

**The Blair County Department of Social Services
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, October 3, 2019 at 11:30 a.m.
The Arc, 431 Jackson Avenue, Altoona, PA**

Board Members Present: James Stratton, Rick Petroski, Commissioner Bruce Erb, Robert Smith, John Allender, Mike Stubler

Board Members Absent: Cassie Grassmyer, Chris Cohn, Donna Gority, Cindy Barton, Steve Martynuska and Sue Tomlinson

Others Present: Jim Hudack, Melissa Gillin, Theresa Rudy, Lorrie Hetager, Jennifer Kensinger, Nicole Germaux, Melissa Gordon, Kelly Popich, Ken Dean, Jamie Henry, Amy Marten-Shanafelt and Sara McConnell

MINUTES

Welcome and Call to Order

Rick Petroski, Chairperson, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Rick mentioned Mike Stubler's well-written Letter to the Editor which was published in the October 3, 2019 addition of the Altoona Mirror.

1. Approval of August 1, 2019 Minutes

- *Motion by John Allender to accept the August 1, 2019 minutes. Robert Smith seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

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

- Jim reported that there are two vacancies on the 2020 Social Services Advisory Board Committee. He is currently working on getting a physician for one of the openings. Jim stated that he would like to have the other opening filled by someone who has received services or by a family member of an individual who has received services. Jim asked attendees to let him know of any potential candidates to fill those openings.
- John announced that most of the board members will be returning for 2020. Jim stated the following officers will be voted for at the December meeting:
 - *Chairperson: Stephen Martynuska*
 - *Vice Chairperson: Michael Stubler*
 - *Secretary: Christopher Cohn*
- The 2018/2019 Annual Board Report will be distributed during the December 2019 meeting.

3. Mental Health Committee Report – Theresa Rudy

- A copy of the MH Committee meeting minutes was attached to the Agenda packet.
- No motions to bring to the Board.
- Theresa extended praises to Cindy James for her role in the success of the September 8th “Out of the Darkness Walk” for suicide prevention. The event raised nearly \$25,000.
- Going forward, Theresa asked Jen to attach SAP updates to the MH Committee report.

4. Developmental Programs Committee Report – John Allender

- A copy of the Developmental Program Committee meeting minutes was attached to the Agenda packet.
- No motions to bring to the Board.
- John discussed highlights of John Seely's presentation that was given at the Developmental Program Committee meeting.

5. County Reports

Executive Director – Jim Hudack

- Jim passed around a flyer about the upcoming Poverty Summit: Strategies for Professionals and Communities to be held Tuesday, November 26, 2019 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Jaffa Shrine, Altoona. Registration is \$10 per person. Lunch buffet and drinks will be served. If you would like to attend, contact Jim. He will cover the \$10 cost.
- Jim reported the Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) was submitted in July. No feedback has been received.
- First quarter of the fiscal year is almost over and no allocation letter has been received yet.
- Rick Petroski mentioned that a statewide webinar on the new Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) regulations is tomorrow, Friday, October 4 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Amy Marten-Shanafelt added that Blair Healthchoices will be viewing the webinar in their conference room. Anyone wishing to attend the webinar at Blair Healthchoices is welcome to do so.

MH/COD –Theresa Rudy

- Theresa mentioned Mike Stubler's letter to the editor, as well as, the stigma surrounding violence and mental health.
- Fiscal year 2018/2019 Income & Expense (I & E) report is completed.
- Theresa stated that the Forensic Case Manager (FCM) position has been and will continue to be funded by HSBG retained dollars. Commissioner Erb added that the FCM has been a great asset to the Blair County Prison.
- The PA Association of County Administrators of Mental Health and Developmental Services (PACA MH/DS) is doing a survey on the result of the (2011/2012) 10% cut of the budget. The information is being gathered to present to the Governor in hopes of restoration of the cut.

Mental Health – Ken Dean

- Ken reported that he attended the Stepping Up Initiative on-site visit on September 26, 2019. One of the goals of the in-depth visit, which included a tour of the Blair County Prison, is to receive helpful information on what the next steps of the initiative will be.
- Ken attended a special conference on Bioterrorism Preparedness in Pittsburgh on October 2, 2019. Ken described a few scenarios for the attendees.

Intellectual Disabilities – Melissa Gordon

- A report was included with the Agenda packet.
- Melissa reported that the 10% cut was discussed at the PACA MH/DS meeting.
- Pending finalization, 6100 regulations are still in the legal department at the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) for language. Once the bulletin is released, providers will have up to 180 days to implement. AE (Administrative Entity) Operating Agreement could be greatly impacted.
- Melissa announced that Southern Alleghenies Service Management Group (SASMG) was awarded ten Community Living Waivers. The waivers were specified for waitlisted individuals who currently do not have any services in place. The average number of individuals on the waitlist is 126.
- Melissa stated that SASMG has several Person/Family Directed Support (P/F DS) waivers, but have no individuals to give them to. Also, providers are not expanding due to lack of staff.
- Melissa mentioned the closing of two state centers: White Haven and Polk. Currently, Blair County does not have any individuals at either of those state centers.

Early Intervention – Kelly Popich

- A report was included with the Agenda packet.
- Kelly stated that discussion at their State Leadership was optimistic in regards to increases for the Early Intervention (EI) budget.
- Kelly attended the Prenatal-Grade 3 Governor's Institute in August. Special focus was on Early Intervention (EI) and child care.

Quality Assurance & Housing Coordinator – Missy Gillin

- Missy announced that there will be a Poverty Simulation on October 29, 2019 at the Blair County Convention Center from 8:30 am to 12 pm.
- A Landlord Educational Workshop will be held Friday, November 1, 2019 at the Altoona Grand Hotel from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm.
- Missy reported that the Department of Social Services is a drop-off site for the United Way's Toasty Toddler Program. Donations are being accepted until October 23, 2019 for new hats, scarves, gloves, coats and snowsuits for boys and girls age infant to five years old.
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will open November 1, 2019.
- Health & Welfare Council Membership form was distributed.
- Blair County Social Services had its first virtual Rural Impact County Challenge web meeting on September 26, 2019. Missy will be attending the first on-site visit at Lake Placid, NY from October 9-11, 2019.

6. Ex-Officio Reports

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Sara McConnell

- Sara reported Family to Family class is being held at the VA Hospital.
- NAMI and Southern Alleghenies EMS Council have collaborated to offer Mental Health (MH) 1st Aid classes in Cambria and Bedford Counties. One series will be held in Blair County.
- One NAMI focus is getting new volunteers to be trained for facilitators for NAMI Connection, In Our Own Voice and Ending the Silence Programs.
- NAMI Presents Speaker Series will have a presentation on anxiety toward the end of October/early November.
- The Member Advisory Board wants to create a "Crisis Planning" workgroup to help families be better prepared in a crisis situation.

CONTACT Altoona – Nicole Germaux

- Nicole reported that CONTACT Altoona has five new clients this month.
- Nicole described the training needed to be an inbound call volunteer. Outbound call volunteers do not need as extensive of training. There is one new volunteer this month. There is a need for additional volunteers.
- The 7-11 shift is the hardest volunteer shift to fill.
- Nicole announced that CONTACT Altoona has a new administrative assistant.

The Arc – Maria Brandt

- No updates

ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager

- Lori reported as per ODP Announcement 19-127 published 10/1/19, Intellectual Disabilities (ID) providers will be required to investigate the following incidents within 24 hours:
 - death that occurs during the provision of service
 - inpatient admission to a hospital as a result of an accidental or unexplained injury or an injury caused by a staff person, another individual or during the use of a restraint.
 - neglect
 - exploitation
 - injury requiring treatment beyond first aid as a result of an accidental or unexplained injury or an injury caused by a staff person, another individual or during the use of a restraint
 - theft or misuse of individual funds
 - a violation of an individual's rights

Blair HealthChoices/Community Cares – Amy Marten-Shanafelt

- Amy reported that a discussion on bedbugs took place during their last Consortium meeting. It has been an ongoing issue in the past for staff going into homes, but has increased as of late.
- Amy reported that changing pay from “fee for service” to “case rate” has helped create some stability with staffing
- Amy addressed the Stepping Up on site visit at the Blair County Prison (BCP). A beneficial conversation was held on how to assess an inmate’s level of mental illness to help determine community safety if that inmate was released back into Society. The BCP Forensic Case Manager may participate in further training.
- Amy stated that Blair HealthChoices is still looking for a building to purchase for the H.O.P.E. Drop-In Center.

Open Forum:

Rick closed the meeting.

The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, December 5, 2019 at 11:30a.m. at the Arc, 431 Jackson Ave, Altoona

The next Mental Health Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, November 7, 2019 at 9:00a.m. at CONTACT Altoona.

The next Developmental Programs Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, November 7, 2019 at 11:30a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd.