

Mental Health Advisory Committee

Minutes – February 4, 2025

Members Present	Members Absent	Ex-Officio and Staff Present	Ex-Officio and Staff Absent	Guests
Lucy Absi-Lopez	Nick Foley	Kelly Gruitt	Michael Mayer	Delgado Argueta
Jennifer Grinnell		Monica Martin	Samar Khleif	Jeremy Atterman
Michelle Grigsby-Hackett		Sara Rose	Meredith Peace	Diana Carillo
Daozhong Jin		Jordan Satinsky		Ashley Contreras
Stephanie Joseph				Karen D
Renee Johnson				Kathy Estrada
Susan Kerin				Britany Giron
Bethany Lee				Katelin Gleason
Libby Nealis				Nurahalisa Jadji
Joi Nolen				Melanie Keller
Alan Orenstein				Laura Mitchell
Crystal Reeves				Melanie Ugadle
Celia Serkin				

- I. **Welcome** - The Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) was called to order at 7:03 pm by Libby Nealis, Committee Chair. Lucy Absi-Lopez is a new MHAC member and introduced herself. She is with the Montgomery County Federation of Families and has a child with mental health needs.
- II. **Legislative Updates**
 - a. **Legislative Committee** – Libby noted that the State’s budget constraints are a main legislative priority. MHAC, as a collective, is not authorized to offer testimony, but members collectively or individually) can submit testimony. Libby mentioned legislation related to interstate compact for professions, reauthorization of telehealth options, and fail first legislation. Laura Mitchell expressed concern about State legislation that would add 20 years to a criminal sentence for drug-induced homicides. Michelle Grigsby-Hackett noted that there is new legislation which would lessen restrictions related to spending of opioid restitution funds.
 - b. **Medicaid Expansion for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)** – The State will now allow school psychologists and social workers to bill Medicaid for some school-based services. Kelly Gruitt noted that the MCPS is working to verify eligibility of staff and educating their staff to understand the system and how to use it.
 - c. **Crisis System Billing** – Michelle Grigsby-Hackett referenced SB599 which would reauthorize crisis service funding. The hearing is on February 19th.
- III. **Old Business**
 - A. **Minutes** – The January minutes were approved by unanimous vote.
- IV. **New Business**
 - A. **LBHA** – Sara Rose shared that the LBHA is a pilot hub with MCPS to work on the Blueprint. This will be their second year. The youth residential facility will now accept all genders (previously male only). She highlighted the [Parent CRAFT](#) video series for substance use. The LBHA is also reviewing the Governor’s budget. Camela George has been promoted and they are seeking to hire a replacement for her previous role.
 - B. **AODAAC** - Laura Mitchell shared that AODAAC held a retreat and invited three State legislators to share an overview of their bills. AODAAC chose to support HB11 which will require health insurance providers to cover out-of-network coverage for services which aren’t covered by in-service providers. AODAAC developed testimony which is currently under review.
 - C. **Suicide Prevention Coalition** – The Coalition now meets quarterly with the hopes this will increase attendance. Diane Lininger regularly forwards updates to MHAC. At the last meeting, the coalition heard presentations on the use of probiotics to impact on mental health and also heard an update on 988 from EveryMind.
 - D. **CAYAS Update** – Celia Serkin reported that the subcommittee got an update on data from MCPS on school refusal. Kelly Gruitt noted that the culture has changed from being punitive to assessing how to help families. Celia requested continued discussion on how community-based organizations could begin collecting information on school refusal.

- E. **Spring Forum** – Diane noted that committee was interested in holding an in-person meeting on a Saturday rather than a Thursday virtual session. The logistics still need to be solidified.
- F. **March and April Meetings** – Diane noted that the April meeting will be in-person on April 10th and in collaboration with AODAAC. By charter, MHAC and AODAAC need to have at least one joint meeting each year. With regard to the March meeting, one suggested speaker might be someone from the Gilchrist Center to discuss issues related to immigration.

V. Announcements

- a. **New MCPD MHAC Representative** – Captain Satinsky shared that he has received a promotion to commander and there will be a new MCPD representative (Kathy Estrade will serve as the MHAC representative).
- b. **State Bed Registry** – Sara Rose showcased a new State database that shows real-time information on bed registries that can be stratified by bed type.
- c. **MCPD Engagement with ICE** – Captain Satinsky noted that ICE is a Federal agency, so they are restricted in going into State/County spaces. MCPD does not engage in these activities unless it is criminally-related.
- d. **Opioid Forum** – Kelly noted that there will be a forum on March 1st at Gaithersburg High School focused on opioid resources.
- e. **AOT Implementation** – Montgomery County will defer to the State regarding new implementation of this legislative requirement.
- f. **Closure of Lawrence Court Halfway House** – Sara and Monica Martin indicated that the budget is still in process so funding decisions have not been solidified.

VI. Meeting Adjourned – The MHAC meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.