



Mental Health & Addictions  
Advisory Council



**Public Health**  
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**Harford County  
Health Department**




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**Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council (MHAAC)  
Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) Behavioral Health Workgroup  
Harford County OOC Opioid Intervention Team (OIT)**

**Meeting Agenda | May 30, 2023 | 8:00-10:00 AM  
Harford Community College Chesapeake Center**

**Call to Order & Introductions:** Ronya Nassar, Director of Population Health at the Harford County Health Department

- Ronya Nassar opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending in person.

**Special Topic | Harford County Public Schools Wellness Needs Assessment:** Christina Alton, Joe Harbert, and Buck Hennigan

- 26,841 students grades 1-12 took the survey. This assessment contains a series of open-ended questions for students. Started in the summer of 2021 in partnership with Hanover Research. Assessment is administered in the fall to students in person. Contains individual results, and whole school results. Results/Answers are confidential, besides school counselors who have access to individual student data.
- A future change will be that the assessment will be given to 3rd through 12th graders, as some questions posed challenges to those who were younger.
- Northstar Health Initiatives. For example, a 9th-grade early warning indicator, to see if students are on track for graduation, and if not, we can identify why this might be.
- Creating an HCPS dashboard focusing on the whole student body such as overall attendance, if students have a medical/dental home, grades, school connectedness, and positive childhood experiences.
- 2022-2023 Wellness Needs Assessment: total number of students that took assessment 26,841. 78% response rate. 12,445 elementary school students. 6,847 middle school students, and 7,549 high school students.
- School Counselor Feedback: 4-way results were utilized: Reach out to individual students 85%, Planned group intervention 76%, Took appropriate action 74%, Presented to administration 69%.
- Key Findings: Students managing time and school-related responsibilities. Struggling to create routines and regulating the emotions that affect their focus and motivation. Highlight Mental Health as a priority across all 3 categories. Many used the open-ended response option "other" to share their lack of wellness needs, this shows that students were intentional with their answers. Important to do this every year because we do see trends (elementary reported high stresses of testing anxiety).

Harford County Health Department  
Division of Behavioral Health  
120 S. Hays Street  
Bel Air, MD 21014  
410-877-2340

Harford County Government  
Department of Community Services - ODCP  
125 N. Main Street  
Bel Air, MD 21014  
410-638-3333

Office on Mental Health  
Core Service Agency of Harford County  
2231 Conowingo Road, Suite A  
Bel Air, MD 21015  
410-803-8726

- Best Practices: Create Professional Development for school-based SS staff members to inform micro and macro interventions. What kinds of training can we offer to our staff members? Share results with stakeholders within and outside of HCPS. Review school-specific data with School Performance and Assessment (SPA) teams. The new administration at HCPS is really focused on students' health in addition to academic success. Present data from the Wellness Needs Assessment annually to administrators & district leadership.
- Will be focusing on mental health in the future. Physical health will be a priority as well along with how students are making connections in school, dietary behaviors, and 16 trained in HOPE.
- School Improvement Plans - vastly related to social and emotional health was shown.
- Data can be accessed by those interested by contacting HCPS to set up a meeting or staff may send requested data.

#### Questions:

- Are School Resource Officers (SRO) involved? They are very involved with students on a daily basis which could provide valuable insight. Yes, SROs are a vital part of HCPS. SRO's are in every middle and high school and are regional for elementary schools.
- Selma Carvalho - Does the WNA elicit questions about substance abuse? No, but the YRBS does go into this. Can look into this in future assessments.
- Project SEEK - work with incarcerated family members. Students are able to feel comfortable answering all kinds of questions.
- Felicia Hopkins - This is helpful for counselors to have this insight. Mental health is very subjective. How are students being acknowledged? It is important to figure out what is the cause of mental health needs and issues. Also, getting all stakeholders involved and getting our programs to HCPS and circulating that information. Possibly creating a report card on students' health. Students love to hear lived experiences from people who can relate, former students, and peers.
- Ronya Nassar - possibly collaborate with YRBS data trends and the Wellness Needs Assessment data.
- Dashboard Overview: data can be broken down into specific elementary/middle/high schools and then even further by grade level. School Counselors and specific HCPS staff will have access to individual student's responses.
- Selma Carvalho - Check and Connect Mentoring program: do you have measurements to see how programs are helping students? Would be looking at the individual student. Many have been assigned a social worker.
- HCPS announced its partnership with Care Solace thanks to funding from the Health Department: Care Solace helps those involved in HCPS navigate the mental health care system to find available providers matched to specific needs. The program is for HCPS students, staff, and their families. The first school system in Maryland to enter into this partnership. Live Weblink will come out on June 1, 2023.

#### Updates:

- **Harford County Health Department Report** –Ronya Nassar, and Andrea Pappas
- Andrea Pappas - Mental Health Awareness Day to destigmatize mental health. Your Mind Matters youth event was attended to educate local youth on mental health.
- There has been an influx of demands regarding mental health services, and the HCHD has been continuing to recruit additional counselors and youth/adult providers.

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- A staff satisfaction survey was given last month to help identify areas of need and to increase employee morale.
- OD2A Project is continuing, however, most referrals failed to show up to their scheduled appointment.
- 125 youth/adolescents were served in FY22, and 154 youth/adolescents served in FY23 to date.
- 2022 showed a decrease in opioid-related deaths in Harford County. Transcutaneous Auricular Neurostimulation (TANS) Initiative began to help clients diminish symptoms of opioid withdrawal.

**Community Announcements:**

- Health Insurance - the Health Department reminded everyone that the health insurance program is still working with individuals to reauthorize their Medicaid information. Encouraged to send anyone to the Health Department to update their information.
- Birth Certificates - is there any way we can help people get birth certificates for people who have little to no money? The state of Maryland switched to a new system and will discuss with the Vital Records program as to what they can do to support this.
- Tara Lathrop reminded everyone of Recovery Month in September and if anyone is interested in attending the planning meetings they can email Margaret Kaiser (mtkaiser@harfordcountymd.gov)

**Upcoming Meetings:** Taking a short break for the summer but will begin meeting again in September. There will be a rotating schedule of in-person and virtual meetings, with possible changes to the structure of the meetings moving forward.

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