

**Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction Advisory Council**  
**Mental Health Advisory Committee**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Joint Commissions meeting**  
**401 Hungerford Drive Rockville MD. 20850 1<sup>st</sup> floor**  
**(In Person / Hybrid) Meeting)**  
**Minutes**  
**April 10, 2025, 6pm- 9pm**

**AODAAC Voting Members:** Elyse Grossman (Chair) Margaret Mattson (Co-Vice Chair), Laura Mitchell, Michelle Scarlett, Malliga Iyer, Nick Borowski, John Sidhom, Irene Gumucio & Jack Maravilla.

**AODAAC Ex- Officio Members:** Monica Martin (Chief of Behavioral Health & Crisis Services) & Sara Rose (LBHA Director)

**MHAC Voting Members:** Libby Nealis (MHAC Chair), Lucy Absi-Lopez, Michelle Grigsby-Hackett, Nicholas Foley Daozhong Jin, Renee Johnson, Stephanie Joseph, Joi Nolen, Crystal Reeves, and Celia Serkin.

**MHAC Ex Officio Members:** Monica Martin (Chief of Behavioral Health & Crisis Services) Sara Rose (LBHA Director)

**Public:** Patty Winters, Jennifer Hodge, Carmela George, Meghan Westwood, Lauren Riley, Katherine Watkins, Cesar Lopez, Nicole Hernandez Rodriguez

**Meet & Greet / Dinner:** 6:00pm -6:30pm:

**Called to Order:** 6:50pm Elyse Grossman, AODAAC Chair & Libby Nealis, MHAC Chair opened meeting and welcomed all commissioners. Members and members of the public introduced themselves.

**1<sup>st</sup> Presenter:** *Katherine Watkins ND MSHS, Senior Scientist, RAND, spoke on the CLARO (Collaboration Leading to Addiction Treatment and Recovery from other stresses) in New Mexico. The PPT will be emailed to both commissions.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Presenter:** *Meghan Westwood, LCSW-C, Chief of Programs, Maryland Treatment spoke on co-occurring disorders, what's seen locally, what's working and what's not working; to include gaps that need to be addressed. **Some highlights:***

- Avery Road 20-30% of the population is uninsured, undocumented, and Spanish- speaking, increasing concerns about access to care. Insurance companies act as gatekeepers, requiring reason for treatment payment and time for treatment
- Montgomery County is committed to being robust in care

- Peer Support and Parent Engagement, focus on peer support and training, SBIRT training and suicide prevention on youth engagement, parent education and support groups to help parents know what to look for.
- Parent Support Package: Suggestion for a parent packet with addiction information. To include resources and information about addiction. The definition of addiction, Information on how to help their child, provide a list of available resources (e.g., AA meetings, Tree of Hope). For immediate support for parents.
- Early Childhood Programs. Concern about continued funding for mental health consults Possibility to implement programs for toddlers and foster care parents. To begin prevention efforts as early.
- More scholarships for sober living potentially extend to per 12-month calendar year. Implement a screening process with goals and requirements.
- Address the need for foster children in substance abuse prevention. Explore potential partnerships with Department of Social Services. Investigate current resources and identify gaps in support for this population.

*The PPT presentation will be emailed to both commissions.*

**2026 Legislation Priorities Discussion:** How can both commissions work collaboratively together to further each priority. Discussion highlights:

**Legislative Priorities:**

- Work together to further each priority through advocacy.
- Will meet in the Fall 2025 for brainstorming.
- Efforts for advocacy by reaching out to county council members and the Intergovernmental Relations Office.
- Concerns raised about the limitations on advocating and sharing expertise
- Discussion on how to collaborate on recommendations and support important issues, such as funding for specific areas like primary care.
- Concern expressed about the limitations on advocating and sharing expertise.
- Verbalized the need to mobilize in any capacity and find unique ways to get voices heard, citing the success of the language through collaborative efforts. “Taking Back Power and Mobilizing”.

- Letters can be written to the council.
- In years past, the Mental Health Advisory Committee combined concerns from various boards and commissions into a letter presented to the Health and Human Services Committee and County Council.
- Recovery Academic Program (RAP) at Shepard Pratt funding cuts. It was suggested revisiting the approach used when the medical officer's position was cut to address and find ways to support students affected by the program's closure. ***Volunteer sheet passed around and these members signed up for a brainstorm session: Renee Johnson, Celia Serkin, Joi Nelson Lucy Absi-Lopez, Michelle Scarlett & Patty Winters.***

**Legislative Session highlights:** Celia Serkin MHAC member and AODAAC Liaison

- Commended Michelle Grisby Hackett for her advocacy, especially for crisis funding.
- School-based mental health services received \ \$100 million per year
- \$20 million in FY25 and \$24 million in FY26 to fund Maryland 988
- Maintains funding for behavioral health crisis services, including youth-specific services.
- Continued development of certified community behavioral health clinics.
- Addresses unmet infant and early childhood mental health needs.
- Prevention of balanced billing for commercially insured individuals.
- \$8.5 million in foster care funding to prevent youth hospital overstay
- Behavioral health workforce wins by entering Maryland into the interstate

**Co-Occurring Disorders:** It was suggested to have a separate discussion with MHAC & AODAAC in efforts to work collaboratively. More to come.

### **Spring Forum 2025:**

- The Spring Forum Committee was thanked for their work.
- The forum will be in person on a Saturday, May 17, 2025 which will include a resource fair.

***Theme "Effective Communications strategies for substance use and mental health."***

- Laura highlighted that the forum aims to provide help for those who feel alone in their struggles.
- Every workshop will be in English and Spanish.
- The Spring Forum will take the place of the May meeting for both AODAC and MIHAC  
***Members are expected to attend***

### **Announcements and Events:**

- Montgomery County Federation of Families is hiring a part-time Spanish-speaking parent who has raised a youth with a behavioral health need. Please contact Cecilia Serkin [CSerkin@mcfof.org](mailto:CSerkin@mcfof.org) for more information
- May 1, 2025, Thriving Minds resource fair.
- **May is Mental Health Awareness Month. The Memorial Plaza will be lit up in green from May 12 - May 18.**
- Every Mind is offering Youth Mental Health First Aid classes.
- About seven slots left for a class on April 25, 2025. Laura is also gathering interest for a second class to find out what days' work for people.
- The class is \$30, includes two hours of pre-work, and a six-hour all-day training typically on a Saturday.
- The class teaches how to recognize and approach youth struggling with mental health or substance use and how to access help.

**Closing Remarks:** Elyse and Libby thanked everyone for attending tonight's Joint Meeting. Presentations were excellent! Hope for more collaboration between AODAAC & MHAC.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:54pm.

**Minutes Recorded by Pamela s. Abramson**

**AODAAC Staff Liaison.**







