

	Mental Health Advisory Committee Minutes – September 2, 2025
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Members Present	Members Absent	Ex-Officio and Staff Present	Ex-Officio and Staff Absent	Guests
Jennifer Grinnell	Lucy Absi-Lopez	Kelly Gruitt	Samar Khleif	Pamela Abramson
Renee Johnson	Nick Foley	Monica Martin	Capt. Kathy Estrada	Angela Belisario
Stephanie Joseph	Michelle Grigsby	Sara Rose		Yeshewaget Assres
Susan Kerin	Daozhong Jin			Bunny Rich
Libby Nealis	Bethany Lee			Laura Michelle
Alan Orenstein	Joi Nolen			John S.
Crystal Reeves				Michelle Scarlett
Celia Serkin				Nicole Rodriguez - Hernandez
				Robin Yasinow

- I. **Welcome** - The Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) was called to order at 7:01 pm by Chair Libby Nealis. There was a quorum.

II. Discussion on Priorities for FY-27 – Libby reviewed some of the priorities from prior discussions in July and August. They are the Medicaid budget cuts, homelessness, and the mental health workforce. MHAC members and guests made the following comments:

- A. Celia Serkin asked that the MHAC check with other HHS boards to see if they have any overlapping priorities.
- B. John noted that pharmacists are required to move to generic and handling more prior authorizations. So, there is concern that this will mean patients must wait longer for their prescriptions.
- C. Jennifer Grinnell expressed concern about the unhoused and how that might be exacerbated with what is happening in DC (and those unhoused individuals may be also needing services here).
- D. Alan Orenstein was concerned about the “sickest of the sick” and the workforce issue.
- E. Laura Mitchell was concerned about the use of AI for notes and that older and disabled patients don’t have the ability/capacity to dispute mistakes. She noted that there is a pilot across six States (but Maryland is not one of the States).

III. Meeting Minutes – The June and July minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

IV. New Business

- A. **LBHA** – Sara Rose shared that the [State’s Behavioral Health Plan](#) is now out. The primary focus is on increasing access and addressing disparities.
- B. **AODAAC** – Laura shared that there is a State Balance Budget Act, and the sunset was removed specifically for mental health. AODAAC had done a newsletter but because of the difficult review process no longer does that. At their next meeting, they plan to look at their priorities and discuss their passions and interests. The conversation will inform their priorities moving forward.
- C. **BHHS** – Monica Martin thanked Laura for her work on this event. Regarding the mobile crisis teams, they now have their 7th team in operation. There will be a press release, and the County Executive is expected to join a ride along with one of the teams. BHHS is also renovating the building for unhoused women, many who are victims of domestic violence and/or trafficking.
- D. **MCPS** – Kelly Gruitt shared that there have been some organizational changes. They are in the process of rolling out their suicide prevention efforts for this academic year.
- E. **Legislative Committee** – Celia shared that she has sent out information about protecting immigrants particularly with potential Medicaid cuts.

- F. **CAYAS** – The next meeting will be on September 16h and they will discuss a new approach related to truancy.
- G. **Executive Officers** – Jennifer Grinnell and Kelly agreed to serve on the selection committee. Diane encouraged MHAC members to submit nominations. Self-nominations are allowed.

V. Announcements

- A. **SIM Summit** – Sara noted that next week the State is convening a summit on the Sequential Intercept Model which does diversions across the criminal justice system
- B. **Adolescent Club House** – They have just opened their adolescent club house that will include recovery services and academic programming.
- C. **Presentation to Nurses** – Sarah noted that BHHS gave a presentation to nurses and techs about treatment and peer support resources.
- D. **988 and World Suicide Prevention Days** – [988-Day events](#) occur on September 9th (9-8). [World suicide prevention day](#) is on September 10th.
- E. **MCPS Mental Health and Wellness Fair** – This will be at Gaithersburg High School on November 8th. Organizations can reserve a table [here](#).
- F. **988 Webinar** – Jennifer shared that Every Mind is hosting a [988 webinar](#) on September 4th.
- G. **Maryland Community Health Resources Commission (MCHRC)** – Libby shared that the [MCHRC](#) just released their State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) 2018-2024 Trend Report analyzing key circumstances surrounding unintentional fatal overdoses.

VI. Meeting Adjourned – The MHAC meeting was adjourned at 8:53 pm.