

Mental Health Advisory Committee

Minutes – March 7, 2023

| Members Present | Members Absent | Ex-Officio and Staff Present | Ex-Officio and Staff Absent | Guests |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Bill Ellis | Garrett Mannchen | Regina Morales | Michael Chindbloom | Donna Cawley |
| Jennifer Grinnell | Michelle Grigsby-Hackett | Meredith Peace | Michael Mayer | Jason Hubell |
| Kelly Gruitt | | Rolando Santiago | | Tijuana James |
| Stephanie Joseph | | | | Joshua Lemere |
| Susan Kerin | | | | Marissa Leslie |
| Tami Mark | | | | LaTonia Rich |
| Libby Nealis | | | | Sami Sapkota |
| Alan Orenstein | | | | Robin Yasinow |
| Celia Serkin | | | | |
| Susan Smith | | | | |

- I. **Welcome** – The meeting came to order at 7:01 p.m. Susan Kerin chaired the meeting. There was a quorum of committee members.

II. Workforce Development Committee –

- A.** LaTonia Rich Executive Director of the Tree of Hope Association and Director of STEER gave an overview of the peer certification program in Montgomery County as well as some of the employment and service barriers. There are currently 19 peers. Pay equity and sustainability are key issues.
- B.** Celia Serkin who is the Executive Director of Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health gave an overview of the history of family peers and how her organization has used their peer services and trainings to support Montgomery County families.

III. Old Business

- a. February minutes** – The minutes for February 2023 were approved.

IV. New Business

- a. Commission on Health Update-** Donna Cawley shared her Commissions priorities which include access to care; environmental health and education; and public health administration. She noted that the latter committee is requesting that the county hire a data analyst related to health data. Susan shared that MHAC also noted the importance of data in their LBHA report.
- b. AODAAC update** – Laura Mitchell was unable to attend this meeting, but several MHAC members attended the recent Fentanyl workshop and noted that there was a large attendance.
- c. Update from BHCS** – Dr. Santiago has been doing a lot of media and outreach events related to Fentanyl. He noted that he has done a number of these for the Latino community.
- d. Update on Applications for New Members** – Two new members were approved by the County Council and are just pending official appointment by the County Executive. They will probably join MHAC officially at the April meeting.
- e. Spring Forum** –The Spring Forum will be on Thursday, May 18, 2023. Last year, the subcommittee came up with the theme for this year which is “Disparities and Barriers to treatment for Substance use and mental health – Strategies to locate treatment.” Donna noted that she has relationships with community leaders in underserved communities and can share those contacts (.e.g., Black Physicians Network, the Black Ministers Alliance and the Black Prison Network) for outreach to potential participants
- f. Upcoming meetings** – Susan will send out an email to see what MHAC members want as a topic in April and if they want to move the date to April 11th due to Spring Break/Passover. There will be no May meeting as MHAC members are encouraged to attend the Spring Forum that month. In June, Dr. Kisha Davis, the county’s new Health Commissioner will present to the MHAC.

- g. In-person meeting** – Susan will also send out an email to see MHAC members’ preferences regarding an in-person meeting in July. If in person, the meeting could also incorporate a site visit of a service provider.
- V. Subcommittees** – Members reported back on the following subcommittees.
- a. Medicaid** – Libby Nealis shared that MHAC submitted testimony that would expand Medicaid coverage to some school-based mental health providers. She noted that the subcommittee has had conversations with community-based providers who were concerned that an unintended consequence of the legislation is that they would lose staff who would become better compensated through the school system.
- b. Prevention** – Stephanie Joseph shared information from a pre-COVID health survey that showed that mental health issues is a major priority of many residents and that minorities are disproportionately impacted with unmet behavioral health needs. As a result of reviewing the survey, the subcommittee agreed that they would like MHAC to be engaged in outreach for the Spring Forum with a particular focus on connecting with marginalized communities.
- c. MRSS** - Celia has been working on getting Elizabeth Manley to give a presentation on MRSS. In December 2022, Elizabeth Manley, who had been with the Institute of Innovation and Implementation (Institute), University of Maryland Baltimore, moved to the Innovations Institute at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. New policies at the University of Maryland have made it challenging for many working with the Institute to continue the innovative, impactful work of their national centers at University of Maryland Baltimore. To continue their important national work, 41 Institute faculty and staff, including Elizabeth Manley, have relocated from the University of Maryland to the University of Connecticut (UConn) School of Social Work (SSW) under the new name Innovations Institute. The delay in organizing the MRSS Subcommittee presentation was due to the negotiations that have been taking place between the two universities.
- VI. Announcements from Commissioners and/or the Public**
- a.** Diane Lininger and several MHAC members thanked Susan Smith who is retiring both from her position as the Disability Services and Resource Services Program Coordinator with the Housing Opportunities Commission as well as with MHAC. She has served with MHAC for over a decade.
- VII. Meeting Adjourned** – The meeting ended at 8:57 pm.