

Minutes

Behavioral Health Council

Date November 19, 2024

Time 1:00 PM – 2:45 PM

Meeting called to order by Dr. Christina Finello, Esq., Executive Director, Behavioral Health Council

IN ATTENDANCE

Commonwealth Representatives:

1. Secretary of Policy and Planning, Akbar Hossain
2. Secretary of the Department of Human Services, Dr. Valerie Arkoosh
3. Secretary of the Department of Health, Dr. Debra Bogen
4. Policy Director, Pennsylvania Insurance Department, Caroline Beohm on behalf of Commissioner of Pennsylvania Insurance Department, Michael Humphreys
5. Secretary of the Department of Aging, Jason Kavulich
6. Deputy Secretary Kelly Primus on behalf of Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Dr. Latika Davis-Jones
7. Special Assistant to the Secretary, Cathy Hall, MPA on behalf of the Secretary of the Department of Education, Dr. Khalid Mumin
8. Spec. Asst. to Adj. Gen. Richard Hamp on behalf of acting Adjutant General of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Brigadier General John Pippy
9. Policy and Legislative Affairs Office Director, Major Patrick Beaver on behalf of Commissioner of Pennsylvania State Police, Colonel Christopher Paris
10. Regional Licensed Psychologist Manager, Corrections, Dr. Elicia Stein on behalf of Secretary of the Department of Corrections, Dr. Laurel Harry
11. Secretary of the Department of State, Al Schmidt
12. Exec. Dir. Rural Dev. Council, Western Reg. Dir. PA Dept. of Agriculture, Mr. Mark Critz, on behalf of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Russell Redding
13. Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Michael Pennington
14. Bureau Director, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, PA Dept. of Labor and Industry, Denise Verchimak, on behalf of Secretary of Department of Labor and Industry, Nancy Walker
15. Special Assistant to the Secretary, Office of Administration, Toni McIntyre and Digital Services Director at the Governor's Office, Sadie Smiles on behalf of Director of Digital Strategy at the Governor's Office, Annie Newman
16. Supervising Analyst, Safe2Say Something Program, Christian Belker on behalf of Pennsylvania Attorney General's Safe2Say Program Director, Brittney Kline
17. Deputy Secretary, Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Jennifer Smith

Representatives with lived or living experiences and family members:

18. Robert Hamilton, MPPM - Westmoreland DHS Dir.; Formerly homeless veteran & person in long-term recovery
19. Kate Favata - Community Engagement Manager, Crossroads, Treatment Advocate
20. Jennifer Wilt - Parent of a loved one with mental illness, President NAMI of Cumberland, and Perry Counties

County Representatives:

21. Tina Clymer, County Mental Health Office representing Carbon, Monroe, and Pike counties
22. Dr. Tamra Williams, County Mental Health Office from Montgomery County
23. Ryan Hogan, Single County Authority from Luzerne County

24. Kristin Varner, Single County Authority from Dauphin County
25. Lynn Deardorff, Area Agency on Aging from Adams County
26. Dr. Shannah Gillam, Area Agency on Aging from Allegheny County

Clinical Representatives:

27. Dr. Amy Kim, an expert in child and family behavioral healthcare
28. Dr. Margaret Jarvis, an expert in addiction medicine and substance use disorder treatments
29. Dr. Jack Todd Wahrenberger, an expert in primary healthcare
30. Dr. Wendy Ross, an expert in treating individuals with co-occurring intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism with mental illness

Legislative Representatives from the General Assembly:

31. Representative Mike Schlossberg (D)
32. Representative Jim Struzzi (R)
33. Senator Maria Collett (D)
34. Senator Michele Brooks (R) (David Burnett)

REPORTS

Dr. Finello took roll call. She then introduced the topic for the meeting, which was health-related social needs and whole person care. Dr. Finello mentioned that first there would be some presentations to help guide our understanding, and then there would be a discussion with Council members led by her.

The speakers were: Jennifer Smith, Deputy Secretary, Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), Dr. Dale K. Adair, MD, DLFAPA, Chief Psychiatric Officer, Department of Human Services, Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, Secretary, Department of Human Services, Kelly Primus, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, and Linda Thomas-Hemak, MD, FAAP, FACP, President and CEO of the Wright Center.

Following the presentations, Dr. Finello led a facilitated discussion with questions that were given to the members of the Council prior to the meeting. Comments from that discussion will be incorporated into the Statewide Action Plan.

Dr. Finello ended the meeting with some closing remarks and thanked the Council members for their time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Behavioral Health Council Meetings will take place on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 1:00 PM. Quarterly meetings will be in person. The next in-person meeting is in December. The next meeting of the Council is December 10, 2024, and it will be in person. For the December meeting, the meeting will be held on the second Tuesday of the month.

NEXT MEETING

December 10, 2024, 9 AM, Governor's Reception Room, 2nd Floor, Main Capitol, Harrisburg, PA