

The Brantley County Family Connection Meeting Minutes

The Brantley County Family Connection (BCFC) Collaborative conducted its County-Wide Partners Meeting on Friday, December 20, 2024, from 11 am – 1 pm at the Hoboken Community Center. 17 Members were present.

Executive Director Dawn Deen called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and stated that this meeting is all about the organizations present and the resources they provide.

Introductions of Resource Providers

Area Agency on Aging

Kristi Hames and Erin Nose represented Area Agency on Aging. They are a division of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) located in Waycross, Georgia at 1725 South Georgia Parkway West. Their mission is to develop, provide, coordinate, and advocate for services that assist older individuals, at-risk adults, persons with disabilities, their families, and caregivers. Their vision is to assist individuals in Living Longer, Living Safely, and Living Well. Some of the services include Information and Assistance, Elderly Legal Assistance Program (ELAP), Alzheimer's Adult Day Care, Home Modification (Wheelchair Ramp Construction), Intake for Elderly Disabled Waiver Program (EDWP), Homemaker Services, Personal Care Services, Caregiver In-Home Respite Services, Wellness Programs, Nutrition Services, including Senior Center Services, Home Delivered Meals (HDMs), and Nutrition Education, and Coordinated Transportation.

Magnolia House

Pam McGauley represented Magnolia House and the Waycross Family Justice Center. The vision of The Magnolia House is to become a recognized model in helping victims of family violence achieve safety and self-sufficiency. The mission of Magnolia House is to empower victims of family violence to become safe and self-sufficient by providing a safe environment and instilling hope through advocacy, information, partnerships, and services that promote economic and family stability. Their family and victim advocates provide services both in shelter and through outreach programs to enable victims of domestic violence to obtain safety and self-sufficiency. Their Children's Program is designed to work with families to provide services that will strengthen the family and help break the bonds of intergenerational violence. Their Legal Advocacy Program assists victims of domestic violence with emergency legal advocacy, such as temporary protective orders, support and advocacy during court procedures, crisis counseling, and information and referrals for legal aid.

NextStep Care

Mary Screws represented NextStep Care. Their mission is to provide support to individuals, their families, and caregivers as they navigate, select, and receive health care options. They are committed to enhancing the communities we serve throughout the state of Georgia by working to make a difference in the lives of our clients. We have NextStep representatives that can present to your church, senior center, or civic organization how our programs can benefit individuals in their community. Their services include Service Options Using Resources in a Community Environment (SOURCE) and Transitions of Care. SOURCE is designed for frail, elderly, and disabled Georgians who require the level of care typically provided in a nursing facility. For some very low-income participants this program provides both medical care and non-medical personal care services. To be eligible for the SOURCE Waiver, an individual must be 65 years of age and older, or if he or she is under the age of 65, must have a disability. They must be receiving full Medicaid benefits and meet nursing home level of care. To determine this, an assessment must be completed. It is possible that a waiting list for services may exist. If an individual qualifies there could be a wait time of two months before receiving services. Transitional care is needed when a patient moves from one healthcare provider setting to another or their home. Some individuals may need that higher level of post-acute care, along with individualized case management, as they recuperate.

Action Pact

Taylor Turner represented Action Pact. Action pact is a community action agency deeply rooted in the promise of improving lives and communities. Their services include energy assistance, weatherization, Head Start, Early Head Start, family literacy, and educational talent search (ETS). Early Head Start services are available to pregnant women, infants, and toddlers until they reach three years old and are ready to transition to Head Start which serves ages three and four. ETS is an outreach and early intervention program that serves middle and high school students. The primary goal of the ETS program is to motivate and encourage low-income, potential first-generation college students to graduate from high school and enroll in and graduate from a post-secondary educational institution. Action Pact operate the Utility Assistance Program funded by the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. Eligibility for this program is determined by the income of all adults living in the household. There are limited funding for households in crisis. Households who are disconnected or are within 7 days of disconnection should call the action pact Service Center in their county for assistance.

Okefenokee Alliance for the Homeless (OATH)

Sarah Jumper and Kit Brinson represented OATH. The Okefenokee Alliance for the Homeless (OATH) is a not-for-profit organization created to fill the service gap that exists for the homeless in Ware, Pierce, and Brantley Counties. The OATH Navigator works with the homeless or those precariously housed to focus on increasing their housing

stability and self-sufficiency. Services include assessment; development of an individualized housing stability plan; acting as a liaison to secure and maintain housing; promotion of employment and training opportunities; a connection to community resources; and advocating on behalf of the client. OATH is in the process of partnering with the TRUST Partnership and Southeast Health District to open a Recovery Center in Waycross.

Department of Public Health – Children’s Medical Services, Children 1st, and Babies Can’t Wait

Michelle Garrett, LaToya Hamilton, and Julie Prestenbach represented the Department of Public Health.

The Children’s Medical Services (CMS) program supports families caring for children with special health care needs. CMS works with healthcare providers and community partners to make sure children and youth with chronic medical conditions have access to timely and quality healthcare services. The CMS program supports improved health and wellness for children and youth with special health care needs from birth to 21 years of age, provides early and continuous screening for children with special health care needs, connects children and youth to a medical home and adequate health insurance, helps families manage their appointments and follow-up treatments with health care providers and vendors, shares community resources with families, and supports adolescents moving from pediatric to adult health care.

Children 1st is the single point of entry for all DPH Child Health programs and services for children, birth - 5 years old, and links eligible children to early intervention services, as well as other public health programs and community-based resources. All referrals made to DPH Child Health programs including Babies Can’t Wait (BCW), Children’s Medical Services (CMS), Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI), and 1st Care must be made through Children 1st. Children 1st collaborates with families, healthcare providers, schools, and other agencies to identify children, from birth - 5 years of age, who may be at risk for poor health outcomes and developmental delay. Some children have medical conditions and environmental concerns that place them at greater risk for developmental delay.

Babies Can’t Wait (BCW) is Georgia’s early intervention program that offers a variety of coordinated services for infants and toddlers with special needs, from birth to three years of age, and their families. Part C early intervention builds on and provides support and resources to assist family members and caregivers to enhance children’s learning and development through everyday learning opportunities. The purpose of Babies Can’t Wait is to provide early identification and screening of children with developmental delays and chronic health conditions, improve the developmental potential of infants and toddlers birth to age three, with developmental or chronic health conditions, and support family members and caregivers to enhance children’s learning and development through everyday learning opportunities.

Satilla Advocacy Services

Maggie Santana represented Satilla Advocacy Services. Satilla Advocacy Services, formed in 1996, is a 501c3 nonprofit organization providing compassionate and comprehensive services for child abuse and sexual assault survivors in Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Coffee, Pierce, and Ware Counties. They provide a safe place that reduces further trauma, provides hope and healing and ongoing support for survivors and their families. They have offices in Waycross, Douglas, Folkston, and Nahunta to reduce the burden of travel to receive vital services. Staff and volunteers are trained in all aspects of child advocacy and rape crisis intervention for survivors of all ages, including crisis intervention, advocacy, emotional support, counseling, forensic interviews, medical exams, follow up care and legal accompaniment. They work with a multidisciplinary team to effectively respond to child abuse investigations. In addition to providing these services to survivors and their families, it is the mission of Satilla Advocacy Services to educate the public on how to recognize and prevent child abuse, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

Georgia Youth Challenge

Jefferey Helms represented Georgia Youth Challenge. The National Guard Youth Challenge Program was established by Congress in 1993 to turn around the lives of young men and women between the ages of 16 and 18 who are experiencing difficulty in completing traditional high school. The Georgia Youth Challenge Program is the premiere residential alternative education provider; developing and producing academically and socially competitive young adults who believe they can achieve their dreams. This is a tuition-free program open to Georgia residents.

Affinis Hospice

Donna Goodbread represented Affinis Hospice. Affinis Hospice provides a comprehensive approach to the care and well-being of patients facing a terminal illness. Individualized care provided by a collaborative team of medical personnel, chaplains, and local volunteers, is designed to meet the varied needs of both the patient and their family members. The Affinis Hospice team provides the following services either at an Affinis qualified center located throughout greater Georgia, or at the patient’s home including social worker support services, physical, occupational therapies and speech-language pathology services, bereavement support services, pastoral services, nursing services available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, home health and homemaker services, medication management services, standardized medical equipment, and volunteer services.

Affinis Hospice can provide patients with all levels of hospice care, including:

Home care - The patient's personalized team works together to provide for the needs of the patient within the comfort of their own home. Our hospice team is on-call 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

Respite care - For families that may need to take time off from caring for their loved one at home, patients can be transferred to an Affinis Hospice Center for short-term care on an interim basis.

Continuous care - Around-the-clock care provided by our hospice team in a patient's home during times of elevated discomfort for patient.

In-Patient care - Care provided to the patient in one of Affinis' qualified centers or a contracted healthcare organization.

Unison Behavioral Health – MAT

Allena Thomas represented Unison Behavioral Health. Unison Behavioral Health is a nonprofit organization providing behavioral health and community support services to persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities and alcohol or other substance abuse problems. The main service area covers the counties of Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce, and Ware.

Child and Family Services include an Initial Assessment, Psychiatric Medication, Individual, Group, and Family Therapy, Crisis Services, Laboratory Tests, and Community Support– skill building and linkage.

Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse services may include an Initial Assessment, Psychiatric Medication, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Peer Support Groups, Individual, Group, & Group Family Services, Intensive Outpatient Treatment, Medication Assisted Treatment for opioid addiction, Psychosocial Rehabilitation – Wellness and Recovery, Psychosocial Rehabilitation – Individual, Peer Support – Individual, Case Management Services, Crisis Stabilization, Residential Treatment, Supportive Living, Supported Employment, and Community Support – skill building and linkage.

Lunch was served

Resource Networking

Dawn Deen invited all partners present to take a moment before being adjourned to walk around the room and learn of all the resources present.

The next Brantley County Family Connection Collaborative Meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 10, 2025, at the Hoboken Community Center, 294 Chicago Avenue, Hoboken, Georgia 31542 for the Annual Operating and Data Review Meeting.

Adjournment

Dawn Deen thanked all partners for attending, wished them all a Merry Christmas, and reminded partners the BCFC Office will be closed December 23 – 27, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned.