



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
 Region 4 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
 Tuesday, June 11, 2019
 Southwestern State Campus • 400 S. Pinetree Boulevard, Thomasville, GA 31792

- Members present:** Cosby, Sandra (Worth), Davenport, Gail (Dougherty II), Green-Caldwell, Cherysh (Tift), Griffin, Amy (Lanier), Heard, Carla (Baker), Herring, Virginia (Seminole), Lane, Landra (Calhoun), Nwamanna, Berinda (Lowndes II), Parrott, James (Thomas), Richardson, Debbie (Dougherty I), Schofill, Robin (Terrell) and Wilson, Lynn (Colquitt).
- DBHDD:** Jackie Davis (R4 BH), Jennifer Dunn (R4 BH) and Tim Hester (R4 DD).
- Guests:** Bryant Wiggins (R5 RAC Chair), Latonia Mansfield (Baker County), Toyia Mather (RESPECT via phone) and Emily McFarland (RESPECT - via phone).

Call to Order: Chair Sandra Cosby called the meeting to order. Meeting attendees were welcomed, and everyone introduced themselves.

- **Agenda Approval.** James Parrott made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Gail Davenport seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- **Minutes Approval.** Virginia Herring made a motion to approve minutes from the April 9, 2019 meeting with corrections submitted by Jennifer Dunn. Debra Richardson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Regional Advisory Council Survey Results Review & Discussion (Ms. Cosby). R4 Completed 1000 more than its goal. Thank you R4 RAC members and R4 staff for all your hard work and efforts. R4 was the only Region that met or exceeded its goal. The initial report was provided in the meeting materials folder. Additional information and a final report are forthcoming. A summary of the six regions is as follows:

Region	Surveys Collected	Goal	Percentage Collected	
1	1,026	1,750	59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total surveys with county identified 8,524 • Total surveys with no county identified 101 • Total surveys collected 8,625
2	816	1,200	68%	
3	889	1,675	53%	
4	1,997	675	296%	
5	1,764	1,100	160%	
6	2,032	1,225	166%	

- **Georgia Apex Program.** The Apex program is funded by DBHDD. The program creates partnerships between community-based mental health providers and local schools to provide school-based mental health services. For information regarding getting Apex into your local school, contact Jennifer Dunn. Jennifer will email a list of schools that have the Apex program to Ms. Cosby and Jackie Davis.
- **Survey Presentation to Boards of County Commissioners.** Region 4 RAC members Bryan Arwood (Colquitt), Sandra Cosby (Worth), Amy Griffin (Lanier), Virginia Herring (Seminole), James Parrott (Thomas), Kelley Saxon (Lowndes), Bobby Walker (Echols) and Billy Zorn (Irwin) gave presentations about the RAC survey to their respective County Commissioners.



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RESPECT Institute (Emily McFarland, Outreach Coordinator, RI Graduate). Beginning in 2012 Emily went through a long-term mental health recovery program that provided her with a safe and structured environment where she became involved in her recovery and slowly rediscovered life. Today, Emily has authentic human relationships in which others truly know her. Recovery did not give her life back; it gave her an entirely new life that turned out to be something better than she could possibly have imagined. For information on the Respect Institute training or to request a Respect Institute speaker, please contact: Toyia Mather, CPS, Outreach Coordinator at (404) 687-9487 or toyia@gmhcn.org.

- **Discussion. Sunlight Project Article & Contacting Sheriffs** (Sandra Cosby, Jennifer Dunn & Lynn Wilson). Ms. Cosby suggests that RAC members have a discussion with their sheriff as an educational exercise and to raise awareness about mental health. Ms. Cosby recently read a Sunlight Project article ("*Mental Health Crisis: Georgia ranks 47th in mental health care access*") in the Valdosta Daily Times which included information about people with mental illness who end up in jail in lieu of receiving appropriate mental health care in their community. The article which ran in several different papers explored the delivery of mental health services in jails. Having a discussion with sheriff's would be educational and would raise awareness. On May 23 Ms. Cosby sent an email to the Worth County sheriff requesting specific mental health information. This email was sent to RAC members as an example of questions they can ask their sheriff. There are resources that jailers and sheriffs may not be aware of. The Sunlight Project investigates and shines a light on issues that impact communities across Georgia and North Florida once a week. The Sunlight Project is a collaborative journalism project between The Tifton Gazette, The Moultrie Observer, The Valdosta Daily Times and The Thomasville Times-Enterprise. The Sunlight Project covers Valdosta, Dalton, Thomasville, Milledgeville, Tifton and Moultrie, Georgia, and Live Oak, Jasper and Mayo, Florida.

Jennifer Dunn shared that there are things in the article which are incorrect, and providers are reaching out to the newspapers to correct the information. The source of the information provided to the reporter is unknown. Jennifer and Angelyn Dionysatos (DBHDD Press Secretary) contacted the reporter who printed the article and offered to provide correct information. Additionally, RJ Hurn (Georgia Pines) have contacted the reporter to provide correct information. Some jails have funds to provide mental health services. It's up to each jail to interpret what those services are. Most jails have a spreadsheet that they maintain which shows what happens when a person enters the prison/jail from hand-off up to their release. The reporter for this article also contacted Lynn Wilson and she provided him with RJ Hurn's and Kirsten Infinger's contact information. Due to concerns with information printed in the article, Lynn sent it to NAMI Georgia for review. NAMI's Executive Director has not had a chance to respond. Lynn believes that data collected from the jails can help drive solutions.

- **Housing Outreach Coordinators** (Jennifer D.). Two of the CSBs in R4 (Aspire and Legacy Behavioral Health) have a Housing Outreach Coordinator position. The Housing Outreach Coordinator's job is to go into the jail and do surveys with people to help them find jobs, housing and to connect them to services. Jennifer can provide the list to everyone. Aspire goes to the jails and prison in their eight-county area. Legacy goes to the jails in their ten-county area. There have been a couple of times where jails have reached out and the Aspire Housing Outreach Coordinator has been asked to go to the jail in Bainbridge (Georgia Pines area).
- **Community Action Council Colquitt** (Lynn W.). The council received a grant for a pilot program. They now have a "single point of entry" for housing. Anyone with who needs housing goes to Community Action Council for the Assessment and they have the list of housing that is



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available and what criteria is needed to go in. Lynn will speak one on one with Jennifer to ensure that the Council is working collaboratively with Rachael Holloman (DBHDD R4 Housing Coordinator). For DBHDD to pay for it in the GHVP, individuals must go through the Unified Referral Housing Process. This is a form that the doctor fills out to document that the individual has a severe and persistent mental illness, number of hospitalizations and that they have been in jail number of times, etc.

- **Tiny House Project Colquitt** (Lynn W.). Because housing is so scarce, Colquitt is looking at participating in the Tiny House Project. There are plans to look at a model in Savannah. It's an opportunity to open the door and educate everyone.
- **Annual Census** (Amy Griffin). Family Connections is polled about the census every year end. This year several counties in the state have decided not to get a group together to do the census in their county. Amy shared information which reflects the counties that already have a census team, counties considering having a team, counties that have not responded and counties that have responded, "no" they will not have a team this year. Amy will email this information to Ms. Cosby and Jackie Davis to share with everyone.

County Reports	
Worth	Sandra C. Went to several county commission meetings to promote the survey. Took a promotional statement to channel 10 with the survey card. In April, Ms. Cosby and Gail Davenport attended the R2 RAC meeting at Central State with Irene Cheyne and Commissioner Craig to promote the survey and to share with members things that R4 RAC had done that helped with getting the surveys to counties it was responsible for as well as other counties not responsible for. Attended the ACCG Conference April 26 & 27 in Savannah. Along with Irene Cheyne, talked with the County Commissioners, County Managers, Administrators, spouses, etc. about RACs and the RAC survey. Sandra and Irene shared a booth with DBHDD staff Angelyn Dionysatos (DBHDD Press Secretary) and a R5 staff member. Many commissioners had not seen the surveys. Attended the RAC learning event in Augusta May 3 - 5. Paper survey included in meeting folder. This is a repeat of an electronic survey sent previously regarding not attending the RAC learning event. Please complete and give to Jackie Davis. Approximately 19 RAC members attended the training. It is important to increase attendance to the trainings. There will be a Fall training. The date and location have not been determined. Spouses are invited and encouraged to attend the RAC trainings. Please make plans to attend training in the Fall.
Calhoun	Landra Lane. It is very disheartening and discouraging when someone seeks help and it's like hitting your head up against the wall. Please contact Jennifer Dunn (BH RSA) or Tim Hester (DD RSA) if you are running into a brick wall and need help. They can reach out to providers.
Dougherty	Debbie Richardson. Attended the RAC Learning Event in Augusta. Attended the Albany Mental Health Proclamation signing a couple of weeks ago along with Gail Davenport and Sandra Cosby. The Mayor and County Commissioners signed the proclamation. Planning to attend the Dougherty NAMI meeting tonight. Asked by Jere Brands to do 3 sessions of QPR (Question, Persuade & Refer) training in July. Debbie and Gail Davenport are planning to attend the Dougherty County Commissioners meeting on Monday, June 17.
Lowndes	Berinda Nwakamma. In the month of May, the City of Valdosta worked with Legacy and put out blue ribbons in recognition of Mental Health Awareness. Family Connections in Lowndes has a Community Action Team and they also met in May. They tried to identify providers and schedule an event for the MH initiatives. Berinda looks forward to speaking with Legacy staff to identify more things that are being done in the community.
Baker	Carla Heard. Planning to share information with County Commissioners and Sheriff's office.
Lanier	Amy Griffin. The hospital recently had a Community Assessment event. The biggest thing to come out of it was mental health. Legacy's office in Cook County covers Lanier. They now have an office in the hospital once a week on Fridays. The hospital is trying to do a lot of referrals and push it so that they can be there more than once a week. They have someone in the DFCS office. The DFCS employee is the same therapist who does drug court. Lanier Family Connections also has a "Safe and Health Families" team. Their team wrote a grant to do a trauma support group for people dealing with substance abuse. This is offered to the women in drug court as they are coming out of drug court. The school system just held a



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	<p>“Threat Team” meeting. Amanda from Legacy talked to the group about a grant in which Legacy would be in the High School. They will have an office at the school and will also send staff to the other school daily. The board must approve it.</p>
Tift	<p>Cherysh Green-Caldwell. Excited to be on the council. Drug Court works with mental health and substance abuse. The drug court partners with Legacy BH. They are in the process of starting a drug court in Turner County. Legacy does not provide services onsite in Turner. Cherysh hopes that when she gets her office up and running, they will be able to provide services out of her office.</p>
Thomas	<p>James Parrott. Thomas Family Connections has been doing literacy. They are going to do mental health starting next year. Apex in the schools has made a great difference with the kids and is a great benefit. Georgia Pines had their summer camp last week which was very successful.</p>
Colquitt	<p>Lynn Wilson. DBHDD staff attended the recent Proclamation signing in recognition of Mental Health Awareness in Moultrie. Colquitt County school system recently had a conference; “Multi-tiered System of Support.” NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Georgia came to Moultrie and one of the members did a presentation. The three purposes of NAMI are education, support and advocacy. Trying hard to get more NAMI presence in South Georgia. Albany is the other affiliate in the area. Visit NAMI.org to view a complete listing of affiliates. NAMI Moultrie in the past year has served 2,547 people at support groups, educational meetings, NAMI Walk, etc. There are 14 paid members and 13 volunteers. Sandra Cosby serves on the leadership committee. NAMI Walk this year is scheduled for Saturday, October 19. NAMI Moultrie is mentoring a group in Tifton that has taken off. They are attending Health Fairs on their own. NAMI attends every Health Fair they can get people to. They have tried very hard to get a NAMI group going in Valdosta. Thomasville has a group that meets on the third Monday of the week. Joy Dickenson coordinates those meetings. NAMI members are not professional mental health people; they have the lived experience and approach the topic from a very different standpoint.</p>
Seminole	<p>Virginia Herring. Seminole Family Connections had their fund-raiser Golf Tournament last weekend. Has tried getting in touch with the Sheriff and is still working on this.</p>

DBHDD Updates

Jennifer Dunn, Behavioral Health

- **Mental Health Awareness.** May was Mental Health Awareness month. R4 staff participated in a lot of activities.
- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).** Jennifer facilitated several MHFA trainings over the past month. A few trainings are coming up. Two trainings are scheduled for Valdosta State University. They want their Residence Hall Monitors in the dorms trained so that they can identify signs. Jennifer is going to Athens in September to do two trainings with The Carl Vinson Institute (Management Academy) leadership staff. Jennifer was contacted by the group in the state that does Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for training.
- **CIT Training.** Training with law enforcement (police department, sheriff’s office, etc.). Jennifer just finished a training in Tifton week before last. A training is scheduled the week of the 20-24 in Valdosta. Several departments (police, sheriff’s, etc.) goal is to get 100% CIT trained.
- **Regional Community Collaboratives.** Schedule provided in meeting folder. Usually get good feedback from these and are always open to more. Everyone is welcome to attend.
- **Suicide Prevention Awareness.** September is Suicide Awareness month. You will get information regarding activities and events. Jennifer is working on a statewide plan for suicide prevention. Jennifer is chairing the safe messaging work group for suicide prevention. This is a five-year plan (2020–2025). This involves multi state agencies (i.e., Department of Education, GBI, Law Enforcement, Public Health, CDC, etc.).
- **Emergency Preparedness.** Jennifer and Tim Hester have been doing a lot with emergency preparedness. There was a training in Thomasville in April. They did a debriefing from Hurricane Michael during this training. Jennifer and Tim attend the Emergency



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Preparedness Coalition meetings. Their coalition is through the Department of Public Health. The goal is to do proactive things before storms hit. There is a focus particularly for the farming community.

- [Rural Mental Health Conference](#). Commissioner Fitzgerald has asked Jennifer to speak at a conference in Fairhope, Alabama in September regarding rural mental health. On the day that Jennifer is scheduled to speak, there are plans to tour farms. Jennifer will speak during the tours. Multiple states participate in this conference.
- [Apex Schools](#). Jennifer will send the Apex listing via email to Ms. Cosby and Jackie Davis for distribution to everyone.

Tim Hester, Developmental Disabilities

- [START Training](#). Jennifer and Tim are involved in projects to break silos that exist. There is a need to start recognizing people as people and not as behavioral health and intellectual disabilities. Treatment needs to be geared towards the person's needs. Progress has been made with blending Mobile Crisis services. The department is working with community-based providers, particularly the large safety net group. DBHDD is trying to determine how to do this, what are the barriers DBHDD needs to do to assist in this. START is a comprehensive program (originated in Massachusetts) that looks at how to assess a person's needs. This is one method that will be used in breaking silos.
- [IDD Case Management System](#). The department has delayed the go-live date of the new IDD Case Management system several times. The DD Division Director says that it is going to go live August 19. "IDD Connects" is the name of this web-based information system. When a family applies for waiver services, they will be able to track the process and the progress of their waiver application via the web. Georgia is the only state in the nation that has a system like this. Tim will be involved in significant training. He will keep everyone abreast of the progress.

Nominating Committee Report. James Parrott gave the following report.

- For the office of Chair, the committee nominated Gail Davenport. Ms. Davenport accepted the nomination. There were no nominations from the floor. All agreed by show of hands.
- For the office of Vice Chair, the committee nominated Virginia Herring. Ms. Herring accepted the nomination. There were no nominations from the floor. All agreed by show of hands.
- For the office of Secretary, the committee nominated Debbie Richardson. Ms. Richardson accepted the nomination. There were no nominations from the floor. All agreed by show of hands.
- For the office of General member, the committee nominated Sandra Cosby. There were no nominations from the floor. Ms. Cosby accepted the nomination. All agreed by show of hands.
- For the office of General member, Gail Davenport nominated Cherysh Green-Caldwell. All agreed by show of hands.

Public Comments



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- [ACCG Magazine](#). The June issue of the ACCG magazine should be arriving in County Commissioners offices. There is an article in the magazine about Regional Advisory Councils. Ms. Cosby has requested a copy of the magazine and will share the article with everyone once she receives it.
- [ACCG Buyers Mart](#). Ms. Cosby and Irene Cheyne attended the 2019 ACCG Buyers Mart. It was very successful and highlighted that RACs must work collaboratively with County Commissioners. The Mart provided an opportunity to promote the partnership between ACCG & RACs. Keep your counties informed. RACs are making a difference.

Next Meeting. August 13, 2019. Location to be determined. If you would like to host the next meeting, please let Jackie Davis know.

Adjournment. James Parrot made a motion to adjourn meeting. Cherysh Green-Caldwell seconded the motion. The motion passed.