

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING
SCDMH Administration
2414 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201
June 5, 2020

A Business Meeting of the S.C. Mental Health Commission was held in Room 320 at the S.C. Department of Mental Health Administration Building on Friday, June 5, 2020, at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Greg Pearce, Chair, was present in person. Other Commission members were present virtually via Zoom. The meeting notice and agenda were posted prior to the meeting and notice made to all individuals and news media who requested information in accordance with State law.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pearce called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Stewart Cooner provided the invocation.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Chairman Pearce welcomed everyone. Visitors present via Zoom were Bill Lindsay, Executive Director, NAMI SC and Sean Turner. Roxanne Wilson and Dr. Larry Kerr were present in person, and Dr. Balbir Minhas was present via conference call.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion by Mr. Bob Hiott, seconded by Ms. Louise Haynes, the Commission approved the Agenda for today's Business Meeting.

All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.

PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION

Chairman Pearce presented a resolution from the Commission upon the retirement of Catawba Community Mental Health Center Director Paul J. Cornely, PhD, MPH. Dr. Cornely's resolution read as follows:

- Whereas:** The South Carolina Mental Health Commission and the State Director of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health recognize the retirement of Paul J. Cornely, PhD, MPH; and
- Whereas:** Mental health is critical to the well-being and vitality of all South Carolinians. Mental illness affects people regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or economic status; and
- Whereas:** The service of Dr. Cornely has improved the lives of individuals living with mental illness, by expanding the Catawba Community Mental Health Center's Housing and School Mental Health programs, and increased the number of peer support specialists within the Center; and
- Whereas:** He has been instrumental in developing a Mental Health Court in York County and has worked tirelessly on various grants and contracts, including efforts to provide care for the indigent population; and
- Whereas:** The South Carolina Mental Health Commission and the State Director of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health recognize Dr. Cornely not only for his distinguished 13 years of service as executive director of Catawba Community Mental Health Center, but also for his 42-year career in the Mental Health field.

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Now, therefore: We express our profound appreciation to Dr. Cornely for his dedicated service to the mentally ill and his invaluable service to the South Carolina Department of Mental Health; offer him our sincere gratitude and best wishes; and order that a copy of this Resolution be made a part of the Commission's permanent records.

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RECOGNITION OF 2020 PALMETTO GOLD AWARD RECIPIENTS

Dr. Patricia Handley recognized six (6) nurses from DMH who are recipients of the 2020 Palmetto Gold Award. The award recognizes the top one hundred nurses in South Carolina each year:

Michelle Allison, PMHNP-BC – Spartanburg Area Mental Health Center
Amanda Clyburn, BSN – CM Tucker Nursing Care Center – Roddey Pavilion
Stephanie Kemp-Pearson, RN – Division of Inpatient Services – Long Term Care
F'Lyce Major, RN – Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital
Mary Mcleod, RN, - Santee Wateree Mental Health Center
Mack Wilson, MBA, BSN, RN – G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital

The award recipients were presented with SCDMH award certificates for their achievements. Dr. Handley stated that this year marks the 19th year that the Palmetto Gold Nurse Recognition and Scholarship Program has been in existence. Forty-six nurses from DMH have been recipients of the Palmetto Gold Award since inception.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Copies of the minutes from the Business Meeting of May 1, 2020 were previously distributed to the Commission. There were no corrections to the minutes. The Commission approved the minutes as received.

MONTHLY/QUARTERLY INFORMATION REPORTS

Ms. Elizabeth Hutto presented the items listed under Monthly/Quarterly Informational Reports, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.

Ms. Hutto reported for the month of May a total of four pending investigations by the Office of Public Safety. One investigation was completed leaving a total of three cases pending investigation.

Ms. Hutto reported that as of Wednesday, June 3rd there were a total of 16 pending SLED investigations. Five cases had been assigned to SLED; three were assigned to Long-term Care Ombudsman Office of which the oldest is from September 2019; three were assigned to local law enforcement; five were assigned to the Attorney General's Office (AGO). She noted that one of the cases assigned to the AGO goes back to 2017. She explained the case will remain open until the defendant is located or until the AGO decides not to pursue any longer.

Ms. Hutto highlighted the following from the Patient Advocacy Report:

- 54 calls to patient advocacy in April 2020; a total of 194 year to date
- 50 complaints were resolved in April 2020.
- 268 complaints have been resolved year-to-date.
- The number of complaints by category resolved year to date is 334 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*).
- Access to treatment is the most frequent type of complaint filed.

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

Coronavirus Response

Administrative Services

Ms. Debbie Calcote presented the Administrative Services Report. She said the Department is operating in an environment where social distancing is the expectation. COVID-19 has created fears and anxieties about working in office spaces together. She expressed appreciation for the staff's good work and dedication for a job well done. Below are highlights from the report.

- Division of Financial Services has begun the process of completing the agency required year-end reporting packages.
- FY21 Budget Meetings will be held in person maintaining social distancing and/or virtually during the month of June with DMH divisions and facilities.
- Public Safety Officers continue to provide support to all inpatient settings in the nursing homes as it relates to patient care and safety, enforce state laws and protect DMH property, patients, and employees.
- Under Physical Plant Services, construction of the two new State Veterans Nursing Homes located in Florence and Gaffney continues to proceed; vehicle management as well as building maintenance is ongoing; and transportation is delivering supplies across the State.
- IT is committed to providing technical support as staff adapt to changes in technology. DMH has established a Zoom account with 100 licenses. Licenses will be distributed to staff who have the responsibility of scheduling virtual meetings.
- "Heroes Work Here" banners were placed at the DMH Administration building to show appreciation for employees and their hard work during this time of COVID-19 crisis.

Community Mental Health Services

Ms. Deborah Blalock presented the Community Mental Health Services (CMHC) report. She referred to the graph showing CMHCs provision of care to patients during COVID-19 and the graph showing the percentage of patients seen on or before March 13, 2020 versus open cases, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. She noted the positive trend and said the mental health centers have done a phenomenal job of getting back to pre-COVID numbers. Prior to COVID, DMH was serving over 60,000 patients in the community. As of June 3, 2020, 5% of the patients served had not been seen, down from 14.08% on May 5, 2020.

Ms. Blalock reported the Centers recently issued 209 return to work letters (7-day letters) informing staff to report back to work on June 1, 2020 in accordance with the Governor's Phase 1 re-entry of state employees. Returning staff members are those whose patients cannot be served telephonically or through telehealth, and staff who have been out on leave because their job duties cannot be performed at home. In addition to following guidelines from health officials to keep the workplace safe, A/B schedules are in place to establish physical distancing among staff. On June 4, 2020 there were 951 individuals working in the Centers compared to approximately 550 individuals working in the Centers prior to issuing the 7-day letters.

Chairman Pearce asked if the Department would receive any reimbursement from the state to cover the costs related to sick and or annual leave that employees took related to COVID. Mr. Binkley said that state revenues have been negatively affected by COVID. The costs to the state and the agencies to forgive leave that employees took related to COVID would worsen agencies' financial outlook.

Ms. Blalock reported the "Supporting Our Staff – Peer Support for SCDMH Staff" (SOS) call line has received 28 calls since the day it was initiated on March 31, 2020. This service is also available to the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, S.C. Department of Corrections, and the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

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Ms. Blalock reported the SAMHSA funded DMH/DOADAS program SC Hopes call center launched on June 1, 2020. A marketing campaign through Gray Media is scheduled to come out next week.

Ms. Blalock presented the Community Mental Health Services Trends and Transparency Monthly Indicators (TMI) spreadsheets, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. This was received as information.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Pearce commended the work of Community Mental Health Services for their outstanding job performance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Division of Inpatient Services (DIS)

Dr. Versie Bellamy presented the Department of Inpatient Services report. Below are highlights from the report:

- Inpatient Services began establishing strategies in March and continues to provide quality services and a safe environment during the COVID-19 Pandemic with consideration given to the most vulnerable patients and residents who share a congregate environment and are unable to leave their respective facility.
- In cooperation with DHEC testing has begun on all patients and all staff for COVID-19. Dr. Bellamy said that hundreds of patients and staff have been tested, and the work that the team, nurses, and medical staff are doing to provide the tests has been phenomenal.
- DIS continues to work with the supply chains to acquire additional supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect the patients and the staff.
- COVID-19 treatment protocols, policies and models continue to be developed by the COVID-19 Task Force.
- Discussions are underway concerning additional isolation and quarantine spaces in preparation for the possible spread of the virus.

Dr. Bellamy expressed her gratitude for Dr. Robert Breen, Chair, COVID-19 Task Force, DIS support teams, contract partners, medical staff, and Senior Management for their outstanding assistance with planning and response efforts in response to COVID-19. She said because of dedicated and committed staff to the safety of the patients, residents, and each other, DIS will continue to manage and plan ahead of each stage of the virus rather than behind.

Chairman Pearce read the following from the June 1, 2020 SCDMH Covid-19 Update, *“While such measures successfully enabled all four (4) DMH nursing homes to report as late as May 20th that no residents had contracted the virus, two residents ... recently tested positive. Those residents have been isolated. They remain asymptomatic and are being closely monitored.”* He commended the DIS staff for their tremendous efforts and all the work they have done in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Forensic Waiting List Update

Dr. Bellamy reported that Forensics has continued to be significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. She reported a total of 73 patients on the forensic waitlist. The DIS COVID-19 Task Force and Leadership team continue to look for ways to build capacity while maintaining patient safety. Dr. Bellamy recognized Dr. Kelly Gothard, Chief Psychologist, Forensic Services.

Dr. Gothard explained that the Forensic Waitlist does not separate those defendants who are ready for admission and those defendants with factors that are not within the department’s control and therefore are not ready for admission. Forensic Services is reviewing data and working toward restructuring the forensics waitlist to separate the categories of admission into (1) Forensic Waitlist – Ready for Admission, and (2) Referral Waitlist – Unable to Admit. Forensic Services continues to update the courts on modifications to processes responsive to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Financial Status Update

Ms. Noelle Wriston presented the monthly financial report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Ms. Wriston reported DMH is projected to end FY20 under budget. FY21 budget discussions have begun with all the centers

and facilities. Increases in expenditures are expected due to ongoing purchases related to PPE and COVID related needs. She reported the Governor signed a continuing resolution which provides for the continued and uninterrupted operation of state government into the beginning of FY21. Lawmakers are expected to return to the State House in September to pass a new budget.

Chairman Pearce asked Mr. Binkley to brief everyone on the federal stimulus money the State received under the Coronavirus Stimulus Package and the Agency's budget requests. Mr. Binkley talked about the Governor's accelerateSC Task Force effort. One of the committees under accelerateSC was charged with advising the Governor on how the State should expend the \$1.9 billion federal relief funds. The final report, including recommendations, is posted on the Governor's website at www.governor.sc.gov. A poll of all the state agencies resulted in about \$700 million in terms of what state agencies have expended related to COVID-19 and expected COVID-19 expenditures through the end of the year. The General Assembly will begin as early as next week to discuss allocation of the federal relief funds.

There was discussion concerning the use of one-time funds should the General Assembly pass a budget funded at the same level as FY20. Mr. Binkley said Senior Management is discussing potential cost saving measures in the event state appropriations are decreased for FY21.

Legislative Update

See the update concerning the continuing resolution reported under the financial status update.

Issue Action Paper (IAP): Property Purchase at 133 Wilmac Road, Gaffney, S.C. for Cherokee MHC

Ms. Calcote presented an Issue Action Paper requesting Commission approval to purchase the buildings and property located at 133 Wilmac Road, Gaffney, SC 29341 for the new location of the Cherokee Mental Health Clinic.

On a motion by Dr. Evans, and seconded by Ms. Haynes, the Commission approved the purchase of the buildings and property as presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Rogers said as Ms. Blalock announced in her report, the SC Hopes line is live with experienced professionals offering guidance, support, and resources. He recently sent a memo to all employees encouraging them to use the SC-HOPES line or the Supporting Our Staff Hotline (SOS) if needed. The staff continues to care for those individuals who seek mental health support during these unprecedented times of stressful events going on in our society, including COVID-19. Those resources will not only benefit the community but also our staff. Currently more states, including South Carolina, are reporting record spikes in COVID-19 cases. However, the Agency is opening back up slowly and mental health centers have begun to increase face to face patient service delivery.

In preparation of a potential decrease in state appropriations in the FY21 budget, Senior Management is looking ahead at cost saving measures, such as exploring ways to increase the volume of patients seen and how to generate revenue through grants or clinical work. Filling vacant non-clinical and non-essential jobs is on hold.

Dr. Rogers said SCDMH is one of the largest healthcare systems in South Carolina providing community services, inpatient services, and long term care in one system. He talked about actively involving quality improvement initiatives focused on measuring and improving patient outcomes and pursuing a more comprehensive approach toward providing integrated mental health care and medical care.

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Dr. Rogers talked about long term care and veterans nursing homes and recognized C.M. Tucker Nursing Care Center for having received a 5-star rating from the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services. He noted of the 190 nursing homes in South Carolina only 42 are 5-star rated. The Department will focus on continuing to meet the standards within the Veterans Affairs system and CMS standards and requirements for long-term care facilities.

Dr. Rogers reported that he met with DIS regulatory staff this past week to review preparations for the Joint Commission and other regulatory bodies. He said readmission rates are an important indicator of the quality of care. The focus on providing integrated mental health care and medical care will improve patient outcomes and will decrease readmission rates resulting in cost of care moving forward.

HOW INPATIENT MEDICAL CARE IS DELIVERED IN THE DMH SYSTEM

Chairman Pearce said the Commission approved amendments to the Commission Bylaws at the May 1, 2020 Commission business meeting. One of the amendments addressed allowing public comment at Commission business meetings, which was a recommendation that came from the House Legislative Oversight Committee.

Chairman Pearce provided the following: “The public comments are limited to relevant general information comments or questions regarding SCDMH operations and/or mental health needs of the state and/or opportunities to support the recovery of individuals with mental illness. The public comment period of the Commission is not a forum to discuss particular facts or individual cases. The speaker must not share any information that would be protected health information of a third party, privately identified information of a third party, or information about a particular staff member or any individual whether affiliated with DMH or not. The Chair will stop any speaker who violates the basic elements of relevant civil discord or general topics. Comments that seek to degrade or insult a DMH patient, staff member, or members of the public will not be tolerated. If at any time the chair finds the speaker to be out of order in their comments, the chair will immediately stop the speaker. Public comments will be taken under advisement and will not be addressed at the Commission meeting. Each speaker has three minutes to speak and must provide their full name and address at which time afterwards the three minutes will start.”

Public comment was given by Mrs. Roxanne Wilson, Springdale, S.C. Mrs. Wilson expressed concern about the care DMH provides to their patients. She provided copies of an email that was sent to her husband, Congressman Joe Wilson, to Commission members and Dr. Rogers.

Public comment was given by Dr. Larry Kerr, Chair of the Legislative Committee for the Columbia Medical Society, Columbia, S.C. Dr. Kerr shared concerns that were brought to his attention concerning the organizational structure and supervision in regards to the medical side and the psychiatric side of inpatient care.

Public comment was given by Dr. Balbir Minhas who was present via telephone conference. Dr. Minhas’ is a gastroenterologist with Midlands Gastroenterology. He commented about the manner in which DMH conducts business concerning contract renewals. Technical issues rendered Dr. Minhas inaudible. Because of that, Chairman Pearce said Dr. Minhas may attend a future meeting to address the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

At 12:12 p.m., on a motion by Ms. Haynes, seconded by Dr. Evans, the Commission adjourned the Business Meeting and entered into Executive Session to receive legal advice concerning pending and threatened litigation. Upon convening in open session at 12:34 p.m., it was noted that only information was received; no votes or actions were taken.

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ATTENDANCE

Commission Members

L. Gregory Pearce, Jr. Chair Members present virtually via Zoom:
Louise Haynes, Vice Chair
Dr. Alison Evans
Robert Hiott

Visitors/Staff

Michelle Allison	Paul Cornely (Zoom)	Larry Kerr	Dr. Kenneth Rogers
Dr. Robert Bank	Patricia Handley	Bill Lindsay (Zoom)	Dr. Kimberly Rudd
Dr. Versie Bellamy	Jeanne Felder (Zoom)	F'Lyce Major	Kimberly Stubbs (Zoom)
Mark Binkley	Melanie Ferretti (Zoom)	Mary McLeod (Zoom)	Sean Turner (Zoom)
Theresa Bishop (Zoom)	Kelly Gothard	Dr. Balbir Minhas	Mack Wilson
Debbie Blalock	Jeffery Ham (Zoom)	(Conference Call)	Roxanne Wilson
Debbie Calcote	Patricia Handley	Eleanor Odom	Noelle Wriston
Amanda Clyburn	Elizabeth Hutto	Valarie Perkins	
Stewart Cooner	Stephanie Kemp-Pearson	Lynelle Reavis (Zoom)	

APPROVALS



L. Gregory Pearce, Jr.
Chair



Kim Ballentine
Recording Secretary

