

**THE MARYLAND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL
Minutes**

January 21, 2020

Maryland Behavioral Health Advisory Council Members Present:

Barbara Allen, Robert Anderson, T-Kea Blackman, Lori Brewster **(by phone)**, Mary Bunch, Shayna Dee, Kathryn Dilley **(by phone)**, Lillian Donnard, Catherine Drake **(by phone)**, Kate Farinholt, Ann Geddes, Kelsey Goering for Jonathan Martin, Lauren Grimes, Shannon Hall, Carlos Hardy, Dayna Harris, Joyce N. Harrison, Sylvia Lawson, The Hon. George Lipman, Caterina Pangilinan, Luciene Parsley, Mary Pizzo, Keith Richardson **(by phone)**, Kirsten Robb-McGrath, Jose Rosado, David Rose for Keisha Peterson **(by phone)**, Jacob Salem, Sabrina Sepulveda, Erin Shaffer for Randy Nero, Pamela Sidle for Rosanne Hanratty **(by phone)**, Stephanie Slowly for Aliya Jones, Jeffrey Sternlicht, Deneice Valentine, Ambrosia Watts **(by phone)**, Kimberlee Watts, Tracey Webb **(by phone)**, Kim Wireman, Kathleen Wordworth for Makeitha Abdulbarr

Maryland Behavioral Health Advisory Council Members Absent:

Dori S. Bishop, Karyn M. Black, Kenneth Collins, The Hon. Addie Eckardt, James Hedrick, Sharon M. Lipford, Dan Martin, The Hon. Dana Moylan Wright, Dana Sauro, Jonathan Shepherd, Mary C. Vaughan, Anita Wells

Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) Staff Present:

Cynthia Petion, Steve Whitefield, Sarah Reiman, Tsegereda Assebe, Greta Carter, Aparna Nagaraju, Natalee Solomon **(by phone)**, Kaylin McJilton **(by phone)**

Guests:

Patrice Sowah, Black Mental Health Alliance, Inc.

Amanda Fox, On Our Own of MD

Joe Adams, MD-DC Society of Addiction Medicine

Catherine Gray, Anne Arundel County CSA

Julia Jerscheid, Mid-Shore Peer Support Specialist/Consumer Advocate

Brooks Robinson, Mid-Shore Consumer Advocate

Diana Seybolt, University of Maryland, Systems Evaluation Center

Amanda Jones, University of Maryland, Evidence Based Practice Center

Kelly Moshogianis, Anne Arundel County CSA

Debby Glunt, Walden Pyramid

Roy Jordan, Gaudenzia

Marianne Gibson, Opioid Operational Command Center, **(by phone)**

Joy Ashcraft, Maryland Army National Guard

Elouise Maybe, Maryland Department of Aging

Vicki Scofield

Janet Beebe

Jackie Pettis, Optum

Brendel Mitchell, Maryland Coalition of Families (Central Office)

Elaine Crain, Maryland Academy of Advanced Practice Clinicians (MAAPC)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Barbara Allen opened the meeting by welcoming her new co-chair Lauren Grimes, members of BHAC and guests. New attendees introduced themselves. Barbara noted that a minor correction needs to be made to the last paragraph of the November minutes, which will not change the content of the paragraph. She will provide the correct language to Sarah Reiman. As there were no other changes, a motion to approve the November minutes was made and seconded. Council members approved the minutes, which will be posted on the Behavioral Health Administration's website at: <https://bha.health.maryland.gov/PagesMaryland-Behavioral-Health-Advisory-Council.aspx>

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

- The Maryland 2020 Tuerk Conference on Mental Health and Addiction Treatment will be held on April 23, 2020. Barbara Allen encouraged Council members to put it on their calendar.
- Sarah Reiman announced that the FY 2022 Community Bond kickoff meeting will take place at the Maryland Department of Transportation on January 30th, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. The purpose of the Community Bond is to provide capital grants for programs that provide housing for individuals with substance use disorders, mental illness or developmental disabilities. Agencies/Providers of services to these individuals can apply for grants for the acquisition, construction, renovation or equipping of affordable housing. The Community Bond workshop provides information on the eligibility criteria and application process. An information flyer was made available to Council members.
- Ann Geddes informed the Council that the Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition will hold a rally at the Annapolis Fire Rescue Memorial Site on February 27th, starting at 12:00 p.m. The purpose of the rally is to tell state legislators not to cut the behavioral health budget. Various organizations such as NAMI, On Our Own Maryland and others will also have advocacy meetings on the morning of February 27th.
- Barbara Allen noted that there are several efforts and events going on in Maryland in relation to behavioral health issues and asked Council members to send any information or flyers they may have to Sarah Reiman for distribution.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Stephanie Slowly, Chief of Staff, Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) addressed the Council on behalf of Dr. Aliya Jones, the new Deputy Secretary/Executive Director of BHA. Dr. Jones could not be at the meeting due to other administrative issues that she had to attend to at the Maryland Department of Health (MDH).

Administrative Services Organization (ASO) Transition

BHA transitioned to a new ASO, Optum Maryland on January 1st, 2020. The transition has not been as smooth as expected. Dr. Jones wants to assure behavioral health partners and providers that BHA is working closely with Medicaid, Optum and other MDH personnel to solve quickly the issues that have arisen. In this regard, Dr. Jones would like to hear from providers and behavioral health partners about their experiences and concerns.

Cynthia Petion, Acting Director/Deputy Director of Systems Management added that BHA is working with the ASO and providers to ensure that services are being provided and payments are being made. BHA is also making outreach to providers to ensure that they are registered with Optum. Cynthia reiterated Dr. Jones' call to providers to share any concerns or issues with her.

Other Updates

Cynthia informed the meeting that beginning February 14th, BHA will start the annual review process of the core service agencies (CSA), local addiction authorities (LAA) and local behavioral health authorities (LBHA) FY 2021 plans. The review of the local plans will end in the 3rd week of April.

Following the plan review completion, BHA will hold its regional stakeholder meetings. The discussions and recommendations from these meetings will inform BHA's FY 2021 planning process and the Federal Block Grant applications.

PRESENTATION

Nurse Practitioners: Modernizing Maryland's Psychiatric Care in 2020

Presenters: Sabrina Sepulveda and Elaine Crain

The presentation discussed how the shortage of psychologists and psychiatrists are affecting patients' access to psychiatric care and increasing the cost of care. The presenters suggested that improvement in access to care and a significant reduction in cost can be achieved if nurse practitioners (NPs) are added to the list of providers who are eligible to conduct capability/capacity evaluations, and evaluations for a certificate of competency: guardianship of a disabled person. It will also reduce psychiatric patients stay in hospitals' emergency departments (ED) by 5 hours. The current average length of stay in ED for psychiatric issues is 8-11 hours. The decrease in length of stay in ED could save up to \$14 million/year. In addition, it will increase patients' access to mental health care by 70%. The purpose of the presentation is to inform the BHAC about draft bill HB 691 / SB 576: Health Occupations – Nurse Practitioners – Certifications of Competency and Incapacity, which will be taken up by Maryland's legislative session 2020.

Council members raised some questions and concerns including:

- Whether there is opposition to the bill; and
- NPs not having the right training to make psychiatric determinations for involuntary admissions with psychiatric symptoms caused by other medical conditions.

Ms. Crain answered that there is no opposition to the bill at this time. Concerning NPs evaluating and making psychiatric determinations, she explained that NPs are already making initial assessments and ordering tests in outpatient clinic and hospital settings including in ED to determine whether psychiatric symptoms are medical or not. The current practice is to have two licensed physicians, and not psychiatrists, sign-off on NPs' medical determinations. The bill, if passed, will allow NPs who have the capacity and are already performing medical evaluations and ordering tests, to make medical determinations and become one of the signees. Psychiatric NPs also can do medical examination, order tests, and make medical determinations, with an added value of making psychiatric diagnosis. Ms. Sepulveda added that a licensed physician will always review and co-sign the NPs' evaluations. The importance of having a set standard to ensure that NPs have at least a minimum of 5 year experience or psychiatric training was also discussed. Co-chair Barbara Allen thanked the presenters for their presentation. Barbara said that the Council will be interested to hear back from them on the lessons learned from the legislative process, once the legislative session is over, whether the bill passes or not. Co-chair Lauren Grimes asked whether there is a plan to track data if the bill passes to see if there is an increase in the number of involuntary commitments. Medicare and Medicaid have the data and information can be tracked more easily. Tracking data for patients with private insurances is much harder as the data may or may not be available.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

One of the points of the Work Plan developed at the July BHAC's Retreat was to come up with 5 specific priorities to pursue in the course of the year. Each of the BHAC sub-committees was asked to submit 3 areas of focus for 2020 in line with the developed Work Plan. Four out of the five sub-committees have submitted their priorities. The idea is to discuss the submitted priorities and put them to vote at the March BHAC meeting to identify some key areas which this Council should focus and build its agenda on for the next year. The Council will collaborate with other groups that may be working on the same priorities to coordinate efforts. From the ensuing discussions, issues surrounding the continuum of care, housing and residential services emerged as some of the main and complex priorities that the Council needs to focus on. In this regard, Judge Lipman added that Council members should look at the final report of the Baltimore Public Behavioral Health System Gap Analysis done as part of the Baltimore City Consent Decree, which is available online. Other priorities presented by the Council's sub-committee chairs include:

- Reviewing the results/progress of the implementation of the BHAC's Steering Committee's recommendations for 24/7 Walk In Crisis and Mobile Crisis Team Services;
- Continuing to monitor/push for compliance with statutory requirements on the competency and 8-507 areas;
- Supporting the development of Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) for children and youth across the state; and
- Reviewing local plans and making recommendations to BHA on the progress local behavioral health authorities are making in implementing the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards, and cultural and linguistic competency goals set forth by BHA and the Cultural and Linguistic Competency Committee.

Barbara and Lauren invited Council members to send their comments/feedback on the priorities to Sarah Reiman before the March meeting of the Council. As mentioned before, the goal is to solidify some of these priorities at the March meeting and move forward on them.

Committees

All committees, except the Planning Committee, are meeting today. Please check the 2nd page of today's agenda for location of the breakout rooms.

The next meeting of the Council is on May 19, 2020. Meeting adjourned.