

**The Blair County Department of Social Services  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 11:30 AM  
Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg**

**Board Members Present:** Steve Martynuska, Donna Gority, Chris Cohn, Susanna Tomlinson, Matthew Dumm, Bob Smith, Mike Stubler, Becky Aungst, Dana Melton, Susan Franco and Commissioner Erb

**Board Members Absent:** Rick Petroski and Amber Hatfield

**Others Present:** Tricia Maceno, Theresa Rudy, Tracy Fitzpatrick, Ginny Christy, Missy Gillin, Erin Kay, Jamie Henry, Maria Brandt, Aimee Burns and Jennifer Kensinger

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*MINUTES*

**1. Welcome and Call to Order**

- Mike Stubler welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.
- Self-Introductions were made.

**2. Public Comment**

- No public comments were received.

**3. Approval of the November 3, 2022 MH Committee Minutes**

- *Motion by Commissioner Erb to accept the November 3, 2022 minutes. Bob Smith seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

**4. Approval of December 1, 2022 Advisory Board Minutes**

- *Motion by Chris Cohn to accept the December 1, 2022 minutes. Bob Smith seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

**5. Board Operations – Tricia Maceno, Director, Department of Social Services (DSS)**

- Trish thanked Paula for catering the meeting.
- Trish stated that things are going well in DSS.

**6. Mental Health Committee Report (Theresa Rudy)**

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- The meeting minutes from the November 3, 2022 MH Committee meeting were included and approved during the Advisory Board meeting, as noted earlier in the minutes.

**7. Developmental Programs Committee Report (Susanna Tomlinson)**

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Susanna reported that the Developmental Programs Committee has been having guest speakers give presentations at their meetings. Stacie Capps, Regional Manager of One Well, was the speaker at the January 5, 2023 meeting. Contact info: [Stacie.capps@onewell.org](mailto:Stacie.capps@onewell.org) /814-321-5761.
- **Approval of the January 5, 2023 DP Committee Minutes**
  - *Motion by Steve Martynuska to accept the January 5, 2023 minutes. Chris Cohn seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

**8. County Reports**

*Social Services Director – Tricia Maceno*

- Tricia reported that the Governor's budget will be out in March.
- The Income & Expense (I&E) report is to be completed and submitted to the State by February 17. An extension was requested and granted.
- Tricia stated that DSS has candidates being interviewed for the open Fiscal Officer position.

- No movement has been made by the PA Legislature in regards to the funds that may be available for MH services.
- Donna Gority asked if a new Secretary for the Department of Human Services has been named yet. Commissioner Erb answered that Dr. Valerie Arkoosh had been appointed to that position.

### *MH/COD –Theresa Rudy*

- Theresa reported that FY 2021/2022 retained funds came in at approximately \$193,000. The Leadership Coalition met and reviewed retained fund requests.
  - Approved Retained Funds Distribution List
 

▪ Big Brothers/Big Sisters -	\$5,000.00
▪ Blair County Drug & Alcohol -	\$50,787.00
▪ Blair HealthChoices (Forensic Case Manager) -	\$50,000.00
▪ Healthy Blair Coalition -	\$3,000.00
▪ SASMG (Navigator) -	\$74,000.00
▪ <u>SASMG (Summer Employment) -</u>	<u>\$10,000.00</u>
Total	\$192,787.00
- A discussion ensued regarding Mike’s comment about the proposed UPMC Altoona EmPATH (Emergency Psychiatric Assessment Treatment and Healing) Unit, which would be located in the Emergency Department. The living room model EmPATH unit would be a separate, calmer space for behavioral health patients to receive care. Multiple grants will be used for construction of the project and UPMC Altoona would be responsible for the sustainability of the unit. Commissioner Erb stated that the EmPATH unit will be discussed at the next Commissioners’ Meeting on Tuesday, February 7, 2023. At this time, the EmPATH unit will treat adolescents as young as 14 years of age. Completion date is unknown, but hopefully by the end of 2024.

### *Mental Health – Tracy Fitzpatrick*

- Tracy, Trish and Theresa met with Mark Taylor and Cris Frederickson of Blair County Emergency Management to discuss trainings to expand on Emergency Behavior Health (EBH).

### *Intellectual Disabilities – Jamie Henry*

- Jamie reported that Southern Alleghenies Service Management Group (SASMG) filled their open Intake and Incident Manager positions.
- SASMG and its providers were working with Penn Highlands College to develop a credentialed Direct Support Professional (DSP) curriculum, but decided that it was not cost effective.
- SASMG is in the midst of the waiver renewal process.
- Jamie is working with a couple of providers to enhance the Summer Employment Initiative, which is a \$10,000 Human Service Block Grant (HSBG). The minimum requirement to participate in the program is an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The goal is to generate interest in working rather than relying on services. Currently, The Learning Community and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) are working on this project with SASMG.

### *Early Intervention – Jamie Henry*

- Jamie reported that EI had its Local Determination Summary (State Compliance Review) and it met or exceeded its expectations. No plan of correction is needed.
- Jamie stated that with the new quality enhancement project, EI will have to track when there is a determination of need, which requires outside assistance and when there is shared leadership role, which falls under the 100% compliance.

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

- Missy stated that the Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2 (ERAP 2) is still ongoing, but the application process is “on hold”, which will give Center for Community Action a chance to process accepted applications to see if there is enough funding to fulfill those requests.
- Family Services’ Emergency Shelter is close to getting an occupancy permit, which would allow for the shelter to officially open.

- Missy stated that Christine Zernick is the new director for Blair County Community Action Program (BCCAP). DSS has met with her.
- Commissioner Erb confirmed that Billie Egan is the new director for the Mountain Lion Backpack Program.

## 9. Ex-Officio Reports

### *CONTACT Altoona – Erin Kay*

- A report was included in the packet.
- CONTACT Altoona did not receive any COVID calls in December, but received 4 in January.
- 12 Days of CONTACT Christmas fundraiser exceeded last year's numbers.
- Spring training dates are April 17, 18, 19, 24 and 25, 2023. Guest speakers are being scheduled.
- Erin will be giving a presentation next week at NAMI Education Days at the H.O.P.E. Drop-In Center.
- CONTACT Altoona will participate in the June 10<sup>th</sup> Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community.

### *NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Aimee Burns*

- A report was included in the agenda packet.
- NAMI Blair County will be distributing information at a mental health event at the Tyrone Library this evening from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Family Support Group and NAMI Connection Support group continue to meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday every month.
- NAMI Education Days is from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. the second Wednesday every month at the H.O.P.E. Drop-In. NAMI is looking for presenters.
- 2023 NAMI Conference will be held at the Blair County Convention Center on April 20, 2023 from 8:30 am – 2:30 pm. Dana Melton is 1 of 3 speakers.
- On February 11, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Chilpotle will donate 33% of event sales to NAMI if \$150.00 in sales is made.
- Aimee was asked to present at the Pennsylvania PTA State Convention in October 2023.
- NAMI Hearts & Minds program will be scheduled sometime in 2023.
- Blair HealthChoices staff will be trained to offer NAMI support groups during daytime hours at their location.
- NAMI Homefront hybrid program will probably begin Spring 2023.

### *The Arc – Maria Brandt*

- Maria is looking for a handyman for the ARC.
  - *Dana suggested contacting Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center (GACTC).*
- Maria has speakers booked for May 2023. Flyers will be sent out.

### *ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager*

- Lorrie was not in attendance.

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

- Amy was not in attendance.

### Open Forum:

- Susanna asked if Blair County Community Action had a number from the Point in Time (PIT Count) from January 16<sup>th</sup>. At this time, no final tally was known.
- Sue Franco expressed her concern over the credentials needed to be a DSP and the amount of documentation that needs to be done prior to each visit with a client. The documentation takes about 30 minutes, which is time not spent with the client. Sue asked Jamie if they could change providers, but UPMC is the only Blair County provider that offers agency of choice.
- Trish announced that the revamped Columbia Suicide App is complete, but needs to be approved by the App store. A launch date and press release will follow.
- Trish stated that the SARA Summit will be held in the summer or early fall.

**The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, April 6, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. at Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg, PA (Formerly 120 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg)**

**The next Mental Health Committee meeting will be held on March 2, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg, PA (Formerly 120 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg)**

**The next Developmental Programs Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd. or Virtual Meeting**