

Minutes

Behavioral Health Council

Date December 10, 2024

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Time 9:00 AM – 10:45 AM

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

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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. Commissioner of Pennsylvania Insurance Department, Michael Humphreys
5. Special Assistant to the Secretary of Aging, Meaghan Abbott on behalf of the Secretary of the Department of Aging, Jason Kavulich
6. 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 acting Secretary of the Department of Education, Angela Fitterer
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. Quality Assurance Risk Management Coordinator, Corrections, Nicole Yesser 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) (Tom Holder)
34. Senator Michele Brooks (R) (David Burnett)

REPORTS

Dr. Finello took roll call. Secretary Hossain gave some opening remarks, thanked the members for their work thus far, and introduced the topic, which was advancing the ideal system of care and next steps. Dr. Finello shared a draft list of recommendation tactics, which the group discussed. Then, she led a brainstorming session on the ideal system of care in light of the topics discussed in previous meetings. Finally, Council members generated a list of additional topics they felt needed to be covered in the meetings next year in order to create a complete and comprehensive report.

Secretary Hossain ended the meeting with some closing remarks and thanked the Council members for their time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In 2025, Behavioral Health Council Meetings will continue to take place on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 1:00 PM. Quarterly meetings will be in person.

NEXT MEETING

January, more details to follow shortly.