

	Mental Health Advisory Committee Minutes – January 7, 2025
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Members Present	Members Absent	Ex-Officio and Staff Present	Ex-Officio and Staff Absent	Guests
Nick Foley	Lucy Absi-Lopez	Kelly Gruitt	Michael Mayer	Pamela Abramson
Jennifer Grinnell		Samar Khleif		Nicole Graner
Michelle Grigsby-Hackett		Sara Rose		Irene Gumucio
Daozhong Jin		Monica Martin		Laura Mitchell
Renee Johnson		Meredith Peace		Stephen Murphy
Stephanie Joseph		Jordan Satinsky		Ed (Bunny) Rich
Susan Kerin				Tondalayo Royster
Bethany Lee				Robin Yasinow
Libby Nealis				
Joi Nolen				
Alan Orenstein				
Crystal Reeves				
Celia Serkin				

- I. **Welcome** - The Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) was called to order at 7:03 pm by Michelle Grigsby-Hackett, Committee vice -chair, pending the Committee Chair's arrival. She welcomed those present, and since there were several new members (Daozhong Jin, Joi Nolen, Nick Foley, Renee Johnson), all Committee members were asked to briefly introduce themselves. The attending members formed a quorum.
- II. **Speaker**
- A. The scheduled speaker was Nichole Graner from the Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland (CBH) who reviewed what to expect from the 2025 County legislative session. After a brief overview of CBHA's advocacy role and activities for its 86 provider members, she described the Behavioral Health Workforce Report, the County budget, and the legislative priorities. The Report described a workforce crisis with staffing about 50% of what is needed, especially counselors and therapists. The challenges indicated by the report were: low salaries, high staff attrition, and licensing delays. There is a \$1 billion budget deficit in FY25 and a gap of \$27 billion in FY26 and 27. While legislators support behavioral health needs, funding currently and through FY30 will be insufficient to address challenges. Priorities in the FY25 legislative session include the workforce, crisis response funding, and school mental health. CBH is now evaluating "pre-filed bills" for behavioral health service implications. Committee members can get involved by tapping into advocacy alerts on the CBHA website.
- III. **Old Business**
- A. **Minutes** – The November minutes were approved by unanimous vote.
- IV. **New Business**
- A. **LBHA** – Sara Rose provided a brief update. LBHA is now reviewing 2024 data for the annual plan. Some highlights she noted are increased client utilization, decreased suicide (11% from 2022 to 2023), and increased emergency visits.
- B. **AODAC** - Laura Mitchell noted there is an upcoming legislative Committee retreat and current consideration of the Spring Forum.
- C. **Commission on Mental Health** – Donna Cawley noted that Commission priorities are to increase behavioral health providers by reallocating funding and seeking grants.
- D. **Suicide Prevention Coalition** – Celia Serkin described the Coalition's two presentations: DBT services and the impact of climate change on suicide.
- E. **CAYAS** – Michelle Grigsby-Hackett described the two presentations at the last meeting: review of grants for youth mental health services and chronic absenteeism.
- F. **Spring Forum** - Diane Lininger indicated that planning for the May 8 Spring Forum is beginning. Also, she will be distributing a listing of committees to inform new members of opportunities.
- V. **Announcements** – Michelle Grigsby-Hackett noted that the Recreation Center will soon be having an open house.
- VI. **Meeting Adjourned** – The MHAC meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.