

**The Blair County Department of Social Services
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 11:30 AM
Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg**

Board Members Present: Commissioner Erb, Donna Gority, Susanna Tomlinson, Matthew Dumm, Bob Smith, Dana Melton, Rick Petroski, and Susan Franco

Board Members Absent: Chris Cohn, Mike Stubler, Becky Aungst, Steve Martynuska and Amber Hatfield

Others Present: Theresa Rudy, Tracy Fitzpatrick, Missy Gillin, Erin Kay, Aimee Burns, Jamie Henry, Kelly Popich, and Jennifer Kensinger

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order

- Donna Gority welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

2. Public Comment

- No public comments were received.

3. Approval of April 6, 2023 Advisory Board Minutes

- *Motion by Susanna Tomlinson to accept the April 6, 2023 minutes. Bob Smith seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

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

- Trish was not in attendance.

5. Mental Health Committee Report (Theresa Rudy)

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Theresa stated that there were numerous May is Mental Health (MH) Month events, as noted in the MH Committee report.

6. Developmental Programs Committee Report (Susanna Tomlinson)

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Donna stated that Christine Green gave a presentation on St. Francis' IM4Q (Independent Monitoring For Quality) program.

8. County Reports

Social Services Director – Tricia Maceno

- Tricia was not in attendance.

MH/COD –Theresa Rudy

- Theresa reported that Commissioners approved Revision 3 of the FY 2021/2022 Income & Expense (I&E) report and Revision 2 of the FY 2021/2022 Retention Plan.
- Theresa stated the Lindsay Dempsie is continuing to help train Scott Andrews, Social Services Fiscal Officer.
- Theresa reported that there was an error in posting of June 2022's payroll, which will mean a reduction in the retention amount. Current year base funds may be used to make up those lost retention funds.
- Most providers are paid through March.
- Human Service Block Grant (HSBG) 2023/2024 Annual Plan guidelines have not been released yet, but should be soon with minimal changes from the previous year.
- HSBG 2023/2024 1st Public Hearing was held Wednesday, May 24, 2023 at the H.O.P.E. Drop-In Center. It was well attended.

- The Leadership Coalition Legislative Breakfast was held Friday, May 5, 2023 at Blair HealthChoices.
- Theresa thanked Tracy, Ginny and Cindy for all their extra work involving the May is MH Month events.

Mental Health – Tracy Fitzpatrick

- Tracy had no additional MH updates.

Intellectual Disabilities – Jamie Henry

- Jamie reported that SASMG received one (1) applicant, The Learning Community (TLC), for its Summer Employment grant, which is (2) two \$10,000 awards. Jamie explained that TLC is partnering with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and requested both grant amounts totaling \$20,000 which would benefit twenty (20) students instead of the just (4) like last year. The idea of granting TLC both grants was presented to the Leadership Coalition on Monday, May 22, 2023 and attending members agreed that both \$10,000 grants should be awarded to TLC.

Early Intervention (EI) – Kelly Popich

- A report was included in the agenda packet.
- Kelly reported that Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) funded programs including EI, Head Start, Early Learning Resource Center and Nurse Family Partnership met in Pittsburgh, in May, to collaborate and talk about information, supports and resources pertaining to domestic violence. EI will reconnect with local domestic violence agencies to discuss information and services.

Quality Assurance & Housing Coordinator – Missy Gillin

- Missy stated that Center for Community Action (CCA) is still processing around 400 applications for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2 (ERAP 2). New numbers will be coming out.
- Missy reported that Operation Safe Space removed (8) eight tenants from an uninhabitable building. Blair County Community Action Program (BCCAP) helped in this operation by placing those tenants into hotels until more permanent housing was established. Another Operation Safe Space initiative will take place in June. BCCAP is in need of funding for this, so the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) has allocated \$20,000 to help with hotel stays, which was approved by the Blair County Commissioners.
- The Family Services' Emergency Shelter is running smoothly.
- Susanna added that Sister Paula's Soup Kitchen prepares the meals for those individuals who are placed in hotels.

9. Ex-Officio Reports

CONTACT Altoona – Erin Kay

- A report was included in the packet.
- Erin gave a presentation on May 10 at the Wehnwood United Methodist Church luncheon.
- CONTACT Altoona participated in the "Light It Green" and Altoona Curve MH Awareness event.
- CONTACT Altoona's first fundraiser, for the FY, will be the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community on June 10 at the Altoona Curve. At this time, five participants are signed up. Also, on June 10, CONTACT Altoona will participant in the Let's Move Blair County Day.
- CONTACT Altoona will have their Plinko game at Duncansville Community Days on July 21st and 22nd.
- Erin donated unwanted items from CONTACT Altoona to the H.O.P.E. Drop-In Center. Erin has set up a collection box, at the office, for other items, mainly hygiene, to donate to H.O.P.E.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Aimee Burns

- A report was distributed at the meeting.
- Family to Family Course is currently happening at the Overflow Church in Altoona.
- NAMI has (3) three people trained in the NAMI Homefront course, which is for active service members, veterans and their family members. NAMI National needs to open up the course materials before the first session can begin.

- Support Groups continue the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm at the H.O.P.E. Drop-In Center. Aimee is working on having Support Groups at the Nehemiah Project so that individuals who live on the other side of Altoona would be able to attend.
- Support Groups in the prison began in May. Another group is scheduled for June 16th. If overall enthusiasm continues for the support groups, they may be offered twice a month.
- NAMI National is offering an Innovative grant, which can be used toward expansion of an existing program. Aimee is going to write to expand on the Meet Little Monster children's mental health coloring and activity book that was designed as a tool for young children to express and explore their feelings. Grant application is due by June 16, 2023.
- NAMI attended (3) three Mental Health events in May.

The Arc – Maria Brandt

- Maria was not in attendance.
- Donna stated the members of The Arc performed at the Blair Creators Festival on April 29.

ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager

- Lorrie was not in attendance.

Blair HealthChoices/Community Cares – Amy Marten-Shanafelt

- Amy was not in attendance.
- Donna, Blair HealthChoices Board Member, stated that she and Commissioner Erb met with Blair HealthChoices lead staff for a team goal review. Updates were given on last year's team goal, as well as, discussion of what their team goal is for this year.

Open Forum:

- Rick Petroski stated that he and his staff could prioritize psychological evaluations for SASMG referrals.
- Donna reminded everyone that "Let's Move Into Kindness Blair County" will be launched during the Let's Move Blair County Day! on Saturday, June 10, 2023 at Lakemont Park.
- Theresa Rudy announced that she is retiring this year. She is planning on late August 2023.

Donna Gority thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, August 3, 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, September 7, 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, September 7, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd. or Virtual Meeting