

Montgomery Cares Advisory Board

October 22, 2025 Meeting Notes

MCAB Members Present: Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Mark Foraker, Wayne Swann, Vahe Hovian, Kate McGrail, Denise Kishel, Leslie Richin, Deborah Miller Young, Karen Crist, Dr. Kisha Davis, Dr. Khalfani Walker

MCAB Members Absent: Kate Lu

DHHS Staff: Dr. Christopher Rogers, Ashley Miller, Melinda Fredericks, Magda Brown, Dr. Trisha Boyce, Sean Gibson, Tatiana Reyes

County Council Staff: Tara Clemons-Johnson

Primary Care Coalition: Veronica Vella, Tefo Linchwe, Ogechukwu Okeke, Jerome Brown, Yasmin Cespedes-Zamen, Tabitha Gingerich, Marisol Ortiz, Sarah Frazell, Wenjing Zhang,

Guest: Dr. Troy Jacobs, Marissa Valeri, Charlotte Jenkins, Sonya Bruton

Dr. Kathryn Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm. Meeting was held via video/teleconference.

Item		Action Follow-up	Person Assigned	Due Date
1.	<p>Approval of Minutes – September 24, 2025 Dr. Kathryn Kelly</p> <p>Dr. Kelly asked the Board if they had any comments or changes to the September minutes. With no comments, she asked for a motion to approve the September meeting minutes as presented.</p> <p><i>Moved by: Mark Foraker</i> <i>Seconded by: Wayne Swann</i></p> <p><i>The motion was passed unanimously.</i></p>			
2.	<p>Montgomery Cares Advisory Board Chair Report Dr. Kathryn Kelly</p> <p>Dr. Kelly gave an overview of the Conflict of Interest policy and reminded the Board of its obligation to disclose any known conflicts of interest as appointed Board members. This is an annual requirement. Dr. Kelly asked if there were any questions. No questions from Board members were posed.</p> <p>Dr. Kelly initiated a discussion on the MCAB meeting format which focused on the number of in-person versus virtual meetings in the coming year. The group discussed various options with a consensus to add additional in-person meetings to the meeting schedule and to have a virtual (hybrid) option for attendance for all in-person meetings. A motion was made to expand from three to five in-person meetings per-year (resulting in half of the meetings being in-person). The</p>	A poll will be circulated to determine the months MCAB will meet in-person.	Ashley Miller	Prior to December MCA B meeting.

	<p>motion did not include the months that will be designated as in-person meetings as it was agreed that Ashley will send a doodle poll to establish the months for in-person sessions. Ashley will send out a doodle poll for Board members to respond to following the October meeting.</p> <p>A motion was made to increase MCAB in-person meetings from three to five annually.</p> <p>Moved by: Mark Foraker Seconded by: Karen Crist</p> <p><i>The motion was passed unanimously.</i></p>			
3.	<p>Open Virtual Voting for Chair/Vice Chair Positions and Nominating Committee Process Nominating Committee</p> <p>Kate McGrail gave an overview of the to-date work of the nominating committee and the process leading to the presentation of candidates for Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>The members of the Board must elect a Chair and Vice Chair by majority vote to serve a 1 year term. Nominees are Dr. Kathryn Kelly for Chair and Mark Foraker for Vice Chair.</p> <p>Ashley made an announcement at the start of the meeting detailing the voting process to elect the Chair and Vice Chair, including the requirements and instructions for casting a vote via email, sent directly to her.</p> <p>Ashley gave an update on the BCC office announcements for openings on MCAB including the need for members to reapply if they chose to serve a second term. A request was made for current Board members to form a nominating committee that will interview new applicants. Current members who are reapplying are not eligible to serve on this committee. Board members Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Karen Crist and Vahe Hovian expressed interest in joining the nominating committee to select new board members. Ashley will email these board members following the meeting to further gauge interest and availability.</p>	An email will be sent to follow up with the board members interested in joining the nominating committee.	Ashley Miller	Prior to December MCA B meeting.
4.	<p>Healthcare Officer Update Dr. Kisha Davis</p> <p>Dr. Kisha Davis highlighted information from the recent Board of Health Report (see report in MCAB meeting packet) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic disease disparities have decreased. Heart disease, cancer and cardiovascular disease remain to have the highest mortality rates. Data continues to show drops in Covid mortality. Previously rated #3 cause of death in the County, now #7. There has been a decrease in fatalities related to substance use, specifically regarding fentanyl. Trends are showing increases in use of Kratom which continues to be readily available. Suicidality in Montgomery County is higher than the State average with white men leading in suicides followed by black men also registering higher than all other demographic groups. 			

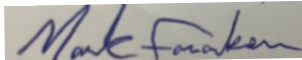
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montgomery County also has a higher uninsured rate compared to all other Counties which could be related to higher immigrant populations. However, this data appears worse than reality as Montgomery County has a robust safety net system including Montgomery Cares and Care for Kids programs. No questions were posed by the Board regarding the November Report. 			
5.	<p>Healthcare for the Uninsured Report Q&A DHHS Staff</p> <p>Board members requested clarification on the update provided in the report on Care For Your Health. Ashley Miller noted that Care For Your Health is one of the health centers participating in the Montgomery Cares program. The health center has temporarily suspended accepting new clients through the end of the calendar year. The health center will provide an update in January when it will once again begin accepting new clients.</p> <p>Dr. Rogers, Melinda Fredericks and Dr. Veronica Vela gave an overview of the first session from the Access to Care workgroup held in October and highlighted key developments from that session as well as overarching goals for the upcoming November session.</p> <p>Ashley Miller highlighted information on Homeless Resource Day, being held in November. More information is included in the MCAB meeting packet.</p>			
6.	<p>Montgomery Cares Quarterly Report PCC See Presentation</p> <p>Dr. Veronica gave an overview of quarter 1 of the Montgomery Cares program and participating clinics. Montgomery Cares welcomed the Islamic Center of Maryland as the newest program to join the program and acknowledged that their entry brings the safety-net system to 12 providers and 25 sites throughout the County. Care for your Health has closed the Poolesville site while still maintain services in Silver Spring. A few other clinic site locations have closed as well. For FY26, Montgomery Cares is budgeted for 78,000 encounters with current estimates projecting more than 84,000 based on current utilization.</p> <p>Sarah Frazell: Gave an overview of the behavioral health program trends and performance data.</p> <p>Tefo Linchwe: Gave an overview of Project Access and specialty care support in general including a current roster of just under 60 specialty care providers in the network. He highlighted the current workflow process as well key challenges and utilization data through Q1 of FY26.</p> <p>Wenjing Zhang: Added key achievements from the work sessions to improve Project Access highlighting next steps and priorities for specialty care provider recruitment, including key areas of need.</p> <p>Tabitha Gingerich:</p>			

	<p>Provided updates on Community Pharmacy utilization and key trends include vaccines with a comparison of utilization between Montgomery Cares patients to the public at large.</p> <p>Marisol Ortiz: Provided updates and key trends related to MedBank highlighting an increase in utilization that appears to be in line with overall increases in patient encounters.</p> <p>Ogechukwu Okeke: An overview of cancer screening data through Q1 was presented, including the recent expansion to offer Cologuard to uninsured patients with 7/12 clinics offering this option.</p> <p>Jerome Brown: Detailed technology priorities with an emphasis on security enhancements including mandatory multifactor authentication and login timeouts for users on the shared instance of eCW.</p> <p>Please reference the slide deck for details on the Q1 Montgomery Cares quarterly report.</p>			
7.	<p>Discussion/Vote - MCAB HHS Committee Priority Statement/Mental Health Advisory Mtg. Dr. Kathryn Kelly</p> <p>Dr. Kelly asked for input and discussion on the proposed priority statement that was circulated to the Board ahead of the October MCAB meeting. Hearing no questions or recommendations for edits, she requested a motion to approve the final statement as sent to the Board.</p> <p>A motion was made to approve the MCAB HHS Priority Statement that will be read on October 23, 2025 by Dr. Kathryn Kelly.</p> <p><i>Moved by: Mark Foraker</i> <i>Seconded by: Karen Crist</i></p> <p><i>The motion was passed unanimously.</i></p> <p>Mental Health Advisory Meeting (November 4)</p> <p>Dr. Kelly initiated a discussion for the Board to select the top two mental health challenges faced by the Healthcare For the Uninsured population. starting with the list of example priorities from other BCCs that were sent to the Board via email prior to the October meeting. These priorities will be submitted to the Mental Health Advisory Committee to be discussed during the November 4 meeting. Mark Foraker and Ashley Miller will be in attendance for the Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Mark suggested prioritizing the impact on targeting immigrant populations and adding an emphasis on the potential decrease in community participation and access to other social service supports as a result.</p>			

	<p>Dr. Kelly proposed the topic of an insufficient behavioral health workforce as another priority. There was group discussion on staffing limitations in multiple scenarios, including an overall lack of bi-lingual therapists and a cycle of losing therapists due to comparatively low-compensation in the safety net.</p> <p>After further discussion, Dr. Kelly asked for a motion to prioritize the following as the two key priorities for the November 4 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The targeting of immigrants and the impacts it is having on enrollment and residents seeking eligible mental health, behavioral health and other benefits and services for the Healthcare for the Uninsured programs and their participation in the community, including accessing related resources such as food access programs that support healthy eating. Insufficient mental health work force capacity, lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate providers and ongoing funding cuts. What can be done to increase capacity, strengthen the existing workforce and incentivize private sector professionals to see patients in the safety-net? <p>A motion was made to approve the MCAB mental health priorities that will be shared with the Mental Health Advisory Committee.</p> <p><i>Moved by: Karen Crist</i> <i>Seconded by: Vahe Hovian</i></p> <p><i>The motion was passed unanimously.</i></p>			
8.	<p>FY 2027 Priorities Review and Finalize Draft CE letter Dr. Kathryn Kelly</p> <p>The final draft of the MCAB advocacy priorities letter was sent to the Board prior to the October meeting and a request for further discussion was raised by Dr. Kelly. Hearing none, she requested a motion to pass the current draft of the advocacy priority letter and send to the CE in its current form.</p> <p>A motion was made to approve the MCAB FY27 Policy and Advocacy Priorities Letter</p> <p><i>Moved by: Karen Crist</i> <i>Seconded by: Vahe Hovian</i></p> <p><i>The motion was passed unanimously.</i></p>	The letter will be sent to the CE, and key DHHS and Council Members will be copied.	Ashley Miller	By November 1, 2025.
9.	<p>Chair and Vice Chair Election Results Ashley Miller</p> <p>The Nominating Committee closed electronic voting after confirming that all members present had completed their vote, Ashley Miller announced the results from the vote for Chair and Vice Chair of MCAB. Dr. Kathryn Kelly was elected to serve another one-year term as Chair and Mark Foraker was elected to serve another one-year term as Vice Chair.</p>			
10.	<p>Board Representative Updates MCAB</p>			

	Dr. Kelly gave an overview of her organization’s initiative to increase access to Mammograms for patients who cannot afford or otherwise have access to this screening procedure. The resulting mammograms will be available to partner organizations and additional details will be provided by Dr. Kelly in the near future.			
11.	December 10, 2025 Agenda and Next Steps The next MCAB meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 10, 2025 from 6:00—8:30 pm and will be held in-person at 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville. A virtual option will be provided via Microsoft Teams	Dr. Kathryn Kelly		
12.	Meeting Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM <i>Moved by: Karen Crist</i> <i>Seconded by: Mark Foraker</i>			

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Foraker
Montgomery Cares Advisory Board