Cathy Palczewski (Heartview Foundation), Doreen Eichele (Dacotah Foundation), Elizabeth Kapella (Nurse Family Partnership at BBPH), Mary Jo Fleming (Ph.D., Regional Director at West Central Behavioral Health Clinic), Hannah E (Dacotah Foundation), Heather Seibel (Dacotah Foundation), Jennifer Pelster (Western Plains Public Health), Kris Morrisette (Ministry on the Margins), Kyle Kirchmeier (Morton Co. Sheriffs Dept.), Michelle E. (Abuse Adult Resource Center), Mike Ness (HIDTA ND ORS), Renae Moch (BBPH Director), Lynden Ring (West Central Behavioral Health Clinic), Sue Kahler (BBPH), Theresa Schmidt (BBPH), Wendy Hafner-Bakken (Bismarck High School BMBHC School Coordinator), Charlotte Williams (ORS Program), Jaylia Prussing (UMary Student), Jena Gullo (United Way), Tiffany Melberg (Evolve Mind), Dick Dever (ND State Legislator),

Total Attendance: 22

Welcome/Introductions:

Renae Moch, Director, Bismarck Burleigh Public Health (BBPH)

Triage Center Updates

Renae Moch provided an overview of Phase Two of the Community Triage Center. Renae outlined phase objectives to convene partners, clarify partner roles, collect local data, refine the model, and explore funding and facilities. She described that the steering committee and subcommittees are working on low-barrier shelter, medical detox, social detox, mental health crisis stabilization, and planning for a certified behavioral health clinic when state readiness allows. Renae reviewed letters of commitment from key partners that were obtained from multiple local partners. She summarized data collection efforts—focus groups with people experiencing homelessness, PIT counts, shelter inventory, partner and hospital ED data—which showed shelters are over capacity and lack hygiene/safety facilities. Renae reviewed the key takeaways like high shelter demand, how Bismarck is focusing on temporary accommodations, and people are cycling through the systems. Through surveys it was found that many individuals in crisis situations value safety, hygiene, and stabilization, but the current systems are not built to stabilize. Emergency departments have a high crisis burden, about one in six ED visits involve a crisis diagnosis. She also noted evidence that community-based social detox reduces jail detentions. Renae outlined the ongoing work to assess facility options, proximity to wraparound services, square footage and space needs, and funding opportunities. She stated she had intent to apply for the Rural Health Transformation planning grant which closes May 29. The grant will help ensure technical assistance for workflow and financial planning and requested city authorization to continue as convener.

Subcommittee Updates:

Prevention & Education Subcommittee

DFC Grant- Madison Peterson, SAP Specialist

Madison Peterson reported prevention activities including partnership with Global Neighbors, presenting Hidden in Plain Sight at Will-Moore, attending many community booth events, and presenting on kratom to C&K Counseling. Global Neighbors is an organization who focuses on helping immigrants integrate into the community. The Bismarck Burleigh Public Health Substance Abuse Prevention team partnered with them to help educate immigrants about underage substance use. Many families were curious about things especially related to nicotine and vaping. The SAP Team also presented Hidden in Plain Sight at Will-Moore Elementary school during their Parent University. Hidden in Plain Sight allows parents to experience a mock bedroom to find risky behavior items and then provide them with a panel to ask questions and learn about the systems in place with their school and law enforcement such as Police Youth Bureau. The SAP team also attended many community booths such as People Matter, Gateway to Health, and Dream Center 4th Birthday. Lastly, Madison presented to C&K Counseling about kratom. C&K reached out about wanting more education since they are seeing clients come in struggling with kratom and some of them had never heard about it before.

Student Committee Updates – Wendy Hafner-Bakken

Wendy Hafer-Bakken provided an update on the BMBHC student committee. BMBHC Student Committee planted red tulips back in the beginning of the fall for Red Ribbon Week for the Plant the Promise Initiative. The flowers serve as a reminder to live a drug-free life. The school made announcement once the flowers bloomed, reminding the school on the purpose of the tulips. The students also did a sticker shock during prom. The sticker was created by one of the students on the student committee with the saying “Just like those prom lights, Keep your future bright. Stay substance-free on your prom night.” 1000 stickers were distributed through Bismarck High School and St. Mary High School. Lastly, Wendy and the current students are working on recruitment for the upcoming school year since 9 seniors from BHS will be graduating.

SOR Grant- Sue Kahler, SAP Coordinator (BBPH)

Sue Kahler provided an update on the State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant. There are currently 51 OneBoxes placed around the Bismarck community. This is an increase from 39 in February. Madison and the previous student intern worked on placing OneBoxes during the spring going to many places that were considered high risk or high turnover. The grant focused on placing them in areas like hotels, convenience stores, and gas stations. Sue also provided Narcan Training to MHA Good Road Recovery and Century High School HOSA classes (medical career). The SOR grant is also focusing on training high schoolers on Narcan administration, so Sue was able to partner with the medical career classes to provide training. Sue also announced an upcoming take back event at Agewell Center on May 27th from 8am-11:30am. There is usually a lot of unused medication that is collected during this event. From 2021 to now, there has been 472 pounds of medication that has been collected.

Intoxication/Withdrawal Management

Lynden Ring and Mary Jo Fleming from West Central Behavioral Health Clinic along with Hannah Watchus, Heather Seibel, and Doreen Eichele from Dacotah Foundation presented on collaborative services.

Lynden gave a quick introduction of Mary Jo Fleming as the new regional director for West Central Behavioral Health Clinic and announced his upcoming retirement at the end of May.

Heather presented on a few of the Bismarck Residential Programs. Alternative Care Services is a 12-bed facility open to 18 or older with self-defined behavioral health crises. The facility is low barrier and person centered and allows walk ins. The facility accepts self-admission, community partner drop-offs, hospital referrals, and referrals triaged via 988/2-1-1. Focuses on social withdrawal and not medical withdrawal since it is not for those with a higher level of care. Lynden clarified that West Central clinical staff perform admissions assessments and that the withdrawal management service is a lower level of care requiring medical clearance rather than medical detox; he emphasized extensive assessments and careful protocols for client safety. The team described 24/7 after-hours psychiatry and nursing access through vendor contracts and 48-hour on-site daytime nursing coverage to coordinate medical clearances and hospital interactions. Those who are in need of a higher level of care will receive a coordinated transfer when indicated. Renae commented that it is an organizational goal to eventually add medical detox capability through the planned triage center expansion.

Heather also talked about two Transitional Living homes, Arbor and Sahnish. Arbor is a 12 bed and Sahnish is an 8-bed, totaling 20 beds for adults 18+ and driven by West Central referrals. Both transitional living homes are for those with co-occurring disorders and encourage independence by teaching daily living, coping skills, and medication management. The homes operate at over 90% occupancy due to high need and client complexity, and length-of-stay patterns vary with many clients. They see many long-term stays that average roughly six to eight months depending on recovery progress.

Hannah Watchus discussed a few services that Dacotah Recovery Center (DRC) offers. DRC is member-run and open to anyone who self-identifies as experiencing mental health symptoms. The members vote on operations per a member handbook used under a Human Service Center contract. The DRC provides peer-led and educational groups, serves as a community resource hub with phones and computers for applications, and functions as a meeting point for multiple agencies and supports. The recovery-based services promote self-worth, self-respect, and independence. The members make decisions on how the center is operated and what monthly activities are best to meet the needs of their members. The DRC operates approximately 40 hours weekly with current Monday–Thursday 8:00am–5:00pm and Friday 08:30am–3:00pm.

Gerridee's Place Recovery Housing is a 12-bed structured recovery housing option focused primarily on substance use disorders and dual diagnosis for those 18 and older. The house is governed by a recovery housing handbook with curfews, phases, and weekly house meetings. The program emphasizes activities that support overall well-being and community connection to sustain recovery. The house focuses on independence and helps those living there to maintain healthy relationships, acquire stable employment/education, and maintain a daily routine.

Dacotah Foundation operates multiple rental properties—Memorial Home, Dakota Home, Lewis and Clark, Custer House (with weekday staff-prepared meals), and Discovery Apartments—targeting individuals with barriers to housing including mental health, substance use, low income, or legal history. Applications are handled through providers or by Dacotah Foundation staff rather than posted on the website, and Hannah can email applications and counsel applicants about fit; waiting lists exist and persistence was encouraged. The Foundation also runs a medication monitoring program for up to 50 individuals who must be linked to psychiatry

services at West Central Behavioral Health Clinic and referred by WC Behavioral Health Clinic. Representative Peer (PE) services operate in Bismarck with approximately 130 individuals served and some program duplication and expansion into Fargo. Participants noted strong collaboration between Dacotah Foundation and West Central Behavioral Health Clinic clients who occupy many of the Foundation's housing units.

Doreen Eichele provided information on Edwinton which is a 40-unit permanent supportive housing project managed in partnership with Burleigh County Housing Authority using a housing-first approach to prioritize chronically homeless disabled individuals and provide supportive services and housing plans.

Lastly, the Bismarck-Mandan Mentor Squad (formerly the Big Brother and Big Sister). The Mentor Squad takes girls and boys between ages 6 to 16 and are lacking supportive participation of two parents. The program requires mentors to be 18+, pass background checks, commit one year and at least four hours per month. Doreen noted they have been seeing success and great connections being built, mentioning one mentor and mentee where the mentee learned some practical skills from his mentor and went on to work in a similar field, obtaining a job. The program is actively recruiting members. Any interest contact Deanna Larson.

Treatment & Recovery Subcommittee

Cathy Palczewski reported on 127 recent street outreach contacts and 129 face-to-face contacts during open hours, with at least one outreach contact entering treatment at Heartview. Heartview submitted a DOJ budget update requesting funds to fill gaps (phones, first-month rent) and applied for a new DOJ grant to expand jail and reentry outreach; award notification is expected in June but likely delayed to August–September.

New Members/Organizations

Additional Comments:

Assignments/Next Meeting

August 4th, 2026, Tuesday at 10am-11:30am

Meeting Adjourned at 11:00am

Meeting minutes taken by: Madison Peterson, SAP Specialist

The Mission Statement:

“To lead and guide a continuum of care model to reduce substance abuse & behavioral health issues in our communities.”

The Vision Statement:

“A safe, healthy, vibrant community, free of substance abuse, addiction and behavioral health issues.”

