

Minutes

Behavioral Health Council

Date March 19, 2024

Time 12:00 PM – 1:45 PM

Meeting called to order by Akbar Hossain, Secretary of Policy and Planning

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. Director – Life, Accident, and Health Rate and Policy Form Review, Bureau of Life, Accident, and Health Insurance, Pennsylvania Insurance Department Lindsay Swartz, MBA, MCM on behalf of Commissioner of Pennsylvania Insurance Department, Michael Humphreys
5. Secretary of the Department of Aging, Jason Kavulich
6. Spec. Asst. to Sect., Dir. of Long-Term Care Council Kevin Hancock on behalf of Secretary of the Department of Aging, Jason Kavulich
7. Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Dr. Latika Davis-Jones
8. Special Assistant to the Secretary, Cathy Hall, MPA, on behalf of Secretary of the Department of Education, Dr. Khalid Mumin
9. Spec. Asst. to Adj. Gen. Richard Hamp on behalf of Adjutant General of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Maj. Gen. Mark J. Schindler
10. Policy and Legislative Affairs Office Director, Major Patrick Beaver on behalf of Commissioner of Pennsylvania State Police, Colonel Christopher Paris
11. Deputy Secretary for Reentry, Dr. Lucas on behalf of Secretary of the Department of Corrections, Dr. Laurel Harry
12. Secretary of the Department of State, Al Schmidt
13. 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
14. Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Michael Pennington
15. 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
16. Digital Services Director at the Governor's Office, Toni McIntyre, on behalf of Director of Digital Strategy at the Governor's Office, Annie Newman
17. Pennsylvania Attorney General's Safe2Say Program Director, Brittney Kline
18. 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:

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

County Representatives:

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

25. Kristin Varner, Single County Authority from Dauphin County
26. Laurie Greco, Area Agency on Aging from Northampton County
27. Dr. Shannah Gillam, Area Agency on Aging from Allegheny County

Clinical Representatives:

28. Dr. Amy Kim, an expert in child and family behavioral healthcare
29. Dr. Margaret Jarvis, an expert in addiction medicine and substance use disorder treatments
30. Dr. Jack Todd Wahrenberger, an expert in primary healthcare
31. 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:

32. Representative Mike Schlossberg (D) (Rachel Maurer)
33. Representative Jim Struzzi (R)
34. Senator Maria Collett (D) (Tom Bowray)
35. Senator Michele Brooks (R)

Additional Speakers:

36. Mike Shepherd, MD, Sr. Medical Director for Behavioral Health, Geisinger Health Plan
37. Matthew Hurford, MD, Vice President, Behavioral Health, UPMC Insurance Division

REPORTS

Secretary Hossain took roll call. Secretary Hossain gave some opening remarks and introduced the topic for the meeting, which was a continuation of the funding streams for behavioral health. He mentioned that there will first be some presentations to guide our understanding of the topic, then a discussion with Council members led by Dr. Finello.

The speaker from the state was from the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance, Lindsay Swartz, who is the Director – Life, Accident, and Health Rate and Policy Form Review in the Bureau of Life, Accident, and Health Insurance. The other speakers represented commercial insurance providers. They were Dr. Mike Shepherd, who is the Senior Medical Director for Behavioral Health at Geisinger Health Plan and Dr. Matthew Hurford, who is the Vice President of Behavioral Health at UPMC Insurance Division.

After the presentations, Dr. Finello led a facilitated discussion with questions that were given to Council members prior to the meeting. The results of the discussion will be used as part of 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 June. The next meeting of the Council is April 16, 2024, and it will be virtual.

NEXT MEETING

April 16, 2024, 1 PM, Virtual via Microsoft Teams