

**ERIE COUNTY MENTAL HYGIENE COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD  
MINUTES**

November 2, 2023

COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD: Terry Alford, Daniel Antonius, Victoria Brooks, Sharon Cavanaugh, Kathryne Coric, Max Donatelli, Emma Fabian, Maya Hu Morabito, Stephanie Orlando, Elizabeth Smith, BJ Stasio, Erica Westphal

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: Mark O'Brien, Shannon Stocker

EXCUSED: Joan Baizer, Pastor George Nicholas, Charles Syms

---

**Approval of Minutes:**

- Erica requested to add to October CSB Minutes: *the question that the Subcommittee posted at September's meeting, whether outreach to family or collateral contact during the program treatment is currently actioned or currently a requirement in the County RFPs.*
- Erica's change was made to the October Minutes. Motion to approve, with Erica's addition, made by Maya, seconded by Elizabeth, no one opposed, October Minutes were approved.

**MH Commissioner Updates:**

- Beds are being restored to Buffalo Psychiatric Center (BPC). They have 7 beds that have already been brought back online: one on each of their existing 7 units. 16 beds will be opening shortly. They are recruiting staff right now. There was controversy when they were going to move Children's Psychiatric Center (CPC) over to BPC. That will not happen, but the renovation had already started, so there was a unit pretty much ready to go. That is coming online as we speak – they've already accepted their first patient. Then, BPC was awarded 16 additional beds. They will be up to 188 beds around the beginning of the new year. In the first new unit, there will be a concentration on co-occurring disorders. Their idea is to have that treatment follow the person as they go under more long-term care on the other units, if that's where they progress to. The focus of what will be the new 16 beds has not yet been determined, but will include additional 730s, the restoration for competencies.
- OMH wants to do some regional planning. We are still the only region in the state that has a functioning Regional Planning Consortium (RPC). We are looking to have the RPC fold into the 1115 Waiver HEROs if they become subregional, or there will have to be some determination as to whether the RPC continues under new leadership. Margaret Varga and Mark have co-chaired it for the last 7 years and will be looking to hand that off by June of next year.
- Opioid Settlement: The \$1.2M RFP has been awarded to Impact Marketing. There was another RFP for \$6M that was for community-based intervention solutions on the opioid process. ECDMH does not control that process, but ECDMH Contract Coordinator Tara Karoleski and Mark sit on the scoring and decision committee. There were 24 responses, but some were not complete. That scoring will be done by a week from Monday, then the group will meet and award the money. Chances are there will be a second round of an RFP that goes out, especially if all the money isn't awarded from this.
- At yesterday's monthly Leadership Meeting, we reminded all the organizations (about 50-75 in attendance) to do assessments on Veteran status and families. Also, ECDMH's new MH

Emergency / Disaster Response Coordinator, Sarah Bonk, did a presentation to help prepare for snow emergencies.

- We don't know yet what the State Budget will look like. Next year is supposed to be kind of dicey and they're saying the year after that is going to be even more dicey. Right now, state agencies are looking for a budget freeze for next year. The good news is, the Governor is very pro-human services.
- We continue to work with CPEP to improve conditions there as well as doing community work to keep as many people as possible out of CPEP and going to other more-suitable options, before going to CPEP. There is an overall steering committee and internal CPEP meetings that are continuing. The BestSelf and Recovery Options diversion programs are in the process and may open in Spring / June 2024. We are trying to work off the continuum that was developed when DSRIP (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Program) and Millennium were around, looking at people's level of distress, options they have for that level, making sure the providers are aware of those options, and bring down as many barriers as possible.
- Mark met "Baby" Joe Mesi when he, Mike Billoni, and Dr. Dori Marshall, Chief Medical Officer at Oishei Children's Hospital, did a presentation this past Sunday at Calvary Episcopal Church in Williamsville.
- Erie County's PATH App (<https://www3.erie.gov/mentalhealth/erie-path>) is launched and is phenomenal. You will probably see this evolve over the next couple of years, broadening the resources on the app. If anyone sees missing information, please email ECDMH's Amy Rockwood ([Amy.Rockwood@erie.gov](mailto:Amy.Rockwood@erie.gov)).
- People may see a story on Channel 4 or other media about People Inc. closing a group home and a family that is infuriated. We have had contact with the family, who reached out to us. We do not have the power, nor does OPWDD, to stop a voluntary agency from closing a group home. What we have found, after looking into it, is that they have checked all the boxes, have been working with the families, etc. It is a staffing issue. They cannot provide staff at safe levels or meet state requirements. They are working with the family to discuss other options.

### **Chairperson Update:**

- For CSB members with terms that are expiring, please reply to Shannon re: renewals.
- Max's CSB Chair term is ending in May after meeting his term limit of 3 years. If anyone wants to move into the Chair position, please let Max or Mark know. BJ is Vice Chair right now; whether he wants to seek the office of the Chair is up to him. To help make more joint decisions, we have a nominating committee, comprised of the 3 Subcommittee Chairs, Max, and BJ. If you would like to suggest someone or if you would like to be part of these meetings, please let Max know.
- Vote on Alcohol and Substance Abuse (ASA) Subcommittee's new name:
  - o The ASA Subcommittee feels the word "Abuse" is a little stigmatic and wanted to remove that. They also wanted to include the prevention piece as well. They voted internally on "Prevention and Addiction Services and Supports Subcommittee" (PASSS).
  - o Elizabeth motioned to pass the new name, Terry seconded, no one opposed, motion passed. This will now be run through the County Executive's office to get written into the Bylaws. It will then be changed on the website.
- The Anti-Stigma Coalition hosted a Facebook Live and discussed Influential Voices in the Black Community. Pastor George Nicholas was one of the speakers in that FB Live along with Kelly Dumas. Karl Shallowhorn was the moderator. They did a great job representing some of the issues that are relevant right now in our black community. If you missed it, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/talkstigma/videos/276479508567626>.

- They discussed the stigma of people not getting help in the black community. They identified some of the barriers and issues. They also talked about how the media is not doing a good job because they are not dealing with some of the issues and collective trauma and are also not discussing recommendations to various churches and the community at large.
- Kelly Dumas may get invited to a future MH Subcommittee and CSB meeting to discuss the Say Yes and database initiatives.
- Pastor Nicholas did a great job speaking candidly from personal experience, especially as we get into the holidays, when depression can be magnified.
- The African American Heritage Corridor (AAHC) will be holding an Annual Event on Sat, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> focusing on families. We are anticipating a large crowd and can disseminate materials for whoever wants them to. The AAHC has a new facility and would be willing to host a future CSB Meeting if we would like.
- Mark shared Resources for Dealing with Holiday Stressors links which will be sent out after this meeting – feel free to share.
- Received good feedback from CSB Members with recommendations on how the CSB is run.
  - Removed “Other Updates” from the CSB Meeting Agendas. If there are specific items to discuss, please let Max know.
  - Reminder, these meetings are open to the public and, once the minutes are approved, they are on the ECDMH website and are FOIL-able. We are not required to have a public comment period.
  - Max and Mark will discuss feedback.
  - If you would like to see any Meeting changes, or if you have ideas for speakers that you would like to have to come to meetings, please let Max know.

### **Subcommittee Updates:**

- PASSS Subcommittee (Elizabeth):
  - Last meeting was October 26<sup>th</sup>. Minutes will be sent out.
  - Janice Cooke-Feigenbaum is resigning from PASSS Subcommittee. She recommended another candidate to replace her, Dr. Alyssa Hamel. Dr. Hamel will attend the January meeting, introduce herself, and then we will vote on her before passing along her information for CSB approval.
  - Next meeting will be January 25<sup>th</sup>.
- MH Subcommittee (Erica):
  - Last meeting was September 11<sup>th</sup>. Minutes will be sent out.
  - Regarding the Local Services Plan, do we have the same timeline now that they are 3-year plans? Mark said to reach out to Amy Rockwood at ECDMH ([Amy.Rockwood@erie.gov](mailto:Amy.Rockwood@erie.gov)).
  - Next meeting will be November 13<sup>th</sup>.
- IDD Subcommittee (Max):
  - Last meeting was September 21<sup>st</sup>. Minutes will be sent out.
  - Next meeting will be November 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Next Meeting:**

- Thursday, January 4, 2024 @ 9:00am.
- If you have other ideas for speakers or topics you would like us to focus on, please let Max know.