

NEW JERSEY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL

Minutes

January 5, 2025, 10:00 am

This meeting was conducted exclusively through MS Teams video teleconference & conference call

Microsoft Teams meeting

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Dial-in Number: +1 609-300-7196, PIN: 306216820#

Notices of the meeting were sent to the Asbury Park Press, The Times (Trenton), Bergen Record, The Press (Pleasantville), and the Courier-Post (Cherry Hill).

Participants:

Suzanne Borys	Francis Walker	Heather Simms	Julia Barugel
Jennifer Rutberg	John Tkacz	Krista Connelly	Elisabeth Marchese
Maurice Ingram	Harry Coe	S. Robin Weiss	Ann Marie Flory
Darlema Bey (Chair)	Connie Greene	Joe Gutstein	Kurt Baker
Suzanne Smith	Gena Ansell-Lande	Tonia Ahern	Debra Wentz

DMHAS, CSOC, DDD, DMAHS & DoH Staff:

Clarence Pearson	Jonathan Sabin	Helen Staton	Jessica Han
Yunqing Li	Nicholas Pecht	Irina Stuchinsky	Brielle Easton
Brittany Thorne	Sucharitha Reddy	Sofie Wilkinson	Mark Kruszczyński

Guests:

Nina Smuklawsky	Anne Smulln-Theiling	Rachel Morgan
Bernadette Moore	Tatyana Brown	Andrea Bakun
Maya (last name unknown)	Elena Kravitz	

I. Administrative Issues/Correspondence (Darlema Bey)

- A. Attendance, 20/31, 64.51% attendance, quorum exceeded.
- B. Minutes of December 11, 2024 General Meeting Approved.
- D. Presentations by Members in CY 2025
 1. Alcohol, Cancer and Warning Labels: Alexeis LaPietra (See C. Greene, for February 2025)
 2. Arrive/Ride Together (Harry Reyes, contact Donna, NJ Prosecutors Office, Amy Holmes, CIT coordinator, check with Rachel Morgan). Director, Office of Alternative and Community Responses, Office of the New Jersey Attorney General, Tiffany.Wilson@njoag.gov
 - a. ARRIVE Together. It stands for Alternative Responses to Reduces Instances of Violence and Escalation - through the Attorney General's Office and rolled out through the Prosecutor's Office.

- b. <https://www.njoag.gov/about/leadership/>
- c. Arrive Together - Alternative Responses to Reduces Instances of Violence and Escalation - through the Attorney General's Office (in partnership with DMHAS Housing/Harry).
<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2024/approved/20240304.shtml>

II. Intensive Recovery Treatment Support (IRTS) Program (Suzanne Borys, DMHAS OPREPO)

A. PowerPoint shared with BHPC via mail

B. Q&A

- 1. Q: Equitable access: Is there a way to look at demographics? A: The program is available to everyone. People can self-refer.
 - a. Wondering about racial disparities in sentencing, and impact on admissions to IRTS.
- 2. Q: Availability to County Jails? A: This is available to State Prison populations but STAR teams do serve consumers being released from County Jails.
- 3. Q: Which figures are self-reported, ex. current use? What constitutes employment? A: We would need to get that info from Program Evaluators.
- 4. Q: Is this available at Edna Mahan? A: Yes. Construction of the new Edna Mahan facility in Burlington County has not yet broken ground.
- 5. Q: Is drug use self-reported? A: We suspect its self-reported, but we would have to check with the program evaluators. Comment, Parole does urine testing, especially if individual has history of drug use.
- 6. Comment: "Would be great to have a peer program similar to this for those reentering the community with MH and forensic background."
- 7. Request: Can there be a similar presentation on SUD prevention efforts at County Jails?

III. Overview of 2024 DMHAS Adult Consumer Perception of Care Survey (Mark Kruszczyński, DMHAS, OPREPO)

- A. PowerPoint shared with BHPC via mail
- B. Q&A
 - 1. Q: What are the reasons why NJ has higher satisfaction rates relative to the US? A: Ultimately unknown. Possibly due to consumer satisfaction with service providers funded by DMHAS.

IV. System Partner Updates (Darlema Bey)

- A. Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). See above, presentations from Dr. Suzanne Borys (Intensive Recovery Treatment Supports) and Dr. Mark Kruszczyński (2024 DMHAS Consumer Survey)
- B. Children's Systems of Care (Nick Pecht).
 - 1. Intensive Mobile Treatment Services (IMTS) for youth aged 5 to 20 with co-occurring I/DD and behavioral health needs.
 - a. This pilot program has been extended for one year and will continue to serve Bergen and Middlesex Counties through 2025.
 - b. Currently serving 20 youth, IMTS program enhancements include onboarding additional staff to better support the youth and families served and access to flex funding to support individualized needs, including challenges related to the social determinants of health.
 - c. The youth and families served are engaged and connected to services and supports, and the youth are remaining in their families' homes. Each family receives between 10 and 15 hours of intensive in-home services each week by the multidisciplinary team, who focuses on the family's unique needs
- C. Division of Developmental Disabilities (Jonathan Sabin)
 - 1. The DDD Office of Education on Self-Directed Services (OESDS) will begin offering monthly WIN (What I Need) Time virtual forums in January 2025. WIN Time provides a standing opportunity for support coordinators, supports brokers, providers and others to learn and ask questions about self-directed services, and network with other professionals. Visit https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=j-4RV4NeRUG-A8VRE09BYGeIhvPsU2VFiA55wD_K8_xUQ1NJUEFDUDIPU0dTRzR-ENE1YMINLNDQ3OC4u&fromie=true for more information.
 - 2. In January 2025, NJ DHS is holding public listening sessions for those engaged with the direct care workforce. Opportunity for direct care workers (direct support professionals, certified home health aides, personal care attendants,

and many others), direct care employers, and people who receive direct care services to talk about their needs and challenges. Three virtual sessions will be held, as follows:

- January 14 at 5 p.m. - Direct Care Workers
- January 15 at 5 p.m. - Direct Care Employers
- January 16 at 5 p.m. - Direct Care Consumers
- If individuals cannot attend or would like to provide a written statement, written testimony can also be submitted to HumanServices@dhs.nj.gov. To register for the DHS Direct Care Workforce Public Listening Sessions visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YyebwK9jRHiAKOsOiN1bCw#/registration.

D. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (John Tkacz)

1. DVRS would like to introduce Tatyana Brown, Program Planning and Development Specials who will be taking the place of John Tkacz at the Behavior Health Planning Council meetings. John will be retiring as of March.
2. Consumers can obtain DVRS services by completing a Referral online or by contacting one of the County DVRS offices found on our website [Career Services | Vocational Rehabilitation Services](#)
3. DVRS has partnered with Rutgers “Integrated Employment Institute” (IEI) for providing the trainings for Rehabilitation Professionals and providers with the opportunity to receive CRC CUE credits.
4. Current IEI Trainings – Integrated Employment Institute are listed below: Use this link to register (<https://iei.rutgers.edu/current-iei-trainings/>)
 - 1/15: Addressing Mental Health Stigma and Ableism in Employment Settings
 - 1/16: Marketing Supported Employment Services to Increase Referrals
 - 1/22: Supporting the Development & Maintenance of Natural Supports in Employment & Education
 - 1/23 & 1/30: Soft Skills - Presenting Qualifications (2 Sessions)
 - 1/29: Career Services - Addressing Provider Burnout
 - 2/5: Developing a Career Profile
 - 2/6 & 2/13 Soft Skills - Asking for Help (2 Sessions)
 - 2/12: Transition Age Youth & Young Adults - Building Vocational Maturity
 - 2/19: Supporting Job Seekers & Students - Acing the Interview
 - 2/26: Recovery Oriented Cognitive Therapy for Career Service Practitioners

- 3/5: Supporting Individuals with Neurodiversity & Mental Health Conditions
- 3/6 & 3/13: Soft Skills - Responding to Feedback (2 Sessions)
- 3/12: Job Development (IN-PERSON)
- 3/26: Supported Education Leave Phase in Crisis - Navigating Interruptions to Matriculation
- 4/3: Understanding Potential Employers' Diversity and Inclusion Practices
- 4/9: Determining Accommodations for Job Seekers with Mental Health Conditions
- 4/10 & 4/17: Soft Skills - Conversing with Others (2 Sessions)
- 4/16: Benefits & Work Incentives - SSI
- 4/23: Benefits & Work Incentives - SSDI

E. Division of Aging (Jennifer Rutberg)

1. Effective 1/1/25 income requirements for PAAD and Senior Gold Pharmacy Programs went up, if less than \$53k per year.
2. <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/l-p/njsave/>

F. Justice Commission, NJ Dept. of Law & Public Safety: (Francis Walker)
No Presentation Provided

G. Department of Education (Maurice Ingram):

1. Connecting the Dots: Designing Intervention Referral Pathways and Risk Assessment and Response Protocols to Support Student Mental Health
 - a. 2/21/25 9:00-12:30pm Register here (Registration will go live mid-January).
 - b. Summary: This training session aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how to successfully connect students with internal and external mental health support as part of a comprehensive school mental health system. Participants will gain insight into using data-driven decision-making processes to guide referrals to tiered support and best practices for recognizing and responding to diverse student mental health needs. Participants will learn specific steps for establishing intervention referral pathways, conducting risk assessments, and coordinating responses that engage families and community partners. This session is intended for school administrators, school mental health professionals and supporting school mental health staff and will include both practical guidance and opportunities for interactive application.
 - c. Objectives:
 - Introduce best practices for referring students to services that fit the unique needs of the individual.
 - Introduce risk assessment and response in the context of Comprehensive School Mental Health referral pathways.

- Describe an MTSS Framework and best practices for risk assessment and response.
- Discuss concrete strategies and skills that can be directly applied at the school or district level.
- Participate in discussions and activities aimed at generating reflection and reinforcing knowledge.

2. Human Trafficking Information Webinar link:

<https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nj.gov%2Feducation%2Fbroadcasts%2F2024%2Fdec%2F11%2FTwoPartWebinarSeriesonHumanTraffickingAwarenessandPreventionwithinSchools.pdf&data=05%7C02%7CMaurice.Ingram%40doe.nj.gov%7Cd5989d0e1e904807f65e08dd28fa9244%7C4b4f7312dd094959b666d5ba6dc8f4b4%7C0%7C0%7C638711778843825598%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMlslkFOIjoIjWFpbCIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2FUHquVdL839q8oQMxNwNFp8tFdXo6BeJSOHeQbvPag%3D&reserved=0>

H. Department of Corrections (K. Connelly):

1. NJDOC prioritizes the safety of the incarcerated population, staff, and volunteers. In order to prevent the introduction of drugs into facilities, NJDOC is implementing a mail copying and screening program for all United States Postal mail for each of the nine correctional facilities. All incoming correspondence must be sent to Pigeonly Corrections, a third-party mail vendor. Additional information including addresses is available on the NJDOC website.
2. NJDOC's contracted healthcare vendor Rutgers University Correctional Health Care will begin piloting anger management groups within the restorative housing units in our correctional facilities. This will be in addition to individual mental health treatment, and a patient does not need to be currently receiving mental health treatment to participate in the new anger management groups.
3. Through January 26, 2025, the Visual Art Center of New Jersey in Summit, NJ is featuring "Perceptions Reimagined: Art from the Women at Edna Mahan," an exhibition of work created by incarcerated artists at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility. The women developed these pieces during their coursework with Raritan Valley Community College. The artists are participants in the New Jersey Scholarship and Transformative Education in Prisons program (NJ-STEP), a voluntary program that enables incarcerated persons to earn college credits.

I. NJ Div. of Medical Assistance and Health Services (NJ Family Care/State Medicaid) (Irina B. Stuchinsky)

1. Behavioral Health Integration began 1/1/25
 2. Phase 1, is Outpatient BH
 3. Upcoming virtual provider training 1/28/25
 4. Advisory Hub Meeting 1/24/25
5. <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/information/stakeholder/index.html>
 6. DMAHS BH Integration hotline phone for providers, members, advocates, other stakeholders # 609 281 8028 or general BH Integration mailbox Dmahs.behavioralhealth@dhs.nj.gov
- J. Department of Health: (Barbara Ferrick): Not present
- K. Division of Family Development (Marie Snyder): Not present
- L. Supported Housing Association (Kate Kelly): Not present.
- M. NJ County Mental Health Administrators Association (Elisabeth Marchese), No updates.
- N. NJ Hospital Association (Deena Tampi), Not Present.

IV. Open Public Comment and Announcements:

- A. Comments/questions: None
- B. Announcements:
 1. The BHPC Membership Committee met on 1/8/25 at 9:30. Requests to BHPC members will be sent out.

V. Adjournment: Darlema Bey 10:10

- A. Next meeting: 2/12/25 10:00 am –noon.
Microsoft Teams meeting
Join on your computer or mobile app
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Or call in (audio only): +1 609-300-7196, PIN: 306216820#

- C. Future Agenda Items:
 1. Alcohol, Cancer and Warning Labels: Alexeis LaPietra (See C. Greene, February 2025)
 2. Arrive/Ride Together (Harry Reyes, contact Donna, NJ Prosecutors Office, Amy Holmes, CIT coordinator, check with Rachel Morgan). Director, Office of Alternative and Community Responses, Office of the New Jersey Attorney General, Tiffany.Wilson@njoag.gov

3. Additional Items for Meetings in 2025
 - a. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP): (Connie Greene)
 - b. NJ DoE Threat Assessment Protocols
 - c. Overview of CSS (Harry Reyes, DMHAS)
 - d. Pretrial Services in Camden County
 - e. JJC Discussion (Filomena DiNuzzo)
 - f. DVR (John Tkacz)
 - g. Presentation on SUD prevention efforts at County Jails?
 - h. Family Member Perspectives
 - i. Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) (Suzanne B.)
 - j. AIR , Youth Suicide Prevention (kurt@air.ngo)
 - k. SUD and the JJC (Francis Walker, JJC)
 - l. Experiences of Consumers in SUD Crisis
 - m. State Mental Hospitals (Department of Health, annmarie.flory@doh.nj.gov (Service Questions, Appropriateness of Services, Outcomes.)

D. February 12, 2025 Subcommittee Meetings

- 9:00 TBD
9:30 Membership
12:00 TBD