

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING
SCDMH Administration
2414 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201
April 5, 2024

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, April 5, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. 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 Levy called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Chaplain Kynan Robinson provided the invocation.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Chairman Levy welcomed everyone. Visitors present virtually were: Bill Lindsey, Executive Director, NAMI SC; Kathy Martin, Attorney, Disability Rights South Carolina; Eleanor Martin, and James Starnes, private citizens; and Susan von Schenk, Capital Information Affiliates (CIA). Wanda McMichael, SCPS Program Manager, Liberty Health Corporation, was present, in-person.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There being no amendments or corrections to the agenda, the agenda was approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There being no amendments or corrections to the minutes of the Commission meeting of March 1, 2024, the minutes were approved as presented.

UPDATE – OFFICE OF CHILD, ADOLESCENT & FAMILY SERVICES

Over her career at DMH, Ms. Louise Johnson, Director of Office of Child, Adolescent & Family (CAF) Services, has taken the lead, had a part in writing, and has written grants that have totaled \$40 million. She gave a presentation on the work of CAF, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. A copy is filed with the minutes in the Office of the State Director. Following are highlights from the presentation.

- CAF provides an array of mental and behavioral health services to children, adolescents, and their families within their communities.
- Children’s behavioral health is prevention and early intervention.
 - Many illnesses that lead to a behavioral health crisis could have been treated much earlier, thus reducing the negative outcomes and the overall experience as well as the costs associated with the crisis.
 - 50% of seriously mentally ill adults experienced their first psychotic episode around the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 21.
 - We are getting involved too late, we need to get ahead of the storm. Children thrive when we can keep them in their homes, schools, and communities.
- Infant Early Childhood Mental Health
 - Adding Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health 101 course to the department’s learning management system.
 - PCIT (Parent Child Interaction Therapy).
 - FAN (Facilitating Attuned Interactions).

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- Project *FOCUS* (Family Options in Cherokee, Union, and Spartanburg Counties) serves children and youth ages 0-21 who have a SED (serious emotional disturbance)/SMI (serious mental illness) and their families in these three contiguous counties. This program was created to address the infrastructure gaps of extensive wait times and inadequate crisis solutions for families of youth with SED/SMI who are at an increased risk of admissions to emergency departments. Project *FOCUS* is built on the existing infrastructure of the Spartanburg Behavioral Health Coalition (SBHC) that includes key stakeholders from education, public health, higher education, mental health, social services, juvenile justice, The Mary Black Foundation, and non-profit organizations.
- CAFÉ (Child and Adolescent Family Engagement Center) – short-term setting that does not require lengthy pre-authorizations for placement. Provides rapid access to trained behavioral health providers for children and youth. The location was provided by the Spartanburg Regional Hospital.
- Roads of Independence (ROI) builds the bridge for youth and young adults ages 16-25 to receive support for successful transition through engagement and providing access to mental health services. The individual meets with a Peer Support Specialist to create a highly individualized, goal focused transition plan. Other offerings include mental health and substance use counseling, youth peer support, education/employment skills assistance, financial management, housing support, life skills, and workshops such as computer labs. Ms. Johnson announced that Aiken-Barnwell Mental Health Center held a ribbon cutting and dedication of its ROI facility on March 25, 2024.
- Bridges is a link to an underserved population in the Agency’s ROI. In collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), local law enforcement agencies, to include the Solicitors office, Bridges provides intentionality to current efforts to increase access to mental health services to families in crisis through a full-service drop-in center in Sumter County. The focus is on offering a community-based alternative to juvenile detention that will address the justice involved disparities existing in Sumter County.
- Young Adult Initiatives Safe Place Project – focuses on connecting children, youth, and young adults to a safe place to go for crisis stabilization that incorporates engaging developmentally appropriate behavioral health and transition services. This initiative will operate in conjunct with ROI and local area school districts in the Santee-Wateree region.
- Project Connect provides direct services to youth whose maladaptive behaviors and school failures have resulted in placement in an alternative education setting in Sumter School District.
- CAF has a partnership with the School of Public Health, University of South Carolina, to equip the workforce with more licensed clinicians. Classes are offered free of charge to clinicians.
- The South Carolina Afterschool Alliance (SCAA) and DMH are partnering to improve access to mental health care and assist with the complex behavioral health challenges in the underserved populations in Florence, Darlington, and Marion Counties, which have over 126 afterschool locations. DMH will also work with the Alliance to provide opportunities to support older teens and young adults with lived experience on a career path to become certified peer support specialists in the DMH system.
- DMH and DJJ recently signed an updated Memorandum of Agreement to ensure justice involved youth with a SMI continue to receive the care and services they need while committed to DJJ. DMH provides case management to these youth while they are in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF) or group homes ensuring they are receiving treatment to transition home and to the community.
- Ms. Johnson announced that a Parental Awareness & Community Empowerment Summit (Our Youth Are Not Okay) was held in December 2023 in Sumter. The goal was to engage, educate, and mobilize the community into action around what is happening with children and youth, especially in the Sumter area. She hopes to take the event to other parts of the state.

MONTHLY/QUARTERLY INFORMATION REPORTS

On behalf of Ms. Elizabeth Hutto, Mr. Logan Royals, Assistant General Counsel, presented the items listed under Monthly/Quarterly Informational Reports, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.

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Mr. Royals reported for the month of March 2024 a total of two pending investigations for the Office of Public Safety.

Mr. Royals reported that as of yesterday there were 26 pending SLED investigations. Six cases were assigned to SLED, of which the oldest is from April 2023; 15 cases were assigned to Long-term Care Ombudsman Office, of which the oldest is from July 2022; four cases were assigned to local law enforcement; and one case is with the Department of Social Services (DSS) Adult Protective Services.

Mr. Royals highlighted the following from the Patient Advocacy Report:

- 148 calls to patient advocacy in February 2024; a total of 257 year to date.
- 96 complaints were resolved in February 2024; a total of 181 year to date.
- The number of complaints by category resolved in February 2024 is 115 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*).

QUARTERLY OLMSTEAD UPDATE

Ms. Tracy Richardson, Director, Office of Transition Programs, presented the “Olmstead Funds Tracking At A Glance,” a copy of which had been provided to the Commission. Ms. Richardson reported the following from August 2023 through March 15 2024:

- Number of patients assisted: 25
- Total amount paid for patients: \$126,330.23
- Reimbursed amount as of March 15, 2024: \$3,924.00

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ms. Robin Crawford, Director of Governmental Affairs, reported the following:

- There is no update on the legislation that restructures the state’s healthcare agencies under a newly created Executive Office of Health and Policy. The Senate version of the bill (S.915) has passed the Senate and crossed over to the House, but has not been set for a hearing. The House version of the bill (H.4927) has passed the House and crossed over to the Senate, but has not been set for a hearing.
- The House Ways and Means Committee passed their first version of the state’s FY25 budget a few weeks ago. DMH was given a little over \$2 million in recurring funds for the healthcare campus relocation and \$5 million from the capital reserve fund for Stone VA Nursing Home capital improvement projects. The Senate Finance Committee will convene to consider and pass their budget next week. The budget will be debated by the Full Senate, on the Senate floor, the week of April 22, 2024. Budget Conference Committees will meet the week of April 29, 2024 and the conference committee reports will be delivered to the Governor the week of May 7, 2024. The legislative session will adjourn sine die on May 9, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
- Mental Health Advocacy Day was held on March 6, 2024 and was well attended. Speakers included Senate President Thomas Alexander; Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott; Dr. Bank; Mr. Bill Lindsey, Executive Director, NAMI SC; Senator Danny Verdin, Chairman, Senate Medical Affairs Committee; Representative Bill Herbkersman, Chair, House Ways and Means Healthcare Subcommittee; and Representative Sylleste Davis, Chairwoman, House Medical Affairs Committee. Senator Alexander introduced a resolution declaring it Mental Health Advocacy Day in South Carolina.
- All state House and Senate seats are up for reelection this year, as well as all of the state’s Congressional seats. Filing for those races ended on Monday, April 1, 2024, at noon and many legislators are not running for reelection, including Senators Nikki Setzler, Thomas McElveen, Scott Talley, Dwight Loftis, and Mia McLeod; Representatives Anne Thayer, Raye Felder, and Bart Blackwell; and Congressman Jeff Russell Ott and Jason

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Elliott who are both running for state Senate seats, and state Representatives Adam Morgan and Stewart Jones who are running for Congressional seats.

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

Announcements

Ms. Debbie Calcote, Deputy Director, Administrative Services, introduced Ms. Gwendolyn Watson who assumed the role of Director of DMH's Office of Human Resource Services effective March 4, 2024. She has served as deputy director of Human Resources for the South Carolina Judicial Branch since 2019, and has held numerous Human Resources roles throughout her career, including Compensation Manager, Classification & Compensation Analyst, Interim Budget Manager, and Position & Compensation Management Coordinator, among others.

Dr. Bank announced that he and other staff members attended the open house for the new Cherokee Mental Health Clinic in Gaffney on March 22, 2024. He noted Senator Harvey Peeler, who represents District 14, Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union and York Counties, was in attendance.

Dr. Bank announced the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) issued their final report, *Act 60 Health Analysis Final Report*, dated April 1, 2024, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. A copy of the report is filed with the minutes in the Office of the State Director.

Dr. Bank reported DMH leadership continues to work closely with the Department of Administration (DOA) and the South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs (SCDVA) with the transfer of the veterans' homes from DMH to SCDVA by the deadline date of June 30, 2024. There was discussion.

Review of Monthly Reports

Dr. Bank presented the Departmental Overview and Update reports to the Commission, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Following are highlights from the report:

- Medical Affairs
 - Office of Transition Programs
 - Transition Specialists assisted with a total of 25 discharges for the month of February 2024. Of those, 58.3% went home to family and 33.33% went to CRCF. There is 0% readmission within 30 days.
 - Since July 2023 a total of 14 patients have been discharged from DMH CRCFs. The average length of stay of current residents in a DMH CRCF at discharge is 1.6 years.
 - During January through February 2024, a total of 52 patients were discharged from enhanced status and there was a total of 33 admissions to enhanced CRCF beds. The current average length of stay is four years.
 - Currently, there are 972 Community Long-Term Care open cases.
 - Community Telepsychiatry
 - During the month of February 2024, there were 5,675 (40.11%) telehealth visits (via MD and APRN) and 8,472 (59.89%) non-tele visits. Dr. Bank noted an average of 39,000 prescriptions dispensed monthly.
 - We currently have a child and adolescent psychiatrist doing interagency consultations with DJJ and DSS from the community. We expect to add a geriatric psychiatrist to assist with the patients that go to enhanced nursing home beds in the near future.
- Community Mental Health Services
 - Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) programs are being developed in 13 out of the 16 DMH mental health centers. Three of the centers do not have enough qualifying patients to qualify for an ACT team: Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center, Tri-County Mental Health Center, and Coastal Empire

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Mental Health Center. An ACT team consists of a community-based group of medical, behavioral health and rehabilitation professionals who use a team approach to meet the needs of an individual with severe and persistent mental illness. The program serves patients 18 years of age and older.

- School Mental Health – DMH has 329 school mental health (SMH) staff positions filled providing SMH services in 612 schools throughout the state.
- Administrative Services & Financial Status
 - The projected deficit for the agency decreased overall by \$1.5 million compared to January 31, 2024. As of February 29, 2024, the Department anticipates ending FY24 with a projected deficit balance of approximately \$9.7 million. The Department has expended 64.67% of state appropriations.
 - The Forensic deficit has increased as the result of rising census and the admission of patients with complex medical needs.
 - Hiring more DMH employees and using fewer contract agency employees continues to have positive impacts on the budgets.
 - Finance Director, Mr. Lee Bodie, meets regularly with each of the facilities to review budgets. Throughout the agency, we are seeing greater effectiveness with budget management translating to efficiency and reduction of budget deficits.
- Inpatient
 - Since the completion of Lodge D construction at Hall Institute in October 2023, patient occupancy has been as high as 30. The current census is 25. Pod 2 construction is near completion and should be ready for patient occupancy in mid-April.
 - The planning phase to include architectural drawings and infrastructure plans for the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) should be complete by late summer. It was approved last year that a design-build-operate-maintain approach would provide the best facility that would benefit juvenile justice involved youth with a serious mental illness in need of admission and treatment to a PRTF. The contract was awarded to WellPath. SCHHS is overseeing the funding of the project.
- Long-Term Care (LTC)
 - Last year the Joint Bond Review Committee (JBRC) approved the development of a new veterans home that will be developed in the western part of Lexington County and will be a replacement for Stones Veterans Pavilion. The contracted state's veterans' nursing homes will be transferred to the SCDVA by July 1, 2024, and that will also include nursing homes under construction or plan to be under construction. The Stone Veterans Pavilion will move to DVA by July 1, 2025. The FY25 DMH budget request included funds for repairs needed to ensure Stone can serve 6-10 years. DMH will work closely with SCDVA not only about the renovations but also about how the facility can be eventually contracted out.
 - In an effort to help with the flow of LTC patients, an enhanced nursing home bed plan is being developed for patients in the psychiatric inpatient facilities who need nursing home care. The plan would offer community nursing homes an incentive in the daily rate in addition to offering geriatric psychiatric consultation for the patients.
 - Working towards increasing collaboration with the University of South Carolina's School of Medicine Geriatric Medicine Fellowship.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

Chairman Levy recognized Mr. Pearce. Mr. Pearce announced his resignation from the Commission effective May 3, 2024, which is the next scheduled Commission business meeting. He said that he made this difficult decision due to health reasons. He stated that he has consulted with the Governor's Office and has followed the procedure for resigning from the Commission. He also consulted with Chairman Levy. He thanked Chairman Levy for his leadership and said, "he has done a wonderful job and I appreciate your support during your tenure as Chair."

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ADJOURNMENT

At 12:08 p.m. by motion duly made and seconded, the Commission adjourned the business meeting and entered into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters relevant to DMH restructuring. Upon convening in open session at 12:53 p.m., Chairman Levy noted that only information was received; no votes or actions were taken.

At 12:53 p.m. by motion duly made and seconded, the Commission adjourned the business meeting.

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

ATTENDANCE

Commission Members

Mr. Bobby Mann
Dr. Elliott Levy, Chair Dr. Crystal Maxwell, absent, excused
Dr. Carl Jones, Vice Chair Mr. Greg Pearce

Visitors/Staff

	<i>present virtually via Zoom</i>	<i>present virtually via Zoom</i>	<i>present virtually via Zoom</i>
Dr. Robert Bank	Carolyn Baldwin	Joy Hodge	Valarie Perkins
Debbie Calcote	Janet Bell	Kathy Hugg	Erica Peterson
Rochelle Caton	Dr. Versie Bellamy	Mahri Irvine	Dr. Lynelle Reavis
Robin Crawford	Deborah Blalock	Charice Jones	Chaplain Kynan Robinson
Louise Johnson	Dr. Robert Breen	Tracy LaPointe	Bonita Shropshire
Wanda McMichael	Jackie Brown	Bill Lindsey	James Starnes
Dr. Chad Pollock	Jenifer Brush	Sarah Main	Sonya O. Stephenson
Logan Royals	Jennifer Butler	Kathy Martin	Jessica Suber
Tracy Richardson	Matthew Dorman	Eleanor Martin	Eric Turner
Gwen Watson	Melanie Gambrell	George McConnell	Susan von Schenk
Brett Williams	Dr. Kelly Gothard	Margaret Meriwether	Lindsay Walker
	Jeffery Ham	Denise Morgan	Kevin Woods
	Dr. Maryjane Hicks	Vincent Patterson	

APPROVALS



Dr. Carl Jones
Vice Chair



Kim Ballentine
Recording Secretary