

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

**Mental Health/Intellectual Disability Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Microsoft Teams
Tuesday, March 11, 2025**

Present: David Forsyth; Deborah Jozwiak; Ken-Netta Fowlkes; Vanessa Dodds; Rachel Flinner; Aeisha Carter; Keirston Parham; Kimberly Mathos; Nev Jones; Lynn Pugliano, ODS Assistant Director; Melissa Medice, OBH Adult Mental Health Program Manager; Colleen Sokira, OBH Special Projects Manager; Sarah Bigelow, OBH Special Projects Assistant

I. Introductions and Attendance

Colleen Sokira called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Attendees introduced themselves, their role in tonight's meeting, and their favorite springtime activity.

Everyone on this call who isn't a DHS staff member is a candidate for the board – will discuss further during announcement section.

II. Office Updates

a. ODS

i. Waiver updates

1. Current usage

- a. Consolidated – 2319
- b. Community living – 753
- c. PFD – 1411
- d. Total – about 6500 individuals, including those on waitlist

2. Recently got initiative slots from the state

- a. Helps plan the waiting list
- b. Received 12 consolidated slots and 95 community living slots
- c. Have already used consolidated slots and have a plan to use all 95 community living slots
- d. Requires coordination with the CAO

3. Waiting list for consolidated waivers is down to 100 – has typically been highest waitlisted waiver

ERIN DALTON, DIRECTOR

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING • ONE SMITHFIELD STREET • THIRD FLOOR • PITTSBURGH, PA 15222
PHONE (412) 350-4457 • FAX (412) 350-3880
EMAIL OBHINFORMATIONREQUEST@ALLEGHENYCOUNTY.US

- a. Consolidated waivers support individuals in group homes – most requested waiver
- ii. [Charting the Life Course tools and framework](#)
 - 1. Emphasizes person-centered change and practices
 - a. Looking at individuals and their supports (paid and unpaid/volunteer) holistically for planning, navigating, and advocating for supports
 - 2. More information also available at lifecoursetools.com
- iii. RFP for two Long-Term Structured Residences (LTSRs)
 - 1. This solicitation seeks the establishment of two LTSRs, **one each for two target populations**, henceforth referred to as the LTSR for Target Population A and the LTSR for Target Population B. Both populations have serious mental illnesses (SMI), forensic risks or involvement, and unique functional impairments related to SMI and/or neurodevelopmental disorders. Target Population B may also have a diagnosis of Intellectual Disability (ID) and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - 2. This RFP was released on February 3 and closes at **3 pm EST on Thursday, March 27**
 - 3. Find more information on the [Solicitations page](#)
 - 4. Further details
 - a. Provides more community-based services for individuals who may be at risk for incarceration
 - b. LTSRs are the highest level of residential treatment services offered
 - i. Locked, but residents can leave
 - 5. Please share with any agencies you think may be interested
- iv. **Question:** Any insights relative to federal funding that we should be prepared for?
 - 1. **Answer:** Allegheny County is of the first counties in PA to control our own budget management going forward. This is kind of an “old school” method of taking the budget back. We have untapped dollars from consolidated slots that can be used to serve unmet emergency needs. This is exciting but requires a lot of planning. This may not necessarily mean additional slots but having freed up dollars to support those in need.
 - a. Flexibility in current slots to move around and serve the next person in need as slots become available due to moving out of county, moving into full-time nursing care, death, or other causes
- b. OBH
 - i. Federal changes on the mental health side – make sure to come to DHS State of Human Services

- ii. Day of Self-Discovery Conference
 - 1. A wellness day for people with lived experience of mental illness
 - 2. DHS Director Erin Dalton is this year's keynote speaker
 - 3. June 26 at Rodef Shalom
 - 4. Breakfast and lunch provided
 - 5. Will be able to share flyer and registration information in May

III. **Announcements and Public Comments**

- a. DHS State of Human Services – annual presentation from DHS
 - i. This year – sessions that focus on individual interests/topics
 - ii. More information and registration:
 - <https://engage.alleghenycounty.us/en/projects/sohs25>
 - 1. Sessions that may be most of interest to this group:
 - a. Strengthening Family and Community Supports: Monday, March 17, 10 am
 - b. Innovations in Behavioral Health: Monday, April 7, 10 am
 - iii. Can register for one or all – can submit questions ahead of time or during the session
 - iv. **Question:** Will the sessions be recorded?
 - 1. **Answer:** Yes, and will be posted on the Engage page
- b. For all candidates:
 - i. ACE Innamorato passed your recommendations on to County Council
 - ii. Please look for outreach from County Council offices – most likely email, but may be phone
 - 1. You **must** attend the **committee meeting** in person or virtually
 - 2. You will then be approved in the following full County Council session (attendance not required)
 - 3. **Question:** Do these meetings have confirmed dates?
 - a. **Answer:** Not yet, but Colleen will share them if and when she receives them
 - iii. Hopefully when we meet on May 13, we will meet as approved board members
 - 1. If so, the May meeting will include an overview of the leadership rolls and nominations so positions can be voted on in July

IV. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

V. **Next Public Meeting**

The next public MH/ID Advisory Board meeting will be on **Tuesday, May 13** from 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. on Microsoft Teams.

Colleen Sokira will send out the Teams invite for this meeting the week before. There is also a link posted on the [DHS advisory board webpage](#).