

ERIE COUNTY MENTAL HYGIENE COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD MINUTES

September 4, 2025
Webex, 9:00am – 10:00am

COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD: Joan Baizer, Victoria Brooks, Sharon Cavanaugh, Max Donatelli (Secretary), Jane Mogavero, Pastor George Nicholas, Stephanie Orlando (Chair), Elizabeth Smith, BJ Stasio (Vice Chair)

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: Sarah Bonk, Shannon Stocker

EXCUSED: Christopher Ramnauth

ABSENT: Terry Alford, Daniel Antonius, Emma Fabian, Charles Syms

GUEST: Amy Rockwood, ECDMH Director of Planning and Evaluation

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

Approval of Minutes:

- June Minutes were approved. Motion made by Max, seconded by Elizabeth, no discussion, all in favor, no one opposed, no abstentions.

Subcommittee Updates:

- MH Subcommittee (Jane):
 - o Last meeting was July 14th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - o Trying to narrow list of priorities to items with measurable outcomes, then set objective, measurable goals to see if our work is moving towards successful outcomes.
 - o After we identify these priorities, we may consider adding committee members who can help us think through them with different perspectives and levels of expertise.
 - o Previous priorities could have been used in both the adult and children's services. We are now trying to be more inclusive of children's specific needs.
 - The County will soon pivot attention to the children's spectrum. We have a disproportionate percentage of young black males on AOT. If we help communities focus on what community resiliency means and how to have strong communities and Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPOA) coordinators who can help families navigate through system literacy challenges so they can be strong on their own, then we would not see as many young black males on AOT or people using high cost, upper level, intrinsically imposing on their rights, sort of services.
 - It is important that in our current CSB Subcommittees, we all consider children's needs.
 - o Next meeting will be September 8th.

- PASS Subcommittee (Elizabeth):
 - o Last meeting was June 26th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - o We've been focusing on our priorities, overdoses, and workforce. Working with educators to discuss their substance use curriculum and encouraging people to get in the field.
 - o Next meeting will be September 25th.
- I/DD Subcommittee (Max):
 - o Last meeting was August 14th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - o Issues remain to be with Medicaid, self-direction, community classes, and housing. It is also difficult to know where funding for IDD services is going with the threats to Medicaid.
 - o For the first time, the IDD Commissioner will be missing the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SANYS) Conference to be with the Governor. The National Association of Direct Support Professionals Conference is this upcoming week in Buffalo. BJ Stasio is being recognized for their Humanitarian of the Year Award.
 - o There is a new OPWDD Know Your Rights book that came out. Thankfully, BJ had a major influence on its contents.
 - o Disability Pride Day was a big success.
 - o Talked about the Whole Person Supports movement, which is being updated.
 - o Our website: ArtOfAdvocacy.com has been updated.
 - o Next meeting will be September 18th.

Chairperson Updates:

- We currently have one opening on this Committee and two great potential new members. We want to stick to the Bylaws in terms of membership and terms. We want to make sure this Board continues to be a specific advisory Board to the Mental Health Department in terms of keeping us updated with what's going on. We want folks to think about what they are going to continue bringing to the Board and whether they are comfortable with the commitment required. We are continuing to track attendance and, if it is not maintained, we may ask folks to evaluate if they can continue to be committed to the Board with what we are looking for, or do we need to rotate people out.
 - o Shannon will schedule a Selection Committee meeting, which is comprised of the Subcommittee Chairs, the Executive Board of this Committee, and the ECDMH Commissioner. There, we will review the two resumes.
 - o We want to make sure our CSB members represent a wide variety of areas.
- Reminder to Committee Members to please email Stephanie and Shannon to list yourself as excused if you cannot attend a meeting so we can document attendance properly. Shannon will send CSB Members the 2024 – 2025 Attendance Sheet now.

Department Updates:

- ECDMH staff have been trying to keep up with Federal changes and updates.
- Within the last week, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) put out a funding notification for \$19M for the states to apply for housing, specifically for folks on Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) with persistent mental illness. Counties cannot apply directly for this funding; NYS will have to.
- We just had our 2026 Budget submission for our Dept. There has been no suggestion that in 2026 ECDMH will have to actively look to enact a 10% reduction scenario, however, our County Budget Director is still asking for us to prepare and plan for a 2027 10% budget reduction.

- The good news is that this won't mean a lot for organizations that we contract with, because when the Budget Director says we need to look for budget cuts, he is talking about County investment dollars.
- To us, that is a huge cut. We are receiving just under \$10M of County tax investment in this department. Which means we will be looking at a 10% reduction within that Budget, which targets our Forensic staff.
- Our message from us as a County globally is going to be that we won't be able to be here as your safety net, to bail out individual organizations in the next couple of years.
- We want to hear how we can communicate information to the public with a layer of separation to help protect the Department to make sure our contracting doesn't get threatened.
 - A suggestion was made to hold community input sessions around the Local Services Plan or potential things that the CSB can host. We could invite people to talk and CSB Members can speak as individuals, not as employees of our employers. We could have it in a Republican's district and invite Republican leaders from the legislators to be part of the conversation. There should be no hesitation about discussions if we speak the truth.
 - The Executive Committee and Sarah can discuss this more and get some potential dates out to pull something together.
- Sarah emailed out to this group an email with this link with the list of Federal cuts: <https://astho1.informz.net/informzdataservice/onlineversion/ind/bWFpbGluZ2luc3RhbmNlaWQ9NDUxMjcwMCZzdWJzY3JpYmVyaWQ9NDE5MzkzMzEw>.

Miscellaneous:

- There is a HealthLink Summit on September 11th from 10:00 – 12:00 at the Buffalo Marriott. You can register if you are interested in attending. Reach out to Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative (WNYICC) or Stephanie for more information.
- Amy Rockwood, Director of Planning and Evaluation at ECDMH will join us at our next CSB meeting to provide an update on the Local Services Plan.

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, October 2, 2025, from 9:00-10:00am.