

**The Blair County Department of Social Services  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, April 4, 2019 at 11:30 a.m.  
The Arc 431 Jackson Ave., Altoona, PA**

**Board Members Present:** James Stratton, Chris Cohn, Commissioner Erb, Steve Martynuska, Rick Petroski, John Allender and Mike Stubler

**Board Members Absent:** Cindy Barton, Donna Gority, Cassie Grassmyer, Dave Hollern, Robert Smith and Sue Tomlinson

**Others Present:** Jim Hudack, Melissa Gillin, Theresa Rudy, Lorrie Hetager, Jennifer Kensinger, Maria Brandt, Nicole Germaux and Wendy Griswold

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**MINUTES**

**Welcome and Call to Order**

Rick Petroski welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Rick introduced Wendy Griswold who recently started working at The Arc.

**1. Approval of February 7, 2019 Minutes**

- *Motion by Mike Stubler to accept the February 7, 2019 minutes. John Allender seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

**2. Board Operations – Jim Hudack, Executive Director Blair County Dept. Social Services**

- Jim mentioned that the June BCSS Advisory Board meeting would be held at The Arc, but due to The Arc not being available for the August meeting, Jim relayed an idea suggested by Missy to see if Fort Roberdeau would be available. If not available, Commissioner Erb suggested NatureWorks Park located at 10 Bedford Street, Hollidaysburg.

**3. Mental Health Committee Report - Theresa Rudy**

- A copy of the MH Committee meeting minutes were *not* attached to the Agenda packet.
- Theresa Rudy reported that there were not any action items to bring to the Board from the MH Committee meeting that was held March 7, 2019.
- Theresa Rudy asked the Board to consider a motion for a letter of support for 35 additional dually licensed (MH and Drug & Alcohol) beds at Cove Forge Behavioral Health Center to serve individuals with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders. The total number of dually licensed beds would increase from 150 to 185.

*Motion by Chris Cohn to provide a letter of support for Cove Forge to submit a request to DHS/OMHSAS to add 35 dually licensed beds to their center. Steve Martynuska seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

**4. Developmental Programs Committee Report – John Allender**

- A copy of the Developmental Programs Committee meeting minutes were attached to the Agenda packet.
- John reported that Blair County ID system currently supports 748 individuals. There are 32 Support Coordinators. John stated that there is a constant need for support staff.
- John stated that the construction of the Skills of Central PA respite home, near the Allegro, is under roof and has siding.
- John reported that Crossroads, Inc., located near Mansion Park, now has a fully operational license.
- John reported that SASMG (Southern Alleghenies Service Management Group) is sending out flyers and information in regards to the Summer Employment Initiative.
- Development Programs Committee did not have any action items to present to the Board.

## 5. County Reports

### *Executive Director – Jim Hudack*

- Jim reported that the HSBG Annual Plan is not out yet. Once plan is released, Blair County has 60 days to submit the County Plan to the State.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing is being held April 5, 2019 at 1:00 PM at the SAEMS (Southern Alleghenies Emergency Medical Services), Training Room, 2900 Beale Avenue, Altoona.
- SARA Summit is April 16, 2019 at the Blair County Convention Center.
- Jim commented that DHS (Department of Human Services) is really cracking down on licensing with providers.
- Jim reported that he has been meeting with RBA (Blair County IT Department) to discuss setting up an off-site back-up for DSS (Department of Social Services) files.
- Jim stated that high grade methamphetamines are becoming a real problem in the area.
- Jim reported that Blair County is opting out of Act 106/AOT (Assisted Outpatient Treatment) program for 2019. To opt out, a form must be submitted or the County will automatically be opted in.
- The Columbia Protocol Suicide App was officially released on March 12, 2019.

### *MH/COD –Theresa Rudy*

- Theresa gave a more detailed overview of the AOT (Assisted Outpatient Treatment) program.
- PACA MH/DS (Pennsylvania Association of County Administrators of Mental Health and Development Services) Spring Conference 2019 is April 11-12. Blair County Solicitor, Steve Wicks, will be presenting on Thursday.
- Theresa reported on March 12, 2019 the Attorney Wicks and Dr. Antonowicz jointly presented MHPA (Mental Health Procedures Act) training. There were 72 attendees. Over half of the attendees were attorneys.
- 2 Trainings were held March 27, 2019 at the Hampton Inn: “*Operational Stress Control & Strategies for Team Support: Psychological Force Protection for Crisis Responders,*” and “*Human Trafficking Recognition.*”
- Nami Conference is April 11, 2019 from 2pm-8pm at the Altoona Grand Hotel.
- May is Mental Health Month. The 2019 event will be held at the Jaffa Shrine on May 16 from 3pm-7:30pm. The subject is “*Healing Trauma’s Invisible Wounds.*”

### *Mental Health – Ken Dean*

- Theresa Rudy reported the number of complex cases have increased. The weekly number of complex cases to review was averaging around 4, but this past week, Theresa and Ken reviewed 10 complex cases. The review entails determining if the individual may need more restrictive care or return to less restrictive care from more restrictive care.
- Jim reported that during January/February, the number of 302 commitments (Involuntary Commitments) did increase.

### *Intellectual Disabilities – Melissa Gordon*

- A report was included with the Agenda packet.

### *Early Intervention – Kelly Popich*

- A report was included with the Agenda packet.
- John Allender reported that Local EI Program Determination results for FY 2017-18 were detailed in the SASMG Program Report.

### *Quality Assurance & Housing Coordinator – Missy Gillin*

- Missy reported that AmeriCorp summer positions are now open. Approximately 300 hours available. If you know anyone who would be interested, have them call 472-7690 and ask for AmeriCorp.
- A Sexual Assault Awareness Lunch & Learn, sponsored by Family Services, will be held Friday, April 26 from 11 AM to 2 PM at the American Legion Social Hall.
- PA Nutrition Education Network Annual Conference will be held on Monday & Tuesday, April 29 & 30, at Nemaocolin Woodland Conference Center. The focus will be on best practices to promote nutritional behavior change & build healthier communities.
- United Way is initiating a new program in all of the schools in Blair County called “Be There Campaign”, which is targeting chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 2 days per month. The goal of the program is to create an environment to have the chronically absent kids want to come to school.
- United Way has a supply of blankets, hats, gloves, coats and scarves if anyone knows of anyone in need.
- United Way is collecting new & lightly used books for K-1<sup>st</sup> grade reading for their Raising Readers Program which begins on Monday, April 6. It is a 2 week program to encourage families to make a commitment to read with their family. The family will take a few books and then return them to pick up additional books.
- LIHEAP ends April 11, 2019.
- Senior Life is holding an open house on April 18. Senior Life is for anyone over the age of 55. Also looking for gently used furniture.
- LHOT & Housing Round Table will be meeting on April 12. This is a combined meeting of the 2 committees to enhance discussions regarding housing for people coming out of prison.

## **6. Ex-Officio Reports**

### *NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Sara McConnell*

- No updates.
- Theresa Rudy reported that the NAMI Conference is April 11, 2019 at the Altoona Grand Hotel from 2:30 PM to 7 PM.

### *CONTACT Altoona – Nicole Germaux*

- Nicole reported that the Incoming Helpline/Outbound reassurance program Volunteer Training is going well.
- As of October 1, 2018, CONTACT Altoona no longer serves as the call center for PA 211 Central region, but are continuing to update 211 resources for Blair County.
- Nicole reported that there has been discussion of having an Advisory Board or an Advisory Meeting for 211 to have a representative from different sectors of services to skim over the information.

### *The Arc – Maria Brandt*

- Maria reported the Emergency Preparedness Training is May 15, 2019 at the Trans4mation Church, 1001 S. First St., Altoona, from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. A flyer was included in the packet describing the event.
- Maria and Jim have discussed future trainings to include both individuals with MH (mental health) and PwD (people with disabilities).
- Maria asked for everyone to get the word out about the training. Nicole Germaux suggested making a post on Facebook so that it can be shared on social media.

### *ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager*

- Lorrie reported that Darline Dunn, Lifesharing Provider with Skills of Central PA was featured in the February 2019 ODP News. Darline won the Excellence in Lifesharing Award. Darline has been a Lifesharing provider for 18 years. She has shared her home with several people with intellectual disabilities and presently cares for two people.
- ACEL had a hoagie luncheon and the center gathered \$291 in donations and presented to Cindy James, who recently lost her husband, Adam.
- March 2018 Kathy Shreffler of ODP presented CPS Billing training on March 28, 2019.

- Staffing shortages continue to be an issue for many providers. Reliance Bank will allow their customers to have one free month of advertising on their billboard.
- On March 15, 2019, Lorrie met with Congressman John Joyce. He would like to be informed of the issues that impact the people who use ACEL services.
- Representative Schmitt is scheduled to tour ACEL on April 12, 2019.
- Lorrie mentioned the CPS rate decrease for Facility based services.
- Penn State Nurses are doing internships at ACEL.

*Blair HealthChoices/Community Cares – Amy Marten-Shanafelt*

- No updates.
- Jim Hudack stated that the only name on the House Bill to combine Physical and Behavioral health is the Representative who authored the Bill.

**Open Forum:**

- Maria reported that there is a Legislative Breakfast scheduled for April 26, 2019 from 8:30 AM to 9:30 PM at The Arc, 431 Jackson Avenue, Altoona. It is a question and answer forum. Registration is available on the Blair County Chamber of Commerce Web-site.
- Steve Martynuska attended the benefit craft fair and fundraiser, “Bring on Spring” that was held March 16, 2019 at The Arc. Steve commented that the event was well-attended. Maria added that most of the crafters had to take special orders.

Rick closed the meeting.

**The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, June 6, 2019 at 11:30a.m. at the Arc, 431 Jackson Ave, Altoona**

**The next Mental Health Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 9:00a.m. at CONTACT Altoona.**

**The next Developmental Programs Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 11:30a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd.**