

ERIE COUNTY MENTAL HYGIENE COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD MINUTES

April 3, 2025
Webex, 9:00am – 10:00am

COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD: Daniel Antonius, Joan Baizer, Victoria Brooks, Sharon Cavanaugh, Max Donatelli (Secretary), Emma Fabian, Jane Mogavero, Maya Hu Morabito, Pastor George Nicholas, Stephanie Orlando (Chair), Christopher Ramnauth, Elizabeth Smith, BJ Stasio (Vice Chair), Charles Syms

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: Sarah Bonk, Shannon Stocker

EXCUSED: N/A

ABSENT: Terry Alford

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
(a majority of the members of the Board)

Approval of Minutes:

- Minutes were not approved since they were just sent out a few hours before the meeting.

Introductions, Including New Members:

- Jane Mogavero, Executive Director of the Patrick Lee Foundation
- Christopher Ramnauth, Clinical Social Worker at the VA of WNY

Department Updates:

- We are waiting for the new Local Law to be signed (emailed to CSB during this meeting). We were instructed to work with the County Executive's office about it. We do not have a timeline when this needs to start. This is an introduction to it.
 - o CSB Meetings will be open to the public. We may have a public comment period.
 - o We will post links to these meetings online.
 - o We will have to be mindful of specific details we discuss, like Protected Health Information (PHI). If conversations need to happen with PHI, we could go into Executive Session, where that piece of the discussion is not open, but the result of the discussion is.
 - o Our meetings will also be video recorded, and those recordings will be available online. We will assume the Chat section in Webex will be included in the recordings.
 - o The minutes and videos may need to be posted online permanently.
 - o We are looking into if the Subcommittees will need to abide by this law as well.
- One of ECDMH's biggest goals at the moment is staying on top of fluctuations in federal funding. We've had some great conversations at the O Agencies (OMH, OASAS, + OPWDD) and they are just as unaware of the cuts and changes as we are. It is very important to the County Executive that the funding is consistently accessible. He wants to make sure that the

HUD and Emergency Services are funded at this time.

Chairperson Updates:

- Topics of interest we can set up speakers for are:
 - o Human trafficking
 - o Involuntary hospitalization
 - o Handle with Care Registry – the Department of Central Police Services reached out to ECDMH asking if we wanted to be named as a collaborator on this as they take it County-wide. Sarah asked to remove ECDMH from it for now. The Commissioner of CPS, Brian Ross, would like to talk to this group about this.
- Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Services (CDPAS)
 - o The state awarded Public Partnerships LLC (PPL) with the one statewide Fiscal Intermediary (FI) for CDPAS moving people from many agencies to just this one, transitioning well over 200,000 people.
https://health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/longterm/cdpap/
 - o People have until the end of this month (including the one-month grace period the Governor gave) to get enrolled into PPL and be payroll ready.
 - o There are a lot of people that aren't in the system, ready to be paid, so we're assuming that there will be some people that won't work because they don't know if they are going to get paid. A lot of the previous FI's gave layoff letters because we have no authorizations to provide service.
 - o The independent living movement is very worried that this is going to flood the hospitals if people can't get their daily care and people aren't working.
 - o The Governor's office says the reason for this is because there was massive fraud that was going on with the former system with its 600 providers.
- Op-ed in Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)
 - o An op-ed was circulated that was drafted by several of our members.
 - Some people were concerned about making a public statement at this point.
 - Some feel it is important to publicly explain and talk about the impact of the proposed and actual cuts that the federal government is making, changes in language, etc. and the impact this is going to have on the people who this committee is supposed to be representing.
 - It was also suggested that, in addition to sending this letter, we should have a townhall in a republican district, maybe in Hamburg, to explain to the public what is actually happening.
 - Others felt that they are unable to make a public statement because of their affiliations. They feel we should continue to talk about this internally and how we can advocate, based on what the role of the CSB is supposed to be.
 - When we talk about taxpayer dollars in the op-ed, it sounds like we are being paid to be representatives. We need to make it clear that CSB members are volunteers and advisors.
 - From the funder and philanthropic side, some people are advising nonprofits to not even use the DEIA label, because then it becomes the partisan fighting and not about the issue of how we're losing funding for good services that need to be provided in our community, and this is what the real impact is.
 - The letter seems to explain understandable frustration and disappointment instead of providing education. Some partners are keeping the good work going but describing it in a different way so that it is not as polarizing.

- Since several weeks have passed since we originally drafted the op-ed, it might make more sense to shift to more of a conversation about how the limiting of DEI language is tied into cuts to Medicaid. Make it a little more educating and use language more about healthcare and Medicaid. Because we have a little more evidence from the past few weeks of literal cuts to the system. Maybe we use this to make a broader statement and have some folks with the ability to sign it in hopes that the Buffalo News would still pick it up even though it's not as cutting of a statement.
- We could sign and submit it separately, not as the CSB.
- We need to make sure that this comes off with our great intent, but it could come off as divisive and there could be certain unwanted consequences. Is it the CSB's job to put out an op-ed?
- For now, we will hold off on submitting the op-ed since we don't want any blowback that would hurt more than help.

Subcommittee Updates:

- MH Subcommittee (Jane):
 - Last meeting was March 10th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - Next meeting will be May 12th.
- PASS Subcommittee (Elizabeth):
 - Last meeting was March 27th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - Charles Syms stepped down from being a voting member of our Subcommittee but will continue to participate as a non-voting member.
 - Emma Fabian was a non-voting member but will now be a voting member.
 - Next meeting will be April 24th.
- I/DD Subcommittee (BJ):
 - Last meeting was March 20th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - Next meeting will be May 15th.

Open Discussion:

- N/A

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, May 1, 2025, from 9:00-10:00am.

 Max Donatelli, Secretary, Signature