

Minutes

Behavioral Health Council

Date September 17, 2024

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Time 1:00 PM – 2:45 PM

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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. Spec. Asst. to Secretary Gabrielle Szymanski on behalf of 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, Secretary of the Department of Education, Dr. Khalid Mumin
8. 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
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. Deputy Director, Policy Office, Department of State Robert Beecher on behalf of 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. 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. 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
18. Deputy Secretary, Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs Kelly Primus
19. Deputy Secretary, Workforce Development, Department of Labor and Industry Daniel Kuba

Representatives with lived or living experiences and family members:

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

County Representatives:

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

26. Kristin Varner, Single County Authority from Dauphin County
27. Lynn Deardorff, Area Agency on Aging from Adams County
28. Jule Benning on behalf of Dr. Shannah Gillam, Area Agency on Aging from Allegheny County

Clinical Representatives:

29. Dr. Amy Kim, an expert in child and family behavioral healthcare
30. Dr. Margaret Jarvis, an expert in addiction medicine and substance use disorder treatments
31. Dr. Jack Todd Wahrenberger, an expert in primary healthcare
32. 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:

33. Representative Mike Schlossberg (D)
34. Representative Jim Struzzi (R)
35. Senator Maria Collett (D) (Molly McMenamin)
36. Senator Michele Brooks (R) (David Burnett)

REPORTS

Dr. Finello took roll call. Secretary Hossain gave some opening remarks and introduced the topic for the meeting, which was workforce, training issues and innovations. He mentioned that there will first be some presentations to help our understanding of the topic, then a discussion with Council members led by Dr. Finello.

The speakers were from the state: Jennifer Smith, Deputy Secretary, Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), Kelly Primus, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, and Dr. Christina Finello, Executive Director, Behavioral Health Council.

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 December. The next meeting of the Council is October 15, 2024, and it will be virtual.

NEXT MEETING

October 15, 2024, 1 PM, Virtual via Microsoft Teams