

NEW JERSEY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL

Minutes

June 11, 2025, 10:00 am

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

Microsoft Teams meeting

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

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:

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Donna Miglorino | Darlema Bey (Chair) | Connie Greene (Vice-Chair) | Heather Simms |
| Julia Barugel | Jennifer Rutberg | Damian Petino | Winifred Chain |
| Elisabeth Marchese | Jennifer Gitka | Tatyana Brown | Krista Connelly |
| Barbara Johnston | Stacy Reh | Morgan Thompson | Francis Walker |
| Michael Ippoliti | Donna Spencer | Ann Marie Flory | Joe Gutstein |

DMHAS, CSOC, DDD, DMAHS, DoAS & DoH Staff:

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Brielle Easton | Brittany Thorne | Helen Staton | Nancy Edouard |
| Suzanne Borys | Mark Kruszczyński | Jessica Han | |

Guests:

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Abigail Lewis | Audrey Powell | Neil Mehta | William Cole |
| Rachel Morgan | Andrea Bakun | Kim Dunaj | John T |
| Adam Chrone | Alana Andrews | Jonathan Tkacz | Sadinka Laha |
| Melissa Williams | Anne Smullen-Thieling | | |

I. Administrative Issues/Correspondence (Darlema Bey)

- A. Attendance, 20/34, 58.8% attendance, quorum exceeded.
- B. Minutes of May, 2025 General Meeting Approved.
- C. Membership Committee
 1. Angela Calzone approved by DMHAS Assistant Commissioner
 2. David Armstrong will be asked to be send an application to join the Council
 3. Three expungements are in process
 4. DOH Student Support Service Office will be asked to solicit interest in the Council.
- D. Committees: Comments of State Mental Health Planner (D. Migliorino) to commend the following subcommittee Chairs and their committee members for their outstanding work this year: Membership (Heather Simms), Nominations (Damian Petino) and Block Grant (Barbara Johnston).

- II. Block Grant Committee: Needs and Gaps (Barb Johnston , Chair, BHPC Committee and Donna Migliorino)
1. SAMHSA has provided final guidance for the 2026-20-27 block grant application. WebBGAS is in the process of being updated now to match the guidance. DMHAS is doing a comparison now of the previous guidance with the new guidance to see what the changes are and we should have an update at next month's meeting.
 2. SAMHSA Monitoring Visit (June 2024)
 - a. Report has been received from SAMHSA and we had one area that we were not in compliance with which was having a parent/family member of a youth on the BHPC. We are now in compliance. The monitoring visit is also an opportunity to learn and recommendations are provided that may help improve our system. We are currently in the process of developing our final draft and then will send it to SAMHSA.
 3. Needs and Gaps: Step 2: Gaps Observed by the Planning Council. [Excerpt will be shared by Brittany T. to MK. MK will share with BHPC]
 4. Process (Barb Johnston): Must be completed by 7/9/25
 - a. MK will create a simple Survey Monkey
What is the issue? Who does this impact? Where in the system of care is this issue observed? The survey will be sent 6/16/25, and will have a deadline for completion of 6/23/25.
 - b. Block Grant Committee; Lisa Federico, Morgan Thompson, Damian, Suzanne Smith, Julia Barugel, Connie Greene
 5. Q&A
 - a. Has the membership committee provided outreach to consumers in State Hospitals
 - b. Response of H. Simms: Yes, we have been in contact with Chris Morrison. Participation via tablets is encouraged. Members of CWCs are in attendance.

II. **BHPC Elections:**

- A. "Per Article V of the Bylaws of the NJ Behavioral Health Planning Council, members of the New Jersey Behavioral Health Planning Council (BHPC) and Community Mental Health Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) are requested to vote for the following two-year positions:
- B. Ballot
 1. Chairperson: Darlema Bey, Heather Simms
 2. Vice-Chairperson: Connie Greene
- C. The terms of office are from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027. Voting members of the BHPC/CAB *who are present* at the June 11, 2025 virtual meeting of the Council may cast one vote for each position. Each individual's vote will be **confidential** and **not** shared with anyone else. To vote please go to the following link that was

emailed to you on 061125 1041 and provide the information. It should only take two minutes to complete your voting.”

- D. At the conclusion of the meeting (6/12/25 12:00 noon) the results were tallied, by simple majority of votes received during the meeting from official, voting members of the BHPC/CAB, and the results are:
 - 1. Chair: Heather Simms (Term of Office 7/1/25 – 6/30/27)
 - 2. Vice-Chair: Connie Greene (Term of Office 7/1/25 – 6/30/27)

III. Alcohol Use Disorder: A Treatable Medical Condition Dr. A. LaPietra

- A. See PowerPoint sent 6/6/25
- B. SUD is chronic, treatable, medical disease.
- C. Q&A/Discussion
 - 1. Issue of Stigma
 - 2. SUD is a brain disease; we have medication and treatment.
 - 3. Q: Suboxone/ Buprenorphine? A: Indicated for SUD
 - 4. QCCBHCs, how are they doing? What metrics should be used to evaluate success?
- D. alexis.lapietra@rwjbh.org

IV. System Partner Updates (Darlema Bey)

- A. Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Donna Migliorino, DMHAS). See above
- B. Children’s Systems of Care (Stacy Reh, DCF CSOC).
 - 1. Working on Block Grant Application with DMHAS
- C. Division of Developmental Disabilities (Jonathan Sabin, not present)
 - 1. No updates this month
- D. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Tatyana Brown)
 - 1. No updates this month.
- E. Division of Aging (Jennifer Rutberg)
 - 1. No updates this month
- F. Youth Justice Commission, NJ Dept. of Law & Public Safety: (Francis Walker)
 - 1. Re-branding of JJC, now called “Youth Justice Commission (YJC)”
- G. Department of Education (Damian Petino):
 - 1. Second Floor Program
<https://www.nj.gov/education/broadcasts/2025/jun/4/2NDFLOORStartOfSummer2025.pdf>, and
<https://www.stopitsolutions.com/safenj>
 - 2. Q&A: Q: Educating Educators Program (NAMI)

Sidebar: Q: How are providers trained in holistic approaches like DOs, are there any RFPs that are out there that offer continuing education from DMHAS? Is there any sensitivity training that is offered?

A: (DMM), I am not aware of any current RFPs for continuing education credits for holistic training or sensitivity training but I will check with DMHAS leadership.

H. Department of Corrections (K. Connelly):

1. No updates this month.

I. NJ Div. of Medical Assistance and Health Services (NJ Family Care/State Medicaid) (Not present)

J. Department of Health: (Ann Marie Flory):

1. New Commissioner Jeff Brown

K. Division of Family Development (Jennifer Gietka):

1. No updated provided.

L. Supported Housing Association (Kate Kelly): Not present.

M. NJ County Mental Health Administrators Association (Elisabeth Marchese)

1. No updated provided.

N. NJ Hospital Association (Deena Tampi), Not Present.

V. Family Perspectives (Darlema Bey):

A. Importance of continuity of care (consistent staffing).

B. Importance of medical technicians

C. Q: Hospitals?: A. (Ann Marie Flory) Presentation is forthcoming at an upcoming meeting.

D. Issues of vocational Opportunities for those with SMI. Stigmas, challenges in the workplace.

IV. Open Public Comment and Announcements:

A. Comments/questions:

1. Correspondence from Trinitas CARES Program. Trinitas' CARES program exists to serve individuals anywhere in New Jersey with developmental disabilities in mental health or behavioral crises.

"For those of you who may not already be aware, I wanted to take the time to inform you all about the upcoming changes to the CARES program taking effect on 7/1. With recent significant budgetary cuts that took place in April, 6 of our CARES staff were notified, that they will be laid off in July and that any open positions remaining will not be filled. With the budget cut and layoffs, we will no longer have enough clinicians available after hours, including the weekends.

As a result, what is being proposed is that referrals can still be called in after hours by leaving a message with our answering service rep, however, there will no longer be a clinician to respond to those calls overnight.

Patients in the ER who may be in need of an assessment (I know some units refuse to take them without a CARES assessment and some doctors won't d/c without one) would have to be held overnight for us to assess the next business day.

In other situations where the patient requires admission, are only appropriate for Trinitas, and are in the ED overnight or the weekend, please contact RWJ Access Center to start the admission process.

Due to these changes, CARES is willing to complete an in-service with screening centers and ERs to discuss the I/DD population, as far as behavioral vs psych presentations and safe discharges. I know that some screeners and ER doctors are not comfortable discharging I/DD patients without our assessment, but it would not be good patient care to hold patients over the weekend who do not meet the criteria for admission.

We are dedicated to continuing to fulfill request for ER crisis assessments, and all community support, so we are asking ERs and Screening Centers to please understand that telehealth and phone assessments will be our primary method to complete crisis assessments. “

B. 06/21/25 NAMI Awards Luncheon, Monroe NJ

V. Adjournment: Darlema Bey 11:57 am

A. Next meeting: 7/9/25 10:00 am –noon.
Microsoft Teams meeting

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B. Future Agenda Items/Additional Items for Meetings in 2025

1. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP): (Connie Greene)
2. NJ DoE Threat Assessment Protocols
3. Overview of CSS (Harry Reyes, DMHAS)
4. Pretrial Services in Camden County
5. JJC Discussion (Filomena DiNuzzo)
6. DVR (Tatyana Brown)
7. Presentation on SUD prevention efforts at County Jails?
9. Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) (Suzanne B.)
10. AIR, Youth Suicide Prevention (kurt@air.ngo)
11. SUD and the JJC (Francis Walker, JJC)

12. Experiences of Consumers in SUD Crisis
13. State Mental Hospitals (Department of Health,
annmarie.flory@doh.nj.gov (Service Questions, Appropriateness of
Services, Outcomes.)
14. DMHAS Fiscal Presentation: August 2025. Confirmed

C. July 9, 2025 Subcommittee Meetings:

1. 9:30 Community Mental Health Block Grant: Gaps and Needs