



**The Alcohol and other Addiction Advisory Council (AODAAC)  
The Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC)**

**October 9, 2025**

**Joint Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Location:** MS Teams [AODAAC & MHAC JOINT MEETING: OCTOBER 9, 2025 | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

**Voting Members Present:** Laura Mitchell (Chair), Margaret Mattson, Ed Bunny Rich, Michelle Scarlett & Jayne Orthwein

**Voting Members Absent:** Elyse Grossman, Malliga Iyer & Irene Gumucio

**Proof of Quorum:** No quorum present

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Sara Rose (LBHA Director), Monica Martin (Chief, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Celia Serkin, Man Cho, Socrates Yiallourous (for Roddy Aguirre) & Douglas Nelson

**MHAC Members Present:** Libby Nealis (Chair), Crystal Reeves, Michelle Grigsby, Celia Serkin, Lucy Absi-Lopez, Meredith Peace, Rennee Johnson, Alan Ornstein, Melissa Goemann & Joi Nolan

**Public Guests:** Patty Winters

**Call To Order: AODAAC pre-Board meeting portion**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm by the Chair

**Welcome and Introductions**

Members welcomed and introduced.

**Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

No quorum present.

**Review and Approve Meeting Agenda**

September 11, 2025, and June 13, 2025, minutes were not approved as there was no quorum present.

## **Meeting Minutes Agenda Items:**

### **Member Recruitment:**

Laura reported that membership is low, and quorum can't be met at this time. Laura asked members to be active and assist in recruiting. Additionally invite them to meetings. Laura suggests active recruitment by sending flyers to organizations like Departments of Public Health or pharmacy, including a write-up about AODAAC and the opportunity it represents.

**Recruitment Suggestions:** Send information to Sarah Rose to distribute to the Provider Council members. Montgomery County Media could be a place to post information about the board and recruitment. Create a flyer to go out with the press release, which could be picked up by the county executive and perhaps placed in his newsletter, then to regional council newsletters.

**Next Order of Business- Co-Vice-chair position.** In consultation with the county regarding the Bylaws vs. The Code. The code supersedes the bylaws. The law states that the council *elects* the chair. Co-chairs are *selected* by the council as appropriate.

Jane Orthwein (General Public voting member) is willing to serve as co-vice chair. Jane has experience with organizational and structural processes. Jane's Background: Jane has a background in systems engineering and social systems engineering. She wants to help improve communication within the board. She wants to bring a system together where everyone can communicate and understand goals, objectives, and priorities. *Appointment was made.*

**Membership Requirements:** Members are encouraged to attend all scheduled meetings to support the work of the council. If a member misses more than three (3) meetings without prior notice or for a valid reason could lead to removal from the council.

**Priorities and Survey Feedback:** An initial survey was conducted, and feedback was received. A list of things was generated from the survey responses. A second survey was sent out to rank priorities, but participation was low (four responses received).  
(from survey/ranking survey):

### **Prevention, Treatment & Recovery, and Outreach & Education**

- Expanding overdose prevention, awareness of and access. School time, out of school time activities.
- Mentors
- Medical and behavioral health care
- Housing, food security
- Research and report on and monitor emerging trends
- Legislative actions Reducing substance use disorder throughout the county
- Remove the stigmatizing language in policy documents, websites and communications
- Promoting early screening for substance use and mental health in pre-adolescents and teens with pediatricians and primary care physicians.

- Primary care is being brought into early screening and referring for behavioral health issues and treatment.
- Encouraging physicians to promote or prescribe naloxone in tandem with every opioid prescription to minimize prescribing opioids to anyone under 18.
- Narcan is the overdose reversal drug that you spray in the nose. Naloxone is the generic name for Narcan.
- Early Screening for Substance Use and Mental Health. Some healthcare providers don't start screening until they are 12 or 13 years old. The American Pediatrics Association recommend starting at age 9 for mental health.

**Priorities letter is due on the 15th.**

**Closing Remarks:** (6:56pm) a short break will be taken, and the meeting will be moved to the full AODAAC & MHAC joint meeting at 7:00 PM.

### **AODAAC & MHAC Full Joint Meeting**

Meeting was called to order at 7:03pm

- Laura reported: MCPS is having a Mental Health and Wellness Fair on November 8th at Gaithersburg High School. Opportunity to raise awareness about AODAAC goal and mission. Laura is looking for members to work at the AODAAC and MHAC table.
- Celia: The Montgomery County Federation of Families will have a table and can hand out materials, such as the AODAAC recruitment letter. Spaces are limited. Laura is on the resource fair subcommittee and can share information.

## **Presentations:**

- **Simulation Exercise** • Laura provided an overview of the simulation exercise she attended and wants to do a simulation exercise in Montgomery County for people involved in meetings, judges, probation officers, and people returning from jail. The simulation can be in-person, an online game, or a card game. The video shared shows a simulation program developed by the Tennessee Office of Reentry to show people what it's like for someone leaving incarceration. Participants interact with service providers, and face barriers such as not having money, a Social Security card, or a birth certificate.
  
- **RAP:** Douglas Nelson is the administrator for the *Recovery and Academic Program* within MCPS. The program is "one of the best kept secrets in MCPS in the county". Douglas gave a brief PPT presentation program. They work with other groups to support the program, including Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) Mental Health and Tree of Hope. The RAP program shifted to the Department of Psychological Services last year. The program is now under the Division of Student Support and Special Services, with Dr. Margaret Cage as the chief. The partner organization has changed from Shepherd Pratt to JSSA Mental Health, requiring relocation and setting up new spaces. Full PPT presentation will be emailed to members.
  
- **SIM (Sequential Intercept Model)** Sara Rose presenting. SIM is a tool used by communities to understand how people with mental health and/or substance use issues engage with the criminal justice system. The goal is to identify key points or determine where intervention can prevent individuals with behavioral issues and prevention from further criminal justice involvement. The project aim is to see where services exist, identify gaps, and how coordination and outcomes can prevent people with mental health and/or substance use conditions from becoming justice involved by providing better access to treatment and support options, and how processes can be improved for individuals who do become involved with the criminal justice system. Discussion of the recommendation in the report followed the presentation. SIM model document will be emailed to all members.

**Wrap up:** Laura and Libby thanked everyone for attending the joint meeting and hope to continue joint collaborations in the future.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01pm

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 13, 2025

## **Minutes by/ PSA**

*Ex-Officio reports attached to these minutes.*

**Montgomery County Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction Advisory Council MHAC Ex-Officio  
Member Report AODAAC Meeting**

**Date:** October 9, 2025 (This is an AODACC and MHAC joint meeting.) Department/Agency Reporting: Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) Ex-Officio Member

**Name:** Celia Serkin, MHAC Liaison to AODAAC Agency Mission (particularly as it relates to AODAAC): MHAC was established to advise the Montgomery County Executive and the County Council on matters concerning mental health.

MHAC's work includes providing citizen oversight to all state-funded mental health agencies serving Montgomery County and serving as an advocate for a comprehensive mental health system for persons of all ages. The Committee helps to ensure that publicly funded mental health services are responsive to local needs, accountable to the citizenry, and accessible to those in need.

**Actions/updates since last report:** MHAC and AODAAC have a joint meeting scheduled for October 9. For this reason, MHAC did not have its regularly scheduled meeting, which would have taken place on October 7. The last regular meeting of MHAC was held on September 2, 2025. MHAC's Ex Officio Report for September 11, 2025, contains information on the MHAC meeting that was held on September 2. MHAC CAYAS (CHILD, ADOLESCENT, AND YOUNG ADULT SERVICES) SUBCOMMITTEE The MHAC CAYAS Subcommittee met virtually on September 16, 3:00 – 4:00 pm. The guest speakers were Allen Tien, MD, MHS, Founder/President and Chief Science Officer of mdlogix, and Charles Austin, Director of Client Services, mdlogix. They discussed works, a web-based behavioral and mental health software platform, which can help schools address truancy. During the meeting, Shawn Lattanzio, Program Manager II, Child & Adolescent Coordinator and Acting Hub Manager, Montgomery County Local Behavioral Health Authority, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, gave an update on the Hub. AODACC members were invited to attend this and other CAYAS Subcommittee meetings. Laura Mitchell, AODAAC Chair, was in attendance. The CAYAS Subcommittee's next virtual meeting is scheduled for November 18, 3:00 – 4:00 pm. The guest speaker will be Steve Neff, Director, Pupil Personnel and Attendance Services, MCPS, who will discuss how Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs) help families whose children and/or youth are struggling with attendance issues. Joint Meeting/Forum with Council President Kate Stewart's Office and All the Department of Health and Human Services Boards/Committees and Commissions (BCCs) Scheduled for November 4 MHAC will have a joint meeting/forum with Council President Kate Stewart's Office and all the Department of Health and Human Services Boards/Committees and Commissions (BCCs) on November 4. This meeting/forum will be held in lieu of the regularly scheduled MHAC meeting. We will be asking the BCCs to send their Chair or Vice Chair and their DHHS staff person to the meeting/forum and have them share their top three priorities on mental Health on each of their populations. Each of BCCs will have a short time to talk and present. Information obtained will be documented in a report that will be sent to the County Council and County Executive at a later date.

**Relevant data** (i.e., overdose statistics/trends, substance use incidents in schools, etc.): Current or potential collaborations with AODAAC: MHAC and AODAAC have a joint meeting scheduled for October 9. They will continue to collaborate on various efforts.

Montgomery County  
Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction Advisory Council  
Ex-Officio Member Report

**AODAAC Meeting Date: 10/9/2025**

**Department/Agency Reporting:** Health & Human Services

**Ex-Officio Member Name:** Sara Rose, Director, Local Behavioral Health Authority

**Agency Mission (particularly as it relates to AODAAC):**

The mission of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is to promote and ensure the health and safety of the residents of Montgomery County and to build individual and family strength and self-sufficiency. The Behavioral Health and Crisis Services (BHCS) service area of HHS is committed to addressing the specialized Behavioral Health needs of Montgomery County.

**Actions/updates since last report:**

**Montgomery County Officials to Give Project Update on Behavioral Health Diversion Center on  
Wednesday, Oct. 29 in Rockville**

---

**For Immediate Release: Monday, October 6, 2025**

Montgomery County officials will host a project update on the planned "Diversion Center" at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 29, in the [Leggett Executive Office Building](#) (LEOB) auditorium in Rockville. The meeting will also be accessible virtually via Microsoft TEAMS at [Diversion Center Project Update](#). The center, which will be located on [Seven Locks Road in Rockville](#), will treat individuals experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

The LEOB is located at 101 Monroe St. in Rockville. The auditorium is on the lobby level of the building.

County officials participating in the Oct. 29 meeting will include:

- Earl Stoddard, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
- Monica Martin, Chief, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Hamid Omidvar, Chief, Division of Building Design and Construction, Department of General Services

**Prevention:**

- 584 people served during August
- 100 back to school backpacks distributed
- 21 youth ambassadors currently in program (1 new member joined in Sept.)

**Harm Reduction:**

- 271 people trained in September and dispensed Narcan (since July 1 we have dispensed 981 Narcan kits)

**SSP updates**

- 180 individuals were served through our SSP program this month

**Opioid abatement update**

- 5 Narcan kiosks were purchased using abatement funds- two of them are located with Dept. Of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) in their lobbies at MCDC and MCCF. We are trying to finalize locations for the remaining three for up county, down county and mid county locations
- SUD Prevention Intervention Program through Identity, Inc is operational county-wide
- Actively working through HR to hire additional positions (PMI-grants and contracts, Administrative Specialist I, and PMII-Harm Reduction)
- Expanded peer recovery specialist through Tree of Hope
- "Piece" campaign will be campaign and landing page will be live this month

**Treatment Services (TS)** On a new episode of ***Road to Recovery***, learn about the opportunities that Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services offers for individuals in recovery. <https://youtu.be/uYSycA2utnQ?si=xu6Q6mphska6RHlu>

**LBHA (Local Behavioral Health Authority):**

- The 3-Year Local Strategic Plan will be due January 5, 2026.
- the FY25-27 BHA State Strategic Plan ([Strategic State Plan\\_updated\\_8.18.25](#)) outlines four priority areas along with goals and objectives to increase access and help meet the needs of Marylanders across the continuum of care. The State Plan Priorities are:
  - Priority 1: Increase access to behavioral health services
  - Priority 2: Reduce disparities in the access and delivery of behavioral health programs
  - Priority 3: Improve quality and outcomes
  - Priority 4: Increase programs promoting wellbeing
- Maryland's Office of Public Awareness rolled out the "dangers of fentanyl" campaign through video, digital, streaming, audio, and print platforms. The PSA reminds the public that they may not know that fentanyl and other drugs are being mixed into street drugs, so know the risks. The messages will now be in barbershops, salons and bars as well. The campaign launched 9/29/25 and will continue through 12/21/25. [Fentanyl: Know the Risks \(English\)](#)

- Carelon (Maryland's current Administrative Services Organization) is recruiting for their Participant Advisory Council: "Carelon values the lived experiences and expertise of people who have used Maryland's Public Behavioral Health Service (PBHS) as crucial to our success. We are convening a Participant Advisory Council (PAC) to offer valuable insights about how we can best support individual recovery journeys and inform systemic improvements. The meetings will be held quarterly, virtually via Webex. We are now accepting nominations for applicants to serve on the PAC. All nominees must self-identify as having lived experience, meaning personal knowledge and understanding gained through direct, first-hand involvement in life events, particularly those related to mental health and/or substance use conditions." Link for nominations: [Participant Advisory Council \(PAC\) Participant Nominations](#)

**Relevant data (i.e., overdose statistics/trends, substance use incidents in schools, etc.):**

[Pages - MDH Interactive Dashboards](#)

**Current or potential collaborations with AODAAC:**

- LBHA will collaborate with AODAAC and MHAC regarding planning for FY27-29 Local Strategic Plan.

**END**