

**S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING**  
**SCDMH Administration**  
**2414 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201**  
**January 8, 2021**

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, January 8, 2021, 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 honored the memory of Colonel Samuel Farrow, a member of the House of Representatives from Spartanburg County, and Major William Crafts, a member of the Senate from Charleston County. The two men worked hard to inform lawmakers to the needs of the mentally ill, and on December 20, 1821, the South Carolina State Legislature passed laws to provide funds of \$30,000 to construct an Asylum for the care and treatment of people with mental illnesses, thereby the beginning of the S.C. Department of Mental Health. As a way of commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Mental Health during 2021, at the beginning of this year's monthly Commission meetings, Chairman Pearce will recognize individuals and contributions made during the 200 years of DMH.

Chairman Pearce called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. Mr. Stewart Cooner provided the invocation.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

Chairman Pearce welcomed everyone. Visitors present virtually via Zoom were: Hannah Bonsu, Treatment and Recovery Manager, S.C. Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS); Raynah Everett, Director of CMC Strategy, Genoa Healthcare; Beth Franco, Executive Director, Disability Rights South Carolina; Jill Gran, Associate Director, State Government Affairs & Advocacy, Otsuka America; Lloyd Hale, Director, SC SHARE; Sally Jackson, Sales Director, Genoa Healthcare; Bill Lindsay, Executive Director, NAMI SC; Brett Macgargle, Senior Deputy, SC Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); Mandy Medlock, Manager of Growth Initiatives, Genoa Healthcare; Carol Rudder; Janie Simpson, Chair, S.C. Mental Health State Planning Council; and Tray Stone, Board Member, NAMI.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

***On a motion by Ms. Louise Haynes, seconded by Dr. Alison Evans, the Commission approved the Agenda for today's Business Meeting.***

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

***By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved the minutes from the Center Presentation of December 4, 2020, and the minutes from the Business Meeting of December 4, 2020.***

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dr. Kenneth Rogers announced the following:

- Dr. Rogers introduced Mr. Paul Morris, Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Morris began his new responsibilities at the Department of Mental Health on January 4, 2021.



- Dr. Rogers announced the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine began this week to frontline employees. The vaccine will be offered to nursing home staff beginning next week.

### ***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 December 2020 a total of four pending cases, of which the oldest is from 2016. The pending case from 2016 is due to an outstanding warrant. The subject of the outstanding warrant has left the state.

Ms. Hutto reported that as of yesterday there were 22 pending SLED investigations. Two cases were assigned to SLED, of which the oldest is from May 2020; Nine cases were assigned to the Long-term Care Ombudsman Office, of which the oldest is from September 2019; four cases were assigned to the Attorney General's Office (AGO), of which the oldest is from 2017 and has to do with financial fraud; four cases were assigned to local law enforcement, of which the oldest is from 2019; three cases relate to standards of care at SVP and SLED referred those cases to DMH to investigate.

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

- 32 calls to patient advocacy in November 2020; a total of 518 year to date.
- 59 complaints were resolved in November 2020; a total of 720 complaints have been resolved year-to-date.
- The number of complaints by category resolved year to date is 905 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*).

Ms. Hutto reported six individual complaints in November. Two complaints were related to a request to change a doctor or clinician; two were related to a request for different prescriptions; and two were requests to change doctors and prescriptions. In all cases, those patients were assigned to a new doctor or a clinician and appear to be satisfied. The prescription complaint had to do with trying to step the patient down to a more appropriate prescription.

### ***UPDATE ON ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINION AND GOVERNANCE OF AGENCY***

Ms. Hutto said that at the request of Representative Caskey, the Attorney General issued an opinion on June 25, 2020 concerning the roles, duties, and responsibilities of the DMH Director and Commission as found in SC Code 44-9-30 and 44-9-40. The opinion answers two questions:

- 1) Who within DMH has the authority to make personnel decisions; and
- 2) How to report issues related to patient care.

Ms. Hutto reported that the Attorney General's opinion restates the relevant Code sections and does not contradict DMH's longstanding interpretation of the Code and the governance of the agency. (1) Regarding personnel decisions, the opinion points out that DMH hospital directors are responsible for all personnel decisions at their hospitals. The opinion allows that under the Code, those decisions are subject to approval by the Director, and the Director's decisions are ultimately subject to the Commission's approval. The opinion does not direct the State Director or the Commission to become involved in the day-to-day personnel decisions of a hospital. Per the opinion, the Commission has discretion to take certain actions if it chooses but only after the chain of command has made decisions and internal processes have been followed. (2) Regarding reporting issues related to patient care, the opinion points out that concerns about patient care should be referred to the DMH Patient Advocacy program. The opinion points out that in the case of a staff member with a concern about patient care, that staff member should refer to Human Resources to determine whether there is an internal process to report concerns of patient mistreatment. The opinion also states that the Commission may investigate complaints about patient care but does not mandate the investigation of complaints.

This was received as information.



***DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE***

**Coronavirus Response**

**Community Mental Health Services**

Ms. Deborah Blalock presented the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) report. Below are highlights from her report:

- Ms. Blalock reported that in conjunction with the DAODAS, application was submitted to SAMHSA for a grant that would extend the services of SC Hopes beyond the end of the current grant.
- The SC Hopes call center has received 1,139 calls since inception on June 1, 2020.
- The Department is awaiting a response from SAMHSA on a request to extend the H.O.T. (Healthcare Outreach Team) to teachers.
- Services from the Highway to Hope (H2H) Grant will begin on February 1, 2021. Ms. Blalock said due to the work of Mr. Stephen Pullie, Procurement Director, the first of three RVs is expected to arrive between mid to late March, much sooner than expected.
- The mental health centers have not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine. Several local hospitals across the state and DIS have offered the vaccine to mental health centers staff members.
- Ms. Blalock reported that Mr. Willie Priester, Executive Director at Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center, announced his retirement effective the end of February 2021, and Mr. Kevin Hoyle, Executive Director at Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center, announced his retirement effective April 1, 2021.
- Service delivery across the outpatient system from November 15, 2020 to December 15, 2020: 48% of all services were delivered face to face; 27% of all services were delivered telephonically; and 25% of all services were delivered through telehealth platform. It is anticipated that delivery of telephonic services will increase because of the uptick in the number of COVID cases across the state. Mental health centers are being advised to decrease face to face delivery as they see fit to ensure safety of patients and staff.
- DMH will submit a grant today for funding to help support implementation of a 9-8-8 system to address suicide and mental health crisis response in South Carolina.
- Ms. Blalock presented the CMHS Trends and Transparency Monthly Indicators (TMI) spreadsheets, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.

**Division of Inpatient Services (DIS)**

Dr. Versie Bellamy presented the Division of Inpatient Services report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Below are highlights from her report:

- Dr. Bellamy said the number one priority in inpatient services is to ensure safety in the delivery of patient-centered care. The onset of the pandemic has necessitated adjustments to strategic priorities with some decrease in the momentum that existed previously to the pandemic. She referred to Triple Aim, a healthcare improvement framework developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), and said she would like to add a fourth aim, which would focus on the provider experience and clinical experience of the workforce. Developing more evidence-based practices or evidence-informed services and focusing on meaningful clinical programming and professional growth will help to keep providers and staff engaged.
- Dr. Bellamy talked about four priorities that represent key initiatives currently being developed in an effort to build service efficiency, promote quality and meaningful services that will serve the patient and resident population, and will also inspire the workforce.
  - Priority 1 – Rightsizing the Organization – identify leaders and physicians who can be expanded and repurposed to meet the needs of the revised services.
  - Priority 2 – DIS Clinical Competency and KRONOS – successfully implemented KRONOS, an automated time and attendance management system, which is currently being used to track productivity and the facilitation of the 24/7 nursing staffing management. Dr. Bellamy said she anticipates additional staff will be added to KRONOS in the spring of 2021.
  - Priorities 3 and 4 – Morris Village (MV) Business Plan and William S. Hall Psychiatric Institute (Hall) Business Plan – Plans are currently being developed at MV and Hall with the goal to advance training and program models.



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Dr. Evans asked when the Commission can expect a business report on MV and Hall. Dr. Rogers said there is no plan right now for changes in treatment paradigms or models at Morris Village or Hall. He said the focus now is on training and workforce development, looking at creating partnerships with local universities and enhancing collaboration with other academic institutions in the state in efforts to increase the census. He anticipates presenting a more comprehensive plan to the Commission over the next several months.

Dr. Bellamy reported the November 2020 overall average daily census represents a decrease of 281 or 22% as compared to the overall average daily census for February 2020 (pre-pandemic). There is an increase of COVID-19 cases nationwide, including South Carolina, with hospital beds filled above 90% capacity.

Dr. Bellamy announced G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital began administering the COVID-19 vaccine this week, C.M. Tucker begins administering the vaccines today, and Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital will begin on Tuesday, January 12, 2020. Dr. Bellamy recognized Dr. Kimberly Rudd, DIS Medical Director, for an update on the COVID-19 vaccine.

Dr. Rudd reported that as of Thursday, January 7, 2020, a total of 170 employees were administered the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at Bryan Psychiatric Hospital and 60 employees had scheduled to receive the vaccine today. The Department has not received approval from DHEC to administer the vaccine to patients at the psychiatric hospitals. The Department is following DHEC's guidance for COVID-19 vaccine allocation, Phase 1A, for vaccinating the healthcare staff and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

Dr. Rogers expressed appreciation to Dr. Rudd and Dr. Breen for their hard work with rolling out the COVID-19 vaccination program.

#### Forensic Waiting List Update

Dr. Kelly Gothard reported increased COVID-19 activity within the forensic facility during December. All units were on quarantine status at some point during the month, therefore regular admissions were not possible to the main facility. There were admissions to the Alternate Care Site. Due to the increase in COVID cases, there were fewer Orders for admissions in December.

Dr. Bellamy congratulated Dr. Gothard on her recent promotion to Forensic Services Director effective December 17, 2020. Prior to her promotion, Dr. Gothard was the Interim Director for Bryan Hospital-Forensic Services.

#### Administrative Services

Mr. Cooner presented the Administrative Services Report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. His report highlighted major achievements in 2020 in the areas of Financial Services, Information Technology, Telepsychiatry, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Cost Accounting/Reporting, and Vehicle Management. He said that during 2021 Administrative Services will focus on service – focusing on internal core competencies and continuously improving quality; supporting and anticipating the needs of external stakeholders and responding to requests for assistance; and sustainability – evaluating the financial infrastructure for each department with the intent of recognizing opportunities for revenue enhancements, cost savings, cost avoidances, and value adding activities.

#### Special Projects

Ms. Debbie Calcote presented the Special Projects report. Ms. Calcote reported the Department has requested \$5 million from the Governor's COVID-19 Response Reserve account to mitigate the COVID-19 related increase in indigent patients in need of psychiatric hospitalization. The Joint Bond Review Committee will consider this request at its January 27, 2021 meeting.

#### Financial Status Update

Ms. Calcote presented the monthly financial report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. As of November 30, 2020 the Department is projected to end FY21 with a balance of \$3.25 million.

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**OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Chairman Pearce announced Ms. Melanie Ferretti retired from her position as executive assistant, SC Mental Health Commission liaison, and webmaster effective January 6, 2021.
- Chairman Pearce announced Senator Harvey Peeler filed legislation to restructure DHEC. The bill calls for creating a Department of Behavioral and Public Health, combining DHEC's current health division with DMH and DAODAS. Chairman Pearce stated that he wanted to make the Commission aware and to think about an organized approach on how the Commission would address the matter if it were to come to a debate.
- Chairman Pearce recognized Mr. Binkley for an update on the Commission's 200th anniversary celebration. Mr. Binkley reported that he and Chairman Pearce are forming a Bicentennial Celebratory Committee. He anticipates the first meeting will be held the last week in January.
- Dr. Evans said she is excited that Jennifer Butler, Director, Office of Suicide Prevention, will conduct training for the faculty and staff at the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics on Wednesday, January 6, 2021.

There were no public comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*At 11:47 a.m. on a motion duly made and seconded, the Commission adjourned the Business Meeting.*

**ATTENDANCE**

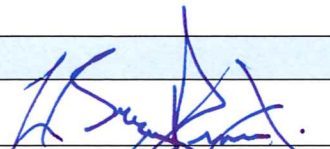
**Commission Members**


L. Gregory Pearce, Jr. (*Commission members present virtually via Zoom*)  
Chair  
Dr. Louise Haynes, Vice Chair  
Dr. Alison Evans  
Mr. Bob Hiott

**Visitors/Staff**

Dr. Robert Bank	Elizabeth Hutto	<i>present virtually via Zoom</i>	<i>present virtually via Zoom</i>	<i>present virtually via Zoom</i>
Deborah Blalock	Eleanor Odom	Hannah Bonsu	Lloyd Hale	Tracy Richardson
Janet Bell	Martin	Dr. Robert Breen	Maryjane Hicks	Jennifer Roberts
Dr. Versie Bellamy	Paul Morris	Jackie Brown	Sally Jackson	Carol Rudder
Mark Binkley	Dr. Kenneth	Peter Camelo	Louise Johnson	Stuart Shields
Debbie Calcote	Rogers	Pete Creighton	Bill Lindsey	Janie Simpson
Stewart Cooner	Dr. Kimberly	Matthew Dorman	Sarah Main	Tray Stone
Kelly Gothard	Rudd	Raynah Everett	Mandy Medlock	Jessica Suber
Dr. Patria Handley	Brett Williams	Beth Franco	Valarie Perkins	Roger Williams
		Brett Macgargle	Willie Priester	Noelle Wriston
		Jill Gran	Lynelle Reavis	

**APPROVALS**

  
L. Gregory Pearce, Jr.  
Chair

  
Kim Ballentine  
Recording Secretary

