

	<h1 style="text-align: center;">Mental Health Advisory Committee</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Minutes – September 6, 2022</h2>
--	--

Members Present	Members Absent	Ex-Officio and Staff Present	Ex-Officio and Staff Absent	Guests
Michelle Grigsby-Hackett	Jamie Gu	Michael Chindbloom	Michael Maher	Viviana Azar
Jennifer Grinnell	Garrett Mannchen	Rolando Santiago	Regina Morales	Dorne Hill
Stephanie Joseph		Meredith Peace		Sgt. Chad Matthews
Susan Kerin		Kyle Potter		Laura Mitchell
Helga Luest				Alan Orenstein
Tami Mark				Ofc. Laurie Reyes
Libby Nealis				Samikshya Sapkota
Kyle Potter				
Celia Serkin				
Susan Smith				

- I. **Welcome** - The meeting came to order at 7:04 p.m. Helga Luest chaired the meeting. There was a quorum of committee members. Helga noted that moving forward, meetings will be on the first Tuesday of every month.

II. Discussion on MHAC FY-24 Budget priorities – MHAC members discussed and finalized priorities.

- a. Expansion of Montgomery County Child and Adolescent Mental Health Clinic** – Viviana Azar noted that the Clinic, which serves as a safety net for uninsured children and adolescents, has seen a 15% increase in referrals and the severity of presentation has been more serious (i.e., the need for longer stays). This has meant that the wait list has gotten longer.

Request: Have the MHAC make a budget request to add four counselors to the Child and Adolescent Clinic as well as 2 counselors for the Adult Clinic and 2 peers for the Adult Clinic. At least counselor in each of the clinics and one peer should be bilingual. The counselors would be used to help run group psychotherapy sessions. Viviana and Dorne Hill would provide MHAC with the financial cost for this request. ***MHAC approved the request by unanimous consent.***

- b. Expansion of Medicaid dollars for MCPS and Behavioral Health** – Libby Nealis noted that mental health services in the school are only covered for students with an IEP. While this is a State Medicaid issue and may require legislation, she recommended that MHAC do research and advocacy to see if there are opportunities to better leverage these funds. She noted that there is some intersection with the Kirwan Commission considerations. Diane Lininger noted that there is a subcommittee call already set up for September 13th. If any MHAC member is interested in being on the call, they should contact Diane. During the discussion, Laura Mitchell expressed concern that the budget for mental health services at MCPS may have been cut. She asked MHAC to consider contacting MCPS to get a better sense of the funding for these services.

Request: To research and advocate for strategies to leverage Medicaid dollars for MCPS behavioral health. ***MHAC approved the request by unanimous consent.***

Request: Send a letter to MCPS Superintendent Dr. McKnight to assess funding related to mental health services and activities. ***MHAC approved the request by unanimous consent.***

- c. Promote and support utilizing Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)** – Sgt. Chad Matthews and Officer Laurie Reyes shared information about law enforcement's CIT unit. There are only three officers on the CIT unit and one officer to address issues for individuals with Alzheimer's disease. The long-term goal is to expand the current CIT unit into a full behavioral health division

Request: Support the addition of two additional officers in the CIT unit and one additional officer to address issues for individuals with Alzheimer's disease. This would not be new hires but reassignments. ***MHAC approved the request by unanimous consent.***

- Request: **For BHCS to form a workgroup of diverse stakeholders to examine how to design and implement the MRSS model in the County.**

MHAC approved the request by unanimous consent.

- d. **Strategies to Expand the Mental Health Workforce** – Susan Kerin and Meredith Peace proposed that MHAC research strategies to recruit and retain the workforce, as well as work to make sure that the workforce is more culturally-appropriate/representative. Some approaches might include conversations with pipeline providers (e.g., schools); exploring incentives; addressing burden and burnout; and better leveraging peer professionals.

Request: Expand the availability of the mental health workforce to meet the demand of Montgomery County residents; ensure culturally-appropriate services; and reduce wait times. The MHAC will work to identify strategies that will improve our county's recruitment, training needs, and retention of a strong mental health workforce. ***MHAC approved the request by unanimous consent.***

III. Old Business

- a. Minutes from July were reviewed. Celia had one edit. Jennifer Grinell motioned to approve the revised minutes and it was adopted by unanimous consent.

IV. New Business

- a. **Switching Meeting to the first Tuesday of the month** – Diane reminded MHAC members that MHAC now meets on the first Tuesday of the month.
- b. **AODAAC update** – Laura and Celia gave feedback on the Montgomery Goes Purple event. Even though the event had to be rescheduled on short notice, there was a good attendance and the event was emotionally every moving. Laura recommended that MHAC members consider attending other events this month which are listed on the Montgomerygoespurple.org website. Laura noted that AODAAC will be looking at legislations to make decisions on what to advocate for. Helga encouraged her to contact MHAC if there are any mutual priorities to work on together.
- c. **Elections of Executive Board** – Diane requested that MHAC members forward nominations for the Executive Board to her. She noted that is it okay to nominate yourself.
- d. **Subcommittee Meetings** – Diane will set up subcommittee meetings for the priorities approved at this meeting.

V. Springfield Hospital Report – There was not a discussion during this meeting.

VI. Comments or questions from the Public or Commissioners –

- a. 988 Promotion** – It was noted that thousands of bookmarks (in English and Spanish) have been printed for distribution to students. Jennifer noted that the suicide hotline used to be placed on the back of student id cards. Laura is exploring whether the 988 promotion can be on the wallpaper for student chrome books. Dr. Santiago noted that there was a 100% increase in texts to 988 in July and a 140% increase in August from August of the previous year.
- b. MCPS Update** – Kyle Potter shared that there were nearly 2,200 suicides for this year. MCPS has filled all their social work vacancies but still has at least 20 vacancies for school psychologists.
- c. Refinement of Priority Statements** – Celia requested an opportunity to refine the language for the priority requests. Diane asked to have the final versions by Friday.
- d. Resources** – During the discussions, the following resources were suggested: [Strengthening Families](#); [Austin's integrated 911 system](#); and [Oklahoma's use of iPads](#) for law enforcement to connect with mental health services.
- e. Speakers for the Next Meeting** – Diane asked MHAC members to forward any suggestions for speakers at the October 4th meeting.

VII. Meeting Adjourned – The meeting ended at 9 pm.