

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

September 5, 2024

**COMMUNITY**

**SERVICES BOARD:** Terry Alford, Joan Baizer, Victoria Brooks, Sharon Cavanaugh, Kathryne Coric, Max Donatelli, Emma Fabian, Maya Hu Morabito, Stephanie Orlando, Elizabeth Smith, BJ Stasio, Charles Syms, Erica Westphal

**GUEST:** Amy Rockwood, ECDMH Director of Planning and Evaluation  
Anika Kalra, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

**MENTAL HEALTH**

**DEPARTMENT:** Mark O'Brien, Shannon Stocker

**EXCUSED:** Daniel Antonius, Pastor George Nicholas

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**Approval of Minutes:**

- June CSB Minutes were approved.

**Chairperson Update:**

- Stephanie introduced herself as the new CSB Chair. She is the Chief Operations Officer with WNY Independent Living and has been in the peer movement since 1999 for people with disability, but primarily she's come through having multiple disabilities, including mental health, and was in the children's system of care quite a bit. Now as an adult, she continues to have her struggles; it's part of who she is, but she is proud to be part of the peer movement. She is open to any feedback, brainstorming, and discussion.
- Max gave an update on some things that were worked on over the summer. There was an application for a CDC grant with the Center for Health Equity with Erie County and BestSelf. Max is hoping to hear more and to report more on that, but he does not have all the information today that he can share. He's been working with Dr. Ana Stearns from Buffalo Center for Health Equity, Pastor Nicholas, and Kelly Wofford on some of the issues and concerns. They did get a fairly large grant, in conjunction with University at Buffalo, for health equity.

**MH Commissioner Updates:**

- Announced today's visitor, Anika Kalra.
- Anika Kalra introduced herself as the Sr. Planning Analyst at NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. She manages their CSB and is trying to sit in on some CSB meetings around the state to learn how other CSB's are managed and run to see how they can improve theirs and engage their CSB members more. She thanked everyone for letting her sit in.
- Congratulations to Stephanie for assuming the Chair.
- Thank you, Max for your leadership and long friendship.
- The 1115 Waiver, the Social Care Network, has been awarded to WNYICC (Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative); Nikki Kmicinski is their Executive Director.
- There is still a lot of work being done on the Crisis Continuum. The Lee Foundation has been funding some things. They are assembling kind of a leadership group that would involve a governess. The workgroup is finishing up a new triage tool for all providers, both peer and professional, to offer options for people who fall into any level of crisis, from who to call, where

to go, and who could come, including pathways, numbers, etc. They hope to have this completed in the next 2-3 months and get it out for the provider community to weigh in on it and try to adopt it. The next phase of that will be some public messaging to give people out in the community the notion that they have options other than 9-1-1, 9-8-8, or to go to CPEP. We want to leave CPEP for people who need CPEP.

- We continue to meet with CPEP. There has been a lot of progress. There will be redesigns to take out some of the office space to have more meeting rooms, do more youth programming, and do more adult stuff. We are very actively engaged with them. My understanding is that they are recruiting for a new Vice President of Behavioral Health Services.
- The ECMC Help Center got awarded an RFP from OMH for what is now called a MHOTRS (Mental Health Outpatient and Treatment Recovery Services) Certificate. It used to be Article 28 (hospital-based) and Article 31 (non-hospital-based) outpatient clinic. This will be a track that will concentrate on youth and youth diversion from CPEP.
- Mark sent an invitation to Jed Wolkenbreit, the Council for the Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors (the CLMHD put together the manual for the Community Services Board, for the Directors of Community Services (DCSs), etc.). Jed is retiring at the end of the year, but will provide a training for this group at the November meeting. We will make November's meeting 1 ½ hours long. Remember, our CSB is advisory, other CSBs are not advisory, so some of the information will not apply to all counties.
- Mark only has the October and January meetings left with this group before he retires (John Grieco will be here for the November meeting). He will ask if the succession process has started (planning, posting, etc.). John Grieco will step in on the interim basis.

### **Amy Rockwood**

- Provided the latest data from the Erie Path App.
  - o Launched app publicly on Oct. 4, 2023. Since then, we've had 175,000 visitors and 15 million hits on the app and the site.
  - o Mark has assigned Sarah Bonk and Julianna Everdyke to assist Amy and CCSI as they continue to work on the app.
- September is Suicide Awareness Month
  - o Fri, Sept 13<sup>th</sup> at 9am at the Rath Building, there is a Flag of Hope event being put on by the Erie County Suicide Prevention Coalition, MC'd by Mark, presentations by the County Executive and others. Feel free to join us and bring your organization's banner.
  - o Buildings will be lit up and trainings are coming up.
- Previously provided us with the link to the 2025 Local Services Plan (LSP), which was completed and submitted by the deadline. The focus areas for this year are: housing, workforce, diversion, racial equity and diversity, and reduce overdose stats. We have a lot of information in our ClearPoint system, which is where all of our contract agencies provide us with performance data that they collect typically every quarter. We are working with CCSI, who works with us with ClearPoint, for them to take all of the data and some of the groupings that we have (MH Residential, OASAS Residential, OMH Diversion, OMH Outpatient Programs, and Vocational) to provide Amy with Tableau reports. Because of the volume of data and the lack of internal resources (primarily Amy's time), she is hoping to have at least some of those reports by the end of this month. There is also information about the race, ethnicity, gender, and age of the persons served by those programs. We also have information collected in there about positive outcomes by race and ethnicity. So, we will be able to do some comparisons and look at those numbers to get a better sense of how people are doing from the racial equity perspective.
  - o Previously provided a long list of potential data points that we have available. There was discussion in the last CSB meeting about using other data sources. Do we want to wait

until we have the Tableau reports so we can look at those and get a better sense of if that's meaningful? My preference, from a resource level, is to use what we have. It's closest to the sources, it's ours, it's timely. Then I can work with it and it applies directly to the LSP, so it all ties in for me.

- Stephanie shared her perspective that in the last meeting, we were brainstorming without knowing fully what was available and easy. She thinks it makes sense to start with looking at what we have.
  - Max brought up that each of the subcommittees has priorities and things they are looking at. He thinks it would be helpful to have a dashboard that could be updated. He defers to the subcommittees to identify what they think would be the most valuable for each of them.
  - Erica said that the MH Subcommittee will be looking at it in their meeting on Monday. They are specifically looking at metrics for a potential dashboard. She asked if the Tableau reports will be categorized by priority, or what they will look like so we can hopefully fit in our suggestions of data that we would like to see in the plan that you already have in place.
    - Amy said she hasn't seen them yet, so she doesn't know what they will look like. Most of the priorities for each of the subcommittees are focused around the focus areas that she mentioned. Once she has the data and can see what is meaningful, she can see if she can present the data in a way, using Tableau or another approach. Then, she will have a much better idea of what we are working with. Once that happens, she can share that with you and get feedback from the subcommittees, and we can move from there.
  - Stephanie said she thinks its helpful in the way the plan is laid out, where we have the big picture view of that goal across all of the subcommittees, then it focuses in on each area. She thinks that is important for us to look at all 3 together and not get too siloed at this level. The subcommittees can focus in and do more of the focused work.
  - Erica asked if Amy could come to the MH Subcommittee and present the reports, maybe in January? Amy said she will definitely want to come out as soon as she can. She would like to share them first, then come out and talk about them.
- We may start working on the 2026 LSP in January, since it is now due the end of June.
  - We conducted a workforce survey that went out in March, and Amy is hoping to finish the report by the end of September. As soon as that is available, she will send it out. The biggest takeaway is that things are still really bad as far as staffing, but people are not perceiving it as big of a problem as it is.

### **Subcommittee Updates:**

- MH Subcommittee (Erica):
  - Last meeting was July 8<sup>th</sup>. Minutes will be sent out.
  - Next meeting will be September 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - The past couple of meetings, they've had Deanna Schaumloeffel, Crisis Response Diversion Coordinator from Crisis Services, join them and presented on all the initiatives she's worked on.
  - They also had Christine Slocum, the Housing Coordinator for Erie County Single Point of Access, who provided a lot of great housing data.
  - Restoration Society (RSI) will not be pursuing the Code Blue this year. They don't know if anyone else will be picking up any of this work.
  - Crisis Services is looking for a Director of Advocacy.
  - Emma expressed concern about the increase in homelessness. The utilization of Evergreen's drop-in services (showers, laundry, group activities, etc.) has skyrocketed

the past year. A lot of the population that use these services identify as being without stable housing or completely homeless and sleeping outside. She is concerned about the colder months approaching and organizations that used to do the Code Blue type of work not being able to take on that responsibility. It's just gotten too big.

- Mark added that Ben Swanekamp, Erie County Chief of Staff, convened a meeting at the direction of the County Executive with all Departments who deal with housing homelessness to bring them all together to essentially reformulate and re-coordinate what we do. What DSS does in terms of homelessness is very different than what SPOA and DMH does. They are also looking at 295 Funds, or Opioid Settlement Funds, to see where those can be applied. DSS, DMH, and the Health Dept will all be working on this.
  - Mark also said he has been over to RSI's Harbor House, Genesee St. location. ECDMH is working with RSI and another agency behind the scenes on a lot of things.
- PASS Subcommittee (Elizabeth):
    - Last meeting was June 27<sup>th</sup>. Minutes will be sent out.
    - Next meeting will be September 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - IDD Subcommittee (BJ):
    - Last meeting was July 18<sup>th</sup>. Minutes will be sent out.
    - Next meeting will be September 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Next Meeting:**

- If you have any topic suggestions, please reach out to Stephanie.
- Thursday, October 3, 2024 @ 9:00am.