

**The Blair County Department of Social Services
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 11:30 AM
Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg**

Board Members Present: Chris Cohn, Susanna Tomlinson, Matthew Dumm, Bob Smith, James Stratton, Rick Petroski, Mike Stubler and Commissioner Erb

Board Members Absent: Stephen Martynuska, T. Grant Phillips, Rebecca Aungst, Donna Gority and Amber Hatfield

Others Present: Jim Hudack, Theresa Rudy, Tracy Fitzpatrick, Jamie Henry, Melissa Gordon, Kelly Popich, Aimee Burns, Lorrie Hetager, Erin Kay, Trisha Riggiero and Jennifer Kensinger

MINUTES

Welcome and Call to Order

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

1. Public Comment

- No public comments were received.

2. Approval of August 4, 2022 Minutes

Chris Cohn, Board Member, asked for a correction to the August 4, 2022 minutes. Under Executive Director Search Committee there was a typographical error stating that Jim Hudack's retirement date was January 6, 2022. Jim Hudack's retirement date is January 6, 2023.

- ***Rick Petroski moved to approve the August 4, 2022 minutes as corrected. Bob Smith seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.***

3. Board Operations – Jim Hudack, Executive Director, Department of Social Services (DSS)

Annual Board Report

- Jim announced that the 2022 Annual Board Report will be distributed at the December 1, 2022 Advisory Board meeting.

Nominating Committee (Jim Hudack)

- Jim met with the Nominating Committee on four different occasions to determine the Board officers for 2023.
 - Board members nominated for Officer positions were: Chairperson, Michael Stubler; Vice-Chairperson, Donna Gority; Secretary, Matthew Dumm.

Motion was made by Chris Cohn to approve the nominated officers presented to the Board. Bob Smith seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

- Jim stated that two Advisory Board members, James Stratton and Dr. T. Grant Phillips, asked not to be reappointed. Jim expressed his thanks to Jim Stratton and Dr. Phillips for serving on the Board.
- Jim presented the board with two candidates for the Advisory Board:
 - Susan Franco
 - Dana Melton
- Jim asked the board to make a motion to approve the two aforementioned candidates, so that they can be presented to the Commissioners for their approval.

Motion was made by Susanna Tomlinson to approve Susan Franco and Dana Melton as board member candidates to present to the Blair County Commissioners for their approval. Chris Cohn seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

Donation Request/Agency Suggestions (Upcoming Holiday Season)

- In his absence, Steve Martynuska asked Mike Stubler to ask the attendees to pick an agency to donate money to for the upcoming holiday season. Last year, the H.O.P.E. Drop-In was the recipient of those donations.
- Mike Stubler suggested collecting donations for the Family Services Emergency Shelter. Everyone agreed to that suggestion.
- Voluntary donations will be accepted at the December 1, 2022 Advisory Board meeting.

4. Mental Health Committee Report (Theresa)

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Theresa stated that no motions were made during the meeting to be brought forth to the Board for approval.

5. Developmental Programs Committee Report (Susanna)

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Susanna reported that Lorrie Hetager suggested having providers present at the Developmental Programs Committee meeting.

8. County Reports

Social Services Executive Director – James Hudack

- Jim reported that DSS is trying to fill the vacant fiscal positions within their department, but has not had any success, so DSS has entered into a purchase service agreement with Southern Alleghenies Service Management Group (SASMG) to contract staff to handle DSS fiscal operations.
- The third Mental Health Program Specialist position listing generated one candidate, but that person failed to return any communications, so that position will be reposted.
- Rick Petroski asked if Jim would have the opportunity to train anyone for his position before he retires. Commissioner Erb answered that the County rarely hires prior to a retirement, but in this situation they are moving forward to make that happen so that there is time for Jim to work with that person.

MH/COD –Theresa Rudy

- Theresa stated that DSS is in a good place, in regards, to closing their books for the FY 2021/2022.
- Theresa included an update on the Student Assistance Program and Mobile Crisis Expansion grant in the agenda packet.
- Theresa reported that DSS has not received allocation letters for the Human Services Block Grant or funding from the non-block grant.
- Theresa reported that through the American Rescue Plan and Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) there are opportunities for funding for three categories: walk-in centers, comprehensive plan creation, or mobile team.
- Theresa shared a report from the Behavioral Health Commission on a one-time \$100 million funding to address adult behavioral health needs in Pennsylvania. The \$100 million would be divided up between all the PA counties. The report will be emailed out to everyone.
- Theresa announced that the Crisis Center moved into its new building on October 4, 2022. Location is 501 Howard Ave., Bldg. C Suite 104. The Access Center is Suite 118. Walk-in hours are 8:00 am – 8:00 pm (Monday through Friday) with end goal of being open 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Services are for adult and youth. Phone number remains the same (814-889-2141 Option 1).
- Theresa, formally, introduced Trisha Riggiero as the Crisis Clinician Supervisor.

Mental Health – Tracy Fitzpatrick

- Tracy included an update in the agenda packet.
- Tracy introduced herself as the DSS's new Mental Health Program Specialist.
- Tracy will be leading the Community Support Program (CSP) meetings at the H.O.P.E. Drop-In Center.

Intellectual Disabilities – Melissa Gordon

- Melissa reported that for the past two years, SASMG has been doing annual risk assessments only for residential providers. Starting this month, any providers, that SASMG is Administrative Entity (AE) for, will have to have risk assessments conducted, if they provide pre-vocational, day, adult, in-home & community, companion, nursing and behavior support. Currently, SASMG will be reviewing 14 providers annually, including residential, either by Quality Assessment and Improvement (QA & I) or Requalification with Risk Assessment. Those assessments will alternate.
- Melissa announced that SASMG is in the process of hiring a Risk/Incident Manager.
- SASMG did complete their self-assessment the end of August. Overall, SASMG did very well. The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) will be at SASMG on November 7 to do their on-site, as well, review some additional files.
- SASMG and the Quality Assurance Group rewarded nominated Direct Support Professionals (DSP) during DSP week with gift bags filled with goodies and gift cards.

Early Intervention – Kelly Popich

- Kelly reported that Early Intervention (EI) exceeded their expected 25% return rate for the Family Survey by reaching 28.89%. That information will be used by the state for EI's performance determination.
- EI has applied for grant funding for Service Coordination retention efforts. Total grant allocation is \$800,000, which will be disbursed throughout the entire State.
- Child Find goals for EI will primarily focus on families affected by homelessness.
- This year, EI will be distributing information to more specialized agencies like pregnancy care clinics. Hopefully, the information will help those agencies to make referrals to EI.
- The Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) 2019 Blair County's Care for Kids and Families Resource Guide is being updated.

Quality Assurance & Housing Coordinator – Jim Hudack

- In Missy's absence, Jim Hudack provided updates.
- Jim reported that the Emergency Rental Assistance Program 1 (ERAP 1) ended September 30, 2022. DSS is in the process of closing out ERAP 1.
- Through ERAP 2, Center for Community Action is processing approximately 100 applications a month. ERAP 2 runs through 2025, but funds probably will be exhausted by 2023.
- Construction for Family Services' Emergency Shelter should wrap up this month with the opening to be mid to latter part of November 2022.
- Jim stated that he met with Landlords and CCA and BCCAP to discuss the likely increase of homelessness once rental, fuel and utility assistance ends.

9. Ex-Officio Reports

CONTACT Altoona – Erin Kay

- A report was included in the packet.
- Erin Kay reported that during the months of July, August and September that CONTACT Altoona volunteers missed 0 shifts. Due to hospitalization, the 1st missed shift was on October 1.
- CONTACT Altoona will have a table at the Hollidaysburg's Pumpkin Fest on October 15th.
- 12 Days of CONTACT Christmas fundraiser will begin in November.
- CONTACT Altoona will have team participating in the End Alzheimer's Walk on Saturday, October 22.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Aimee Burns

- A report was included in the agenda packet.
- Amy received a call from the Northern Blair County Roundtable for her to speak with the Tyrone Police Chief about NAMI's Critical Incident Training (CIT) Program.
- Aimee reported that 3 out of 5 participants were trained to become Peer-To-Peer leaders/teachers.
- NAMI will be presenting their Faith Net and In Our Own Voice programs at the Altoona/Johnstown Diocese.
- NAMI's programs are listed on their web-site.

- Aimee explained that the “Meet Little Monster” program was developed during COVID to help younger children. This program may help recognize early signs of mental illness.

The Arc – Maria Brandt

- Maria was not in attendance.

ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager

- Lorrie reported that SIS assessments returned to in-person meetings on September 1, 2022.
- Quality Assessment and Improvement (QA & I) surveys were due the end of August. Onsite visits with SASMG will begin.
- Providers who provide Community Participation Support (CPS) were asked to complete two surveys. They are collecting information on capacity, barriers, ensuring person centered planning, and providing guidance to teams on discharge procedure.
- Direct Support Professional (DSP) week was 9/11/2022 through 9/17/2022. Thank you to SASMG, Lisa Phipps, The Learning Community (TLC), NSSF, and Care Smart Solutions for their donations to DSP week. SASMG asked providers to submit names of DSP’s who do above and beyond when providing support. Providers were given gift cards and Bath and Body Works goodie bags to present to DSP’s. TLC held a BBQ for their DSP’s and gave them gifts of appreciation. Voices for Independence provided cookie trays and refreshments and raffled gift cards. UPMC ACEL provided meat and cheese tray from Grand View Meats.
- TLC wrapped up their summer employment program. Charles Lansberry passed the first part of the benefits counseling program. He is currently doing a case study that is due by the end of this month. TLC is hoping to accept referrals for benefits counseling after completing the program.
- Care Smart Solutions held a Bike Run mid-August. All money went to veterans in our area.
- UPMC ACEL closed the center 8/25 and 8/26 for deep cleaning due to many people testing positive for COVID. For DSP appreciation week, staff were appreciated throughout the week. A meat and cheese tray from Grand View Meats was provided for the entire center to celebrate.
- Providers have until 10/31/2022 to request ARPA funding for staff training and technology. Spending deadline has been extended to 3/31/2025.
- October Central PA Health Care Quality Unit newsletter will be sent out to everyone via email.
- A suggestion was made for providers to present at the Developmental Programs Committee meetings.

Blair HealthChoices/Community Cares – Amy Marten-Shanafelt

- Amy was not in attendance.

Open Forum:

- No comments were made.

The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, December 1, 2022 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 November 3, 2022 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, November 3, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd. or Virtual Meeting