

**The Blair County Department of Social Services  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, April 6, 2023 at 11:30 AM  
Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg**

**Board Members Present:** Donna Gority, Chris Cohn, Susanna Tomlinson, Matthew Dumm, Bob Smith, Mike Stubler, Becky Aungst and Susan Franco

**Board Members Absent:** Commissioner Erb, Rick Petroski, Steve Martynuska, Dana Melton and Amber Hatfield

**Others Present:** Tricia Maceno, Theresa Rudy, Tracy Fitzpatrick, Ginny Christy, Missy Gillin, Erin Kay, Maria Brandt, Kelly Popich, Melissa Gordon, Lorrie Hetager 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 February 2, 2023 Advisory Board Minutes**

- *Motion by Bob Smith to accept the February 2, 2023 minutes. Chris Cohn seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

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

- Trish stated that if anyone is aware of in-person CEU trainings to let Social Services know.
- Theresa added that Blair County Drug & Alcohol Program (BDAP) & Pyramid have hosted CEU trainings on ethics. BDAP may have one coming up in the near future.
- Trish reported that DSS is working with Penn Highlands on a training for Direct Support Professionals (DSP).

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

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Theresa stated that having three (3) mental health program specialist within DSS has been beneficial.

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

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Susanna reported that the Developmental Programs Committee's guest presenters for the March 2, 2023 meeting were Rich and Jaime Zaliznock from Crossroads Day and Residential Programs.

**8. County Reports**

*Social Services Director – Tricia Maceno*

- Tricia reported Scott Andrews, DSS Fiscal Officer, has been with DSS for a month, making the office fully staffed.

*MH/COD – Theresa Rudy*

- Theresa reported that she is keeping an eye on the Governor's 2023/2023 budget.
  - No word on what may be in or out for mental health
  - No action on the 40 million dollars that the Health Commission was to get and distribute last year.
- Theresa stated that the Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) Leadership Coalition is coordinating a Legislative Breakfast for Friday, May 5, 2023.

- An effort is still being made to advocate for the restoration of the 10% mental health budget cut from 2012.

### *Mental Health – Tracy Fitzpatrick*

- Tracy reported that she, Trish and Ginny attended a PA SAP Conference the end of February and a PACA MH/DS Conference the end of March.

### *Intellectual Disabilities – Melissa Gordon*

- Melissa reported that SASMG is collaborating with Penn Highlands College to do Direct Support Professional training for providers since the credentialed DSP curriculum was deemed not cost effective.
- Since COVID restrictions have been lifted, SASMG and their providers are seeing an increase in mental health in individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. SASMG is working on rebuilding their relationship with UPMC Altoona, in the hopes, of getting the people, who they support, the help that they need to address their mental health.
- SASMG is participating in the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training.
- SASMG is fully staffed.
- Jamie Henry sent out the Summer Employment Initiative application.
- Becky Aungst made a suggestion that SASMG and their providers work with Penn Highlands to develop a DSP curriculum that could be offered to participating providers at a discount.
- Maria asked who the new chairperson and co-chairperson are for the Human Rights Committee. Melissa will find out and send Maria the information.

### *Early Intervention – Kelly Popich*

- Kelly reported that EI has been busy with referrals.
- SASMG has been monitoring all aspects of EI to include case management, evaluations and service delivery.
- One evaluator agency has hired 2 additional evaluators to keep up with EI referrals.
- EI Family Survey is open until June. SASMG must meet a 25% return rate on the survey. Currently, the return rate is at 12%.
- Kelly reported that an EI Infant Mental Health Community of Practice has been meeting monthly. That group is also going to send out a family survey to identify gaps to see what training may be needed.
- Week of the Young Child celebration is Saturday, May 13 from 10:30 am – 2:30 pm at Lakemont Park. Rain date is May 20.

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

- Missy stated that CCA is still processing applications for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2 (ERAP 2). Currently, there are 570 applications pending despite the application process being shut down since January 2023. ERAP 2 has distributed 2.5 million dollars in assistance.
- The new Family Services' Emergency Shelter is open with a 30 day stay maximum.

## **9. Ex-Officio Reports**

### *CONTACT Altoona – Erin Kay*

- A report was included in the packet.
- CONTACT Altoona spring volunteer training is scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>. Evening sessions are being held. 5 people are confirmed.
- Fundraiser: Powerhouse Subs
- Participating in the NAMI Conference on Thursday, April 20.
- Erin will be speaking at the CIT training on Friday, April 21.
- A vendor table will be set up at the Altoona Curve Mental Health Awareness game on Friday, May 26.
- Erin will be speaking at an informational night at the Wehnwood United Methodist Church in Juniata in May.
- CONTACT Altoona will be participating in the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community on June 10<sup>th</sup> at the Altoona Curve as well as have a table at Let's Move Blair County event at Lakemont Park.

- CONTACT Altoona will be running a Plinko table at the Duncansville Community Days on July 21 and 22.
- Healthy Blair County Coalition is presenting a free Fighting Fraud Social Media Awareness: Protecting Yourself from all the D@mn Scammers on Wednesday, April 26, 2023 from 2pm-4pm or 6pm-8pm at the Blair County Convention Center and Thursday, April 27, 2023 (same times as above) at the Morrisons Cove Memorial Park Event Center.

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

- A report was included in the agenda packet.

#### *The Arc – Maria Brandt*

- On April 29, 2023 there is a Blair Creators Festival from 12pm-8pm at Heritage Plaza, 1401-07 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Altoona. Arc members will be performing.
- Fundraiser: Ultimate Subs
- Parent to Parent training will be held Thursday, May 11, 2023 at The Arc of Blair County, 431 Jackson Ave., Altoona from 1pm-3pm or 6pm-8pm. Flyer was included in the agenda packet.

#### *ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager*

- Lorrie reported that the Arc had a dance last month. Mike Bradshaw said it was well attended and that people from other organizations came.
- Elise Messner, The Learning Community, presented at a national webinar through the National Center on Advancing Person Centered Practices (NCAPPS). She presented building supporting cultures for staff to support people with risk.
- The Learning Community has been sharing boxes of produce with providers/people supported in Blair County.
- Amazon is moving into Blair County. The company is fantastic at hiring people with disabilities.
- The Learning Community will be presenting at the Development Programs Committee in May.
- Quality Assurance and Risk Management Group: QA Newsletter finalized, IM brochures updated for DSPs and families.
- Community Practice had their kick-off meeting in January. They are focusing on LifeCourse, Person Centered Thinking and Facilitation Skills. Next meeting will be April 11, 2023 from 9 am to 11:30 am. They will be focusing on Skill check in, important to and important for, and working/not working.

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

- Amy was not in attendance.

#### *Open Forum:*

- No further discussion

Mike Stubler thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

**The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, June 1, 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 Thursday, May 4, 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, May 4, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd. or Virtual Meeting**