

**COUNTY OF**



**ALLEGHENY**

**SARA INNAMORATO**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**MH/IDD Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
Microsoft Teams  
Tuesday, May 14, 2024**

**Present:** Tony Goreczny, David Forsyth, Debbie Jozwiak, Kimberly Mathos, Kelly McCreary, Rachel Flinner, Joanne Tziouvannis, Maria Silva, Laurie Levine, Stuart Fisk, OBH Deputy Director; Brenda Bulkoski, ODS Deputy Director; Jewel Denne, OBH Assistant Director Bureau of Mental Health Services; Carly Ferrone, OBH Senior Manager of Quality Oversight; Colleen Sokira, OBH Special Projects Manager; Leah Bailey, OBH Special Projects Project Specialist; Patricia Bowser-Elm, ODS OID Program Supervisor; Camellia McGhee, ODS Program Specialist; Alison Koebler, ODS Community Based Program Specialist

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**I. Introductions and Attendance**

Colleen Sokira called the meeting to order. She wanted to hold this meeting to share updates happening in Allegheny County. As of this meeting, both the MH/IDD Advisory Board and the D&A Planning Council were waiting for the county council to approve their members.

**II. Critical Incident Reporting System Changes**

Carly presented on changes taking place with the critical incident reporting system. This system is relevant for incidents where the county is paying for services. Critical incidents can include deaths, assaults, missing persons, etc. Over the last year, the filing and warehousing has been updated at OBH and DHS. A new data entry form was introduced to reduce burden to providers and facilitate information sharing with Community Care. This form will also improve coordination, improve integration of data and record systems, etc. This is going live on July 1<sup>st</sup>. We are no longer requiring a verbal call for IRES deaths. The online data form will be the primary collection form, and we will no longer offer fax or pdf. A call line is being considered as a secondary option to the online data form. The initial training and testing period will be next Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 10am. There will be follow-up training in June. Both trainings will be recorded, and resources will be shared as well. We are open to feedback throughout this process.

**III. IM4Q Updates**

Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) takes pride in the importance of relationships. IM4Q originated in 1997 when the Planning Advisory committee and Pennsylvania's Office of Developmental Programs came together. The purpose of IM4Q is to collect information from people with intellectual disabilities to improve their lives, ensure they are healthy and safe, and offer services that promote choice and control.

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ERIN DALTON, DIRECTOR

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**For more information from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services about efforts to improve the lives of people and family members of people with disabilities, please see:**

[https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Disabilities-Aging/Documents/Everyday%20Lives/Everyday%20Lives%CB%90%20Values%20In%20Action%20\(c\\_241391\).pdf](https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Disabilities-Aging/Documents/Everyday%20Lives/Everyday%20Lives%CB%90%20Values%20In%20Action%20(c_241391).pdf)

IM4Q collects information about people's lives through an interview process. Interviews include questions covering satisfaction, dignity/rights/respect, choice and control, relationships, and inclusion. These are all essential areas needed for a good quality of life. Participants can always decline to answer a question they do not want to answer.

After the interview, the two monitors completing the interview meet to review their answers together and come to an agreement about what they heard from the participant. Monitors must discuss "considerations". These can include explicit responses to a question, unprompted ideas provided at interview that may make a person's life better, or responses that suggest the person may benefit from a change. Considerations can come from anyone (person, family, staff, etc.). Interview staff are trained to identify considerations that are explicit and things that are "under the surface".

Staff are also trained to identify reportable offenses (major concerns) including physical dangers, hazardous/sanitation problems, physical/sexual abuse/neglect, psychological abuse, and human rights violations. Major concerns and considerations are both reported, major concerns need addressed within 24 hours.

Brenda asked who receives an IM4Q survey. IM4Q interviews started with people only living in group homes but has since expanded. People interviewed can include anyone receiving supports coordination services. It is supposed to be random as to who is contacted because IM4Q uses randomization to determine who to contact for an interview.

Patricia Bowser-Elm said all annual Allegheny County IM4Q Reports are housed on the Allegheny County website if you want to look at previous, aggregate survey results and get a better sense of the questions being asked. Dr. Goreczny is retiring in the next couple months so thank you to him for his partnership in building this program from the ground up.

Rachel asked who the client is for IM4Q. The client is the person being interviewed and their family member. Other stakeholders are important as well, but the client is the most important person.

#### **IV. Intellectual/Developmental Disability Updates-Brenda Bulkoski**

Brenda said to keep an eye out for information she'll be getting to the board in preparation for the July meeting. One document she's working to develop will be an impact analysis discussing wait list. She also hopes to provide some more concrete information on how the state can provide some more waiver capacity to the county. The county will be getting back a large amount of control in that area and Brenda hopes to discuss that in the next meeting on whether or not fairness is being adequately determined and specifically how families are integrated into that process.

#### **V. Mental Health Updates-Stuart Fisk**

We are still waiting for official confirmation by the County Executive and Council for all boards/councils.

Jewel wanted to see if anyone had any questions or thoughts about the system. Transforming our system to work better together, be more integrated and effective to serve more people with the stagnant sources we have with the block grant are goals for this board.

## VI. Announcements

No announcements were made.

## VII. Next Public Meetings

The next public MH/IDD Advisory Board meeting will be on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. on Microsoft Teams. These meetings typically fall on the second Tuesday of every other month.

**\*Please note:** *Colleen Sokira said that if members for the MH/IDD Advisory Board have not been approved by the county council, the email invitations to the July public meetings will be sent out like they were for this meeting.*

*If people have been assigned to the MH/IDD Advisory Board before the July public meetings, they will receive additional emails from Colleen Sokira with instructions on how to sign into a system designed for keeping track of board and council meetings at DHS.*

*If anyone has any questions related to the MH/IDD Board before the next meeting in July, they can contact **Colleen Sokira** at: [colleen.sokira@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:colleen.sokira@alleghenycounty.us) or 412-350-4021.*