

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

SARA INNAMORATO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**MH/IDD Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Microsoft Teams
Tuesday, July 9, 2024**

Present: Tony Goreczny, David Forsyth, Darlene Belajac, Kimberly Mathos, Kelly McCreary, Rachel Flinner, Joanne Tziovannis, Chris Michaels, Fran Sheedy Bost, Maria Silva, Buffie Faes, Brenda Bulkoski, ODS Director; Sue Martone, OBH Assistant Director, Operations; Colleen Sokira, OBH Special Projects Manager; Leah Bailey, OBH Special Projects Project Specialist

I. Introductions and Attendance

Colleen Sokira called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM. She wanted to hold this meeting to share updates happening in Allegheny County. As of this meeting, the MH/IDD Advisory Board was waiting for the county council to approve their members.

II. Intellectual/Developmental Disability Updates-Brenda Bulkoski

Brenda wanted to get folks acclimated and familiar on some priority areas and projects coming out of those priority areas.

Access is both a DHS and ODS priority. We are working on an intake portal (went live July 1) to bypass calling us to begin the intake process. We're hoping it's fairly intuitive and it does save information that a family member, individual, etc. has completed. Even prior to July 1, we had received 2 intakes via this portal so hopefully once people are aware of this portal it will be a good resource.

The START pilot is a 3-tiered evidence-based model. The tiers include crisis intervention and connections to behavioral health, emergency services, and individual practitioners, and educating providers and family members. During a crisis, it's important for family members to know they can call this crisis number and get a response. There are some limitations for this program as you do need to qualify for it. We had some problems putting together a team that gelled well. We'd really like feedback on this work from both a family member and provider perspective.

Legal Connections, Support and Interventions (LeCSI) is a team through ODS that serves people registered with us who are active in the courts system. We've found that a lot of our people are active in criminal court. We are having individuals now who are involved in gang activity, weapons, etc. which can be a heavy load on the system. We've been trying to educate the courts system about our services to try to alleviate this burden with some initial good results, but we've also seen the need to be careful around individuals who do not want to really change their behavior. I'd like this group to come and present to you all.

ERIN DALTON, DIRECTOR

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Supporting Families is another DHS priority. Funding has been used for assistive technology, recreational activities, etc. We want to continue this programming, even with our own funding moving forward.

The state received over 150 distinct pieces of feedback on performance-based contracting. I'd like to hear more about what areas you value. Each county is expected to be evaluated for readiness in terms of budget. Budget is being determined in terms of number of waiver slots, not a monetary amount. Housing needs for people with autism in particular can be very different than others. They do not necessarily need to be in a more restrictive housing setting like a group home. There are challenges, including housing.

Fran said she really looks forward to hearing more about these program offerings. It used to be very difficult to advocate for these individuals and those in forensics used to go directly to Torrance or somewhere similar, so she really applauds Brenda's team. Thank you for doing this work.

III. Mental Health Updates-Sue Martone

No announcements were made.

IV. Announcements

Colleen provided an update from OEE (Office of Equity and Engagement) about the board membership that you all have applied for. We expect the County Executive to send applications to county council in August. The expectation is that this will be the same step for other mandated boards. Once applications have been decided, letters and emails will be going out to OEE. Once these determinations have been made, she will be setting up a meeting to introduce members to bylaws, Govenda, and select their leadership, etc. Hopefully, this meeting will be made by late August, early Fall.

Dave asked if any more information is needed from the people who have applied. No, not at this time.

If board members are selected before our next scheduled meeting, we might choose to split that joint meeting, otherwise it will be a joint meeting.

V. Next Public Meetings

The next public MH/IDD Advisory Board meeting is scheduled as a joint meeting with the D&A Planning Council on Wednesday, September 11, 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 September 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 September 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 meetings at DHS.

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