

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Drug & Alcohol Planning Council and MH/ID Advisory Board
Joint Meeting Minutes
Microsoft Teams
Wednesday, September 14, 2022**

Present MH-ID Advisory Board: Maria Silva, Gerry Dugan, Laurie Barnett Levine, Conrad Kalcich
Absent MH-ID Advisory Board: Chris Michaels, Paul Barkowitz, Kathy Testoni, Barbara Wolvovitz, Leslie Zacharias
Present D&A Planning Council: Theresa Edwards, Paul Freyder, Charles Davis
Absent D&A Planning Council: Stacie Brown, Mario Browne, Michael “Mike” Mallon, Val Ketter
Present Staff: Maisha Howze, Bureau of D&A Services Assistant Deputy Director; Regina Janov, Bureau of Adult MH Services Administrator; Brenda Bulkoski, ODS Deputy Director; Hannah Trout, ODS Community & Systems Resource Navigator; Bridget McNamee, OBH Special Projects Manager; Michelle Lee, Bureau of D&A Services Clerk Typist 2
Absent Staff: Jewel Denne, OBH/MH Services Assistant Deputy Director; Renee Patten, Bureau of Children/Adolescent MH Services Administrator

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Bridget McNamee called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

II. Board & Council Business

MH-ID Advisory Board July 2022 Meeting Minutes

Since Chris Michaels, MH-ID Advisory Board Chair, was absent, Theresa Edwards, D&A Planning Council Chair, asked for a motion to approve the July 2022 meeting minutes. Maria Silva made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Conrad Kalcich seconded the motion. The July 2022 meeting minutes were approved.

D&A Planning Council July 2022 Meeting Minutes

Since there was not a quorum, Bridget McNamee will email the July 2022 meeting minutes to the D&A Planning Council members for review and approval.

III. ODS Updates-Brenda Bulkoski

START RFP (Request for Proposals)

Brenda Bulkoski gave an updated on the START RFP. START is a behavioral treatment team made up of clinicians, medical staff, coaches, and coordinators whose goal is to provide support to individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, and mental health issues. Unlike existing behavioral health treatment teams, the START team will bring the intellectual disability and autism components into treatment. The hope is that using the START model will yield different results for some people with more complex needs. The START RFP is a pilot project that

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DHS/ODS is doing at the request of PA DHS (Department of Human Services). At the time of this meeting, the START RFP had been released, and the evaluation committee for this RFP was in the middle of scoring the applications they had received. They hope to award the START RFP to a provider by the end of September or mid-October at the latest. Benita Cabell has been hired as the START program director who will oversee the implementation of this pilot. Benita Cabell had previously worked at the RESPOND program, which is a residential treatment model intended for youth with complex needs and includes a mobile treatment component. She has some great ideas about how to adapt the START model to an adult population and different presentations that may be seen in youth. After the START RFP is awarded to a provider and implementation is underway, Brenda Bulkoski would like Benita Cabell and her staff come to a future MH/ID Advisory Board meeting to give more updates about the START program.

LCSI Project

Brenda Bulkoski talked about the LCSI (Legal Consultation Support and Improvement) project. There are a lot of individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism who get caught up in the justice system, primarily for smaller offenses, like misdemeanors and harassment. However, occasionally people will get involved with the wrong group of people and will get into trouble. DHS/ODS will not know that these people have landed in the legal system. DHS/ODS has found individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or autism in the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ) and federal prison, and DHS/ODS has not had the opportunity to intervene or say that these people are eligible for supports. The purpose of the LCSI team is to realize that individuals, who are registered with DHS/ODS, have hit the legal system, regardless of whether it is at the local/state level. Tamara Siegert is the manager of the LCSI team and has built amazing relationships with courts and judges so that information can be shared. This allows local attorneys, who discover someone whom they think may have an intellectual disability, to call DHS/ODS. DHS/ODS is now allowed to talk to attorneys about whether an individual is associated with DHS/ODS. This project is not intended to prevent individuals from taking responsibility for their actions. It is meant to help keep people from ending up back in the court system by helping inform the court about DHS/ODS-involved individuals and by providing opportunities to intervene so the problem does not continue. This program has already taken referrals and has a waiting list. There are 50 individuals in the court system who will be participating in this program once it is up and running.

IV. MH Updates-Regina Janov

Children's and Adolescents MH Updates

Regina Janov gave updates on OBH/Children's and Adolescents MH on behalf of Renee Patten, who was unable to attend this meeting. Renee Patten had wanted to notify everyone that Southwood had been selected from the RFP process to develop 2 short-term residential treatment facilities. One of these facilities would be specializing in helping CYF-involved children, and the other facility would be for children with generalized mental health concerns. These programs are comparable to DAS (Diversion and Acute Stabilization) programs and are designed to help people avoid going to inpatient or to be a step down from being in an inpatient unit. An RFP for an extended acute care unit for children has been released. As of this meeting, the RFP was in the review process. The community school-based behavioral health team has been expanded in McKeesport School District. A learning collaborative will be launched focusing on the needs of children in the transition-age population. This collaborative is part of the transition-age youth strategic initiative, which has been done in conjunction with CCBH. OBH/Children's and Adolescents MH is focusing on adding staff to accommodate the expanding duties related to the daily operation of school districts in complex cases.

Adult MH Updates

Regina Janov said that OBH/Adult MH is also hiring additional staff since they are also expanding and trying to fill current vacancies. Staffing issues are still an ongoing challenge across the board at every level and at every provider. There have been numerous ongoing discussions with leadership, and there have been provider-led initiatives related to the staffing issues. There are a lot of changes coming out soon for the front-end referral process to adult mental health residential programs. There are a limited number of programs and available beds. OBH/Adult MH wants to make sure that those most in need can get the most appropriate level of support and can get a bed as quickly as possible. There is a fairly extensive waitlist. Currently, Mental Health First Aid training is being conducted with probation officers. All ACJ staff have already completed the Mental Health First Aid training.

August 2022 CIT Training

Regina Janov said there was an international critical intervention training (CIT) for police officers that was held in Pittsburgh in August 2022, and it was the largest conference of its type. Laurie Barnett Levine had attended the CIT training and thought it was amazing, well-received, and very informative. She thought there were over 1,000 people who attended. She was impressed that a lot of the workshops were co-presented with first responders and BH providers, so people got to see both perspectives. The workshops used humor to make everyone feel comfortable discussing the differences and issues between the first responders and BH providers. She attended a workshop presented by a Pittsburgh police officer who had a son with autism and someone from an autism agency. The police officer talked about what it was like to have a son with autism and for the need to be respectful and responsive, in order to understand how what you could be doing could set a person off. There was a train-the-trainer CIT training that allowed people to become CIT trainers. For those not attending the CIT training, there was a showing of an award-winning film. This film was for advocates and was intended to facilitate discussion. There were some amazing speakers. There was a keynote speaker, who was a police officer who shared his story about how he lost his daughter to suicide. There were people there from Native American reservations, other countries, and Hawaii.

NAMI Walk-October 2nd, 2022

Regina Janov said that the NAMI walk would be in Monroeville on October 2nd, 2022, at 9 a.m. More details will be sent out to attendees.

V. D&A Updates-Maisha Howze

D&A Updates

ACJ Methadone Project

Maisha Howze said OBH/D&A is working with Tadiso to get a methadone program started in the ACJ. This program is for those coming into the jail who have already been prescribed methadone and is intended to allow them to continue receiving methadone treatment. At the time of this meeting, OBH/D&A was still working things out with Tadiso, in order to get this program up and running. This project is also encountering staffing issues. Attendees will be informed once this program has started.

Recovery Housing Expansion

Maisha Howze said that once the new recovery housing provider that was chosen through the RFP process is up and running, OBH/D&A will have 3 recovery housing facilities. As of this meeting, 2 out of 3 facilities are already licensed, and the third facility is working on getting licensed. Now all recovery houses in PA must be licensed by DDAP (Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs) if they plan on receiving public dollars. After the third recovery housing provider is up and running, there will be a total of 54 male recovery housing beds and 19 female

recovery housing beds.

Naloxboxes

OBH/D&A has been distributing Naloxone boxes (Naloxboxes) to different places in the community, which are different than drug lockboxes, which people use to lock up their medications. Naloxboxes are similar to the metal AED boxes. Inside the Naloxboxes, there are resources, including 2 boxes of Narcan, gloves, and a face shield. Attendees can email Bridget if they know any community providers that want Naloxboxes. A lot of people are putting the Naloxboxes in common areas, so they are accessible. Maisha Howze said that OBH/D&A coordinates with the owner and operator of a facility that wants a Naloxbox in order to distribute it. The owner/operator of the facility must be the one to request the Naloxbox. The box itself costs almost \$400. OBH/D&A will ask facilities for their addresses and where they are placing the Naloxboxes since OBH/D&A is working on creating a Naloxbox locator. If a location is owned and operated by the City of Pittsburgh, then they would need to approve placing a Naloxbox at that facility.

Pittsburgh Recovery Walk-September 17th, 2022

Maisha Howze said the Pittsburgh Recovery Walk would be held on Saturday, September 17th, 2022. **Please see the attached flier and the website: <https://pghrecoverywalk.org/> for more information.** Registration is not required, but it is encouraged. This event starts at 9 a.m. and will take place at 1201 Waterfront Place, in the parking lot across from the Heinz History Center.

VI. Other Announcements

Mental Health America Annual Meeting-October 20th, 2022

Laurie Barnett Levine, from Mental Health America, said that Mental Health America will be having their annual meeting on October 20th for the first time in person since the beginning of the pandemic. This meeting will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel-Pittsburgh Monroeville Convention Center. The keynote speaker will be the police lieutenant who spoke at the critical intervention training (CIT) about his son who has autism. He will be talking about the benefits of CIT. Also, during this meeting, Mental Health America will be honoring Joni Schwager, the executive director of Staunton Farm Foundation, who will be receiving the Fred Funari Mental Health Award of Excellence. When Laurie Barnett Levine receives the information about this meeting, she will send it to Bridget McNamee to share with attendees.

Recruitment of D&A Planning Council and MH/ID Advisory Board Members

Bridget McNamee said she is still recruiting D&A Planning Council and MH/ID Advisory Board members. If attendees know anyone who is interested in joining either group, they can ask Bridget McNamee for the flier, but she said she will also send the flier out to attendees.

Workforce Issues

Laurie Barnett Levine asked if there had been any data gathering in Allegheny County about staff vacancies and about workforce issues. There are issues with people waiting to receive services and with providers not being able to get enough staff to provide these services. She asked if there was something that could be reviewed and discussed, like what things are being done to address provider staff vacancies. For instance, some providers are paying for TV commercials and statewide provider organization committees are addressing this. Laurie mentioned possible topics to discuss relating to the workforce issues, such as if there were any public relations/media ideas that could address this issue, looking at various schools of social work and counseling programs to try to recruit more students, having job fairs to attract more people, and having public speakers talk to students in classrooms to encourage them to go into the field. This issue needs a multi-pronged solution that addresses the need to recruit more people, the need to address people

leaving the field, and the need to retain staff. She wanted to know what actions are being taken to address all of these things. Mental Health America is a small agency, and she said they were fully staffed as of this meeting. They worked very hard to retain staff and talked about the benefits of having people who have gained experience from working at an agency for a long time. Laurie Barnett Levine said that having constant staff turnover is an issue when working with people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, and mental health issues since it is very hard to form relationships with them. When staff leave, it makes it more difficult and less effective to provide services to these individuals. Mental Health America seeks to educate people about mental illness, but when people try to get help, they cannot do so because of the staffing issues. There has been an increase in the number of people calling 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline), but there are a lot of people who end up waiting in emergency rooms to get help. Bridget McNamee said that there will be further discussion about workforce issues at the next MH/ID Advisory Board meeting.

DHS/OBH Staff Changes

Maria Silva brought up that Denise Macerelli, DHS/OBH Assistant Deputy Director was no longer with DHS (Her last day was September 9, 2022.) and mentioned how many had reached out to Denise Macerelli to tell her how much they had appreciated all she had done for the community and Allegheny County. Maria Silva asked if there were any updates regarding Denise Macerelli's replacement. Maisha Howze said that Erin Dalton, the DHS director, said that each assistant deputy in DHS/OBH would be responsible for their individual bureaus while Erin Dalton is in the process of searching for Denise Macerelli's replacement and all of them will report directly to Erin Dalton. Maisha Howze will be responsible for OBH/D&A. Jewel Denne will be responsible for OBH/MH. Sue Martone will be responsible for OBH/Operations. As of this meeting, she was unsure of what the timeline was for the process of hiring someone to fill this position.

Gerry Dugan thanked Bridget for all her work in providing the MH/ID Advisory Board and joint meeting agendas, minutes and said she appreciated it very much.

VII. Adjournment

Chair Theresa Edwards made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Charles Davis and Conrad Kalcich both seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

VIII. Next Public Meetings

Bridget McNamee said that people could email her if they had any particular topics, they wanted to discuss during the November MH-ID Advisory Board and D&A Planning Council meetings. She is going to work on getting guest speakers for the November meetings.

Bridget McNamee said that since the next public MH/ID Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for Election Day on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, from 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. on Microsoft Teams, this meeting will likely be rescheduled for November 1st. She will email the MH/ID Advisory Board members to make sure that this date works for enough people. Otherwise, the meeting may be rescheduled to the week after on November 15th.

The next public D&A Planning Council meeting will be on Wednesday, November 9, 2022, from 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. on Microsoft Teams.