

NEW JERSEY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL

Minutes

October 8, 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:

Donna Migliorino	Heather Simms (Chair)	Connie Greene (Vice-Chair)
Julia Barugel	Nancy Edouard (Aging)	Maurice Ingram (DoE)
Joe Gutstein	Barbara Johnston	Darlema Bay
Suzanne Smith	Morgan Thompson	Winifred Chain
Stacy Reh (CSOC)	Tatyana Brown (DDD)	Francis Walker (JJC)
Tom Pyle	Jessica Groelly (DoC)	Kristal Connelly (DoC)
Elisabeth Marchese	Betsy Weiss (DoH)	Harry Coe
Rosy DaFonseca (NJ HMFA)		

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

Brielle Easton	Yunqing Li	Jonathan Sabin (DDS)
Mark Kruszczyński	Zui Han	Shenal Pugh (DMAHS)
Megan Sullivan	Irina Stuchinsky (DMAHS)	Suchartitha Reddy (DMAHS)

Guests:

Elena Kravitz (DRNJ)	Lasheema Sanders-Edwards	
Abigail Lewis	Serena Zuppardo (CSP NJ)	
Rachel Morgan	Alana Andrews	Christina Nicodemus (DoC)
Mike Santillo (NJ-CARS & Prevention Links)		William Cole
Jessica Groelly (DOC)	Nina Smuklavskaya	Adam Chrone
Ann Smullen Thieling	Brian Harris	Andrea Baktun
Joseph Pfeifer	Diane Litterer	June DePonte-Serrnak
Becky DiLiscandro		

I. Administrative Issues/Correspondence (Heather Simms)

- A. Attendance, 21/35, 60% attendance, quorum *exceeded*.
- B. Review of Minutes of September 10, 2025 meeting.
- C. State Ethics Training due 10/10/25.
 1. Members of the BHPC/CAB are to reach out to me

II. Monthly Opioid Use Disorder Trainings (Carrie Trznadel, Opioid Treatment Technical Advisor DMHAS)

- A. The NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), Office of the Medical Director has been officially approved as an Education Provider through NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. This important milestone reflects our commitment to supporting and strengthening the current and future addiction services workforce and combatting misinformation about treatment options. As part of this initiative, we are launching a monthly web-based learning series featuring 1-hour live trainings, each eligible for 1 NAADAC-approved Continuing Education (CE) credit at no cost to the participant.
1. Topics will vary but will all relate to substance use, addictive/behavioral health disorders, and co-occurring disorder prevention and treatment, counseling policy, practice, and services, medications used in the treatment of substance use, and peer support and direct care. These trainings will be especially valuable for direct care staff (counselors, peer specialists, case managers) and those who hold or are pursuing certification or licensure in the substance use field.
 2. Registration is required and they can register here: dmhas.dhs.state.nj.us/cme/register
 3. These trainings will take place monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 1-2pm. They are going to be held live and recorded. Each training will be eligible for 1 CE through NAADAC and is also approved by the Addiction Professionals Certification Board. Many other disciplines and boards (NASW, NBCC, ASWB) accept NAADAC CEs under agreements or on a case by case basis so, I encourage everyone to check with their boards and look into more information on acceptances here: <https://www.naadac.org/naadac-ce-approvals>
 4. While the trainings are currently only offered live we are working to enhance our system to allow for asynchronous viewing and credit to accommodate varied schedules.
 5. For further information I can be reached at carrie.trznadel@dhs.nj.gov

III. Sensitivity Training, Holistic Approaches, QPR, MHFA, Cultural Competence (Megan Sullivan, DMHAS Disaster & Terrorism Branch & June DePonte-Sernak, Center for Family Services)

- A. See a very comprehensive Power Point slide deck sent to BHPC via email 100725.

IV. Mental Health and First Aid Training (Megan Sullivan, DMHAS, Disaster & Terrorism Branch)

- A. Slide deck shared with the Planning Council via email 10/8/25
- B. NJ Mental Health Crisis: 786 suicides in 2024, 1 in 5 adults with MI, 62k calls to 988 in 2023.
- C. First Responders and Mental Health Crisis (firefighters, Law Enforcement, EMS)
- D. Military-to-Civilian Transition: Peer support
- E. Mental Health First Aid: adult and youth focus, 3 year certification course

IV. NJ Family Care Behavioral Health Integration (DMAHS) (Shanique McGowan, Irina Stuchinsky, NJ DMAHS)

- A. See PowerPoint slide deck shared with the Council via Email 100625
- B. https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/information/stakeholder/DMAHS_BHI/20250425-Member-Care-Management-FAQs-vShare.pdf
- C. Q&A
 - 1. Q: The information here is good, that said what does one do outside of This specific group to get REAL access to assistance. Frustration with accessing services in Gloucester County and elsewhere. A: Contact the member services phone # on your insurance card.. HSimms@CSPNJ.org offered resources as did Shanique McGowan. You can also reach out to the BH Resource Account at NJ FamilyCare with member-specific inquiries at dmahs.behavioralhealth@dhs.nj.gov
 - 2. Comments of Joe G. What is the role of CCBHCs in BH Integration? A: CCBHCs are a one-stop-shop for primary and mental health. It is covered by NJ Family Care.
 - 3. Comments of Julia B. There might be some lack of awareness of MCOs among case managers

V. System Partner Updates (Heather Simms)

Going forward all system partners are requested to provide the Council with brief, written updates by the Friday prior to the next BHPC meeting. Those updates will be provided to the Council prior to the meeting; this will give Council members an opportunity to pose questions to the system partners in a timely manner.

- A. Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Donna Migliorino, DMHAS).
 - 1. The combined MHBG/SUPTRS Grant was submitted by 9/1/25.

2. DMHAS has begun working on the MHBG Implementation Report which is due 12/1. We will be reviewing the data for the implementation report in the November BHPC meeting.
 3. The URS (Universal Reporting System) data tables are also due on 12/1. DMHAS will be requesting an extension for some of the URS tables including the tables which cannot be completed prior to 12/1 due to the way in which the data is calculated (e.g. readmissions within 180 days of discharge).
- B. Children's Systems of Care (Stacy Reh, DCF CSOC). No update was provided.
- C. Division of Developmental Disabilities (Jonathan Sabin)
1. The transition of the Division of Developmental Disabilities' (DDD) Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA) Self-Directed Services Model from Public Partnerships LLC (PPL), the current fiscal intermediary, to Acumen Fiscal Agent (Acumen) continues. Acumen and DDD are hosting weekly transition update webinars, with Q&A, for individuals and families, support coordinators, supports brokers, and vendors. For more information on the transition and/or to sign up for a transition webinar please visit <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/individuals/community/selfdirected/acumentransition.shtml>.
 2. The Community Care and Supports Program Policy Manuals have had updates. Overall there were grammatical and typo corrections as well as updates to form names, email addresses, and links as well as revisions to individual budgets to reflect rate increases. Additionally, the updates include clarifications and updates to the manual's primary sections.
 3. October 2025 is the 80th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). It is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the positive impact of people with disabilities in the American workforce and promote inclusive employment practices.
 4. The Office of Education on Self-Directed Services (OESDS) has released its Fall 2025 Family Networking Sessions schedule. These sessions are for people and families who are, or are interested in, self-directing some of or all their DDD-funded services. Please visit [Family Networking Sessions Fall 2025](#) for more information.
- D. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Tatyana Brown):
1. DVRS is actively seeking qualified providers to conduct evaluations and mental health restoration services for our consumers. We are in need of psychiatrists, psychologists, and SUD providers to join our network. Please have any interested parties contact dvrsmentalhealth@dol.nj.gov for additional information regarding reimbursement rates and the application process.

2. We're excited to celebrate Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM), a national observance that highlights the importance of inclusive workplaces and the contributions of people with disabilities. On October 21st, we'll be hosting a special event at our central office to recognize our outstanding partners and celebrate the achievements of the consumers we serve over the past year
- F. Department of Education (Maurice Ingram): No updates
- E. Division of Aging (Jennifer Rutberg): No updates from Division of Aging Services
- F. Youth Justice Commission, NJ Dept. of Law & Public Safety: (Francis Walker)
- H. Department of Corrections (K. Connelly):
1. The most recent public meeting regarding the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women took place on September 19th. A recording of the meeting is available on the NJDOC website and on the NJDOC YouTube page. The new women's correctional facility is currently in the design phase, with construction anticipated to begin in mid to late 2026. The project is expected to be fully completed in 2028.
 - a.
 2. NJLEAD Reentry Grant Program – Nearly \$7 Million Awarded (FY 2025): NJDOC awarded NJLEAD grants to over 40 nonprofits, municipalities, and training centers, each with their own eligibility criteria and serving various community locations throughout New Jersey. The complete list of grant recipients can be found within the Press Release at this link:
https://www.nj.gov/corrections/pdf/PressRelease_PS/250917_NJDOC_Announces_2025_NJLEAD_Grant_Awards.pdf.
 If organizations are interested in potentially applying for a NJLEAD grant, future opportunities will be posted on the NJDOC's Grants page: <https://www.nj.gov/corrections/pages/grants.html>.
 - a. Program: NJLEAD (New Jersey Locally Empowered, Accountable, and Determined).
 - b. Funding Recipients: Nonprofits, municipalities, and training centers.
 - c. Goals: Support returning citizens with housing, employment, and trauma-informed care. Strengthen community ties and reduce recidivism.
 - d. Long-Term Impact: Promotes safer neighborhoods, stronger families, and resilient communities.
 3. Support for Youth Affected by Incarceration
 - a. Partnership: NJDOC and Give Something Back (Give Back).

- b. Focus: Academic support and mentorship for youth impacted by parental incarceration and childhood adversity.
 - c. Approach: Long-term coaching and educational guidance.
 - d. Mission: Break the cycle of incarceration and trauma by investing in the next generation's stability and success.
 - e. Give Something Back is a national nonprofit. NJDOC's partnership with Give Back will provide services and resources to children with a parent incarcerated at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility. More information about Give Back in general can be found at their website, <https://giveback.ngo>.
- I. NJ Div. of Medical Assistance and Health Services (NJ Family Care/State Medicaid) (Shenal Pugh). See above, "NJ Family Care Behavioral Health Integration (DMAHS).
- J. Department of Health: (Betsey Weiss):
 - 1. The Department of Health has moved forward with a reorganization, effective October 4, 2025. Here are a few updates relevant to this Council:
 - a. The Office of Opioid Response and Policy will report to the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Syndemic and Substance Use that now falls under a new Population Health Branch.
 - b. The Division of Behavioral Health Services that oversees the four State Psychiatric Hospitals is now under the Care & Treatment Services Branch (formerly it was called Integrated Health Services Branch).
 - 2. Staffing changes within the Care & Treatment Services Branch and the Division of Behavioral Health Services are as follows:
 - a. Deb Hartel has retired from her position as Deputy Commissioner of (formerly Integrated Health Services) Care & Treatment Services.
 - b. Ann Marie Flory, who was Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) assumed the role of Deputy Commissioner of Care & Treatment Services.
 - c. Susan Loughery assumed the role of Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Behavioral Health Services.
 - 3. Locally, at the State Psychiatric Hospital level:
 - a. Ancora had a very successful JCAHO site survey in September which included recommendations from the JCAHO that APH publish their work regarding the SIM lab (a nursing simulation lab

is a controlled environment designed to replicate real-world patient care scenarios. Ancora Psychiatric Hospital has designed a simulation lab to facilitate live medication passes, psychiatric emergencies, and emergency intervention/medical care).

- b. DBHS is working with Rowan School of Medicine on initiatives to advance patient outcomes through expanded residency and medical staffing initiatives.
 - c. Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital (GPPH) recently had a kick-off Opening Ceremony in August for the 150th celebration of GPPH that is coming up in 2026. Staff and community providers were on site to celebrate this milestone and discuss vision for the future.
- K. Division of Family Development (Jennifer Gietka, not present): No update provided.
- L. Supported Housing Association (Kate Kelly, not present): No update provided.
- M. NJ County Mental Health Administrators Association (Elisabeth Marchese). No update provided.
- N. NJ Hospital Association (Deena Tampi, not present). No update provided.
- O. NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJ HMFA), (Donna Spencer).
 - 1. The NJHMFA Board approved a series of wholesale state tax credit auctions to generate up to \$500 million for a Fourth Round Production Fund (FRPF) and Middle-Income Workforce Housing Fund (MIWHF) Program. The auction will generate up to \$100 million in tax credits annually over the next five years. Projects applying for the FRPF must be 100% affordable and set aside at least five units or five percent of the total project units, whichever is greater, as supportive housing units.
 - 2. NJHMFA awarded over \$6.3 million in annual in the Spring 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), which will lead to the construction of more than 250 new affordable apartments for families, seniors and residents with special needs. Eighteen projects applied for the Fall 9% LIHTC round that may generate an additional 1100 apartments for New Jersey residents.

VI. Open Public Comment and Announcements:

- A. Public Comment
 - 1. Suggestion to get more feedback from individuals at hospital-based Community Wellness Centers. [Joe G. asked if DRN-NJ could comment on litigation against NJ State Psychiatric Hospitals]

B. Announcements:

- 1.
2. USDA Timelines for SNAP and Work Requirements
3. Attitudes in Reverse <https://www.air.ngo/> See <https://toh.ngo> for information on AIR's fundraising event on 10/8/25 in Princeton.
4. NAMI NJ GALA Thursday Nov 20, Westin Princeton 6:00pm.
5. Supportive Housing Association of NJ will be opening registration for our Nov. 14th Conference in the next few weeks. More details available here: <https://www.shanj.org/conference-2025/>
6. Supported Housing Association (NJ SHA) Conference, 11/14/25 <https://www.shanj.org/conference-2025/>

V. **Adjournment:** Heather Simms: Time: 11:58: am.

A. Next meeting 11/12/2025 10:00 am –noon.

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

1. DMHAS Ombudsman
2. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP): (Connie Greene)
3. NJ DoE Threat Assessment Protocols
4. Overview of CSS (Harry Reyes, DMHAS)
5. Pretrial Services in Camden County
6. JJC Discussion (Filomena DiNuzzo)
7. DVR (Tatyana Brown)
8. 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