

Minutes

Behavioral Health Council

Date February 20, 2024

---

Time 1:00 PM – 2:45 PM

---

Meeting called to order by Akbar Hossain, Secretary of Policy and Planning

---

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. Secretary of the Department of Aging, Jason Kavulich
6. Spec. Asst. to Sect., Dir. of Long-Term Care Council Kevin Hancock on behalf of Secretary of the Department of Aging, Jason Kavulich
7. Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Dr. Latika Davis-Jones
8. Secretary of the Department of Education, Dr. Khalid Mumin
9. 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
10. Policy and Legislative Affairs Office Director, Major Patrick Beaver on behalf of Commissioner of Pennsylvania State Police, Colonel Christopher Paris
11. Regional Licensed Psychologist Manager, Corrections, Dr. Elicia Stein on behalf of Secretary of the Department of Corrections, Dr. Laurel Harry
12. Secretary of the Department of State, Al Schmidt
13. 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
14. Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Michael Pennington
15. 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
16. Digital Services Director at the Governor's Office, Toni McIntyre, on behalf of Director of Digital Strategy at the Governor's Office, Annie Newman
17. Pennsylvania Attorney General's Safe2Say Program Director, Brittney Kline
18. Pennsylvania Attorney General's Law Enforcement Treatment Initiative (LETI), Dr. Janene Holter
19. Deputy Secretary, Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Jennifer Smith
20. Deputy Secretary, Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs Kelly Primus

Representatives with lived or living experiences and family members:

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

County Representatives:

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

28. Laurie Greco, Area Agency on Aging from Northampton County
29. Dr. Shannah Gillam, Area Agency on Aging from Allegheny County

Clinical Representatives:

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

32. Representative Mike Schlossberg (D)
33. Representative Jim Struzzi (R)
34. Senator Maria Collett (D)
35. Senator Michele Brooks (R)

REPORTS

Dr. Finello and Secretary Hossain took roll call. Secretary Hossain gave some opening remarks and introduced the topic for the meeting, which was the funding streams for behavioral health. 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) and Kelly Primus, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs. To provide a county perspective on funding, the two speakers were: Dr. Tamra Williams from Montgomery County Human Services and Robert Hamilton, MPPM from Westmoreland County Human Services.

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 March. The next meeting of the Council is March 19, 2024, and it will be in person.

NEXT MEETING

March 19, 2024, 1 PM, Governor's Reception Room