



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health
& Developmental Disabilities

Judy Fitzgerald, Commissioner

Office of the Commissioner

Behavioral Health Coordinating Council
Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2020
10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Meeting held via WebEx only

Meeting Called By: Judy Fitzgerald, Chair

Facilitator: Judy Fitzgerald

BHCC Liaison: Tracy Gamble

Council Members Teleconferencing: Commissioner Judy Fitzgerald (DBHDD), Commissioner Tyrone Oliver (DJJ), Commissioner Frank Berry (DCH), Commissioner Michael Nail (DCS), Commissioner Timothy Ward (GDC), Representative Katie Dempsey (District 13), Family Representative, Stanley Jones, Esq., Disabilities Services Ombudsman Jacquice Stone (ODSO), Chairman Terry Barnard (PAP) Parent Representative Diane Reeder

Absent: Senator Renee Unterman (District 45), Commissioner Robyn Crittenden (DHS), Commissioner Kathleen Toomey (DPH), Commissioner Mark Butler (DOL), Commissioner Christopher Nunn (DCA), Superintendent Richard Woods (DOE), Adult Consumer Representative Julie Spores

DBHDD Leadership: Brenda Woodard, General Counsel
David Sofferin, Director, Office of Public Affairs

Agenda

Call to Order: Chair Judy Fitzgerald; 10:08 a.m.

Chair Judy Fitzgerald welcomed everyone to the meeting. Behavioral health and wellness are important to the council and to the constituents that we serve. Chair Fitzgerald thanked everyone for taking the time to engage in the discussion. Each of you in your specific roles are as passionate as the DBHDD team about assuring Georgians have access to the services they need and they know what is available.

Recovery Presentation

Fitzgerald introduced Toyia Mather, outreach coordinator for the RESPECT Institute of Georgia. Ms. Mather presented Curtis Hall, a new graduate of the RESPECT Institute. Mr. Hall grew up in a middle-class family and was a happy child but always felt that he did not fit in with the other children. Unfortunately, trying to fit in with others led him to using drugs and resulted in being sentenced to detention centers, jails, and prison. Mr. Hall lost everything including his self-respect due to his drug use. Through therapy and narcotics anonymous he learned that he also has a mental health diagnosis and began to receive treatment. He has repaired his family relationships and is engaged to be married. Mr. Hall is employed with Highland Rivers Community Services Board as a Forensic Peer Mentor and proudly help others through the Appalachian Judicial Circuit Accountability Court Program.

Chair Fitzgerald began the meeting with presenting three action items for the council's approval.

Action Items

Approval of the August 12, 2019, BHCC meeting minutes: Chair Fitzgerald asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Frank Berry made the motion, which was seconded by Stanley Jones, Esq. The motion was passed unanimously.

Approval of the BHCC 2020 meeting dates: Chair Fitzgerald asked for a motion to approve. Stanley Jones, Esq. made the motion, which was seconded by Chairman Timothy Barnard. The motion was passed unanimously.

Approval of the FY21-FY23 Georgia System of Care State Plan: Chair Fitzgerald asked for a motion to approve. Chairman Timothy Barnard. made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Timothy Ward. The motion was passed unanimously.

BHCC Initiative

Interagency Directors Team

Chair Fitzgerald introduced Renee Johnson, director of Georgia State University Health Policy Center and chair of the Interagency Directors Team (IDT). Johnson gave a brief overview of the work group activities.

- FY21-FY23 SOC State Plan has been approved. It includes include 0-4 age population.
- 11 New Workgroups were created in relation to the new SOC state plan. The work groups are organized around the different focus areas such as infant and early childhood, school based mental health, evaluation, coordination, and workforce development. The strategies are outlined in the plan.
- Upcoming Kickoff Meetings – A series of meetings are scheduled in the next two weeks with the workgroups and the chairs and are co-led by members of the IDT and partnering agencies.
- New LIPT Manual Developed & Distributed – local area planning teams disseminated it throughout the state. LIPTs are meeting with the families and partners and are adapting to the virtual environment.

Transition-Reentry Committee

Chair Fitzgerald introduced Terri Timberlake, Ph.D., director of DBHDD's Office of Adult Mental Health and co-chair of the BHCC Transition Reentry Committee. Dr. Timberlake shared updates on the committee areas of focus.

- Access to Respect Institute speakers for partnering agencies. Partnering agencies are encouraged to invite a speaker from the institute to share their lived experience at their meetings or trainings to help stamp out the stigma of mental health.
- Forensic Peer Mentor Program committee focused on forensic peers in 7 state prisons (5 positions filled), 8-day reporting centers (5 positions filled), 2 state hospitals (0 positions filled) and 5 mental health treatment courts (5 positions filled). FY20 851 forensic peers were served.
- Returning citizens need to have an opportunity for gainful employment. A town hall meeting is scheduled on December 1, 2020 to talk about strategies to help with employment.
- Family Reunification Project- a new initiative multi-session project that is family-focused and peer-facilitated. The proposed pilot sites: Metro Atlanta Reentry Center-FPM is in place and the next step is training on the curriculum. Central State Prison- still awaiting response. The proposed 20 returning citizens are in the first cohort.

The Chair's Report – Included DBHDD updates from Commissioner Fitzgerald and DBHDD staff.

Commissioner Fitzgerald reflected on the impact of COVID-19 and its effect on the safety net that includes 5 state hospitals, the Georgia Crisis & Access Line (800-715-4225), mobile crisis, and crisis units across the state. The safety net continued to operate with implementing augmented staffing, rapid testing and having adequate personal protective

equipment (PPE). Commissioner Fitzgerald acknowledged the support from Governor Brian Kemp and his team, Commissioner Frank Berry and the Department of Community Health and Commissioner Toomey and the Department of Public Health team with being instrumental in keeping the safety net functioning. Commissioner Fitzgerald also acknowledged the work of the clinical leadership throughout the state. The safety net is open for business and continues to serve our most vulnerable citizens.

Jeannette David, DBHDD Disaster Mental Health Coordinator gave an overview on COVID-19 SAMSHA Recovery Response Grant. The State of Georgia received a presidential state disaster declaration for COVID -19. DBHDD was eligible to receive funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and SAMSHA for a Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) that provides supplemental mental health funding in the wake of a disaster. In Georgia, the program is called the Georgia Recovery Project.

The Georgia Recovery Project began on May 1, 2020. The CCP is funded through interagency partnerships from substance abuse and mental health services administration and FEMA. The purpose is to provide non-clinical practical emotional support to survivors of disasters and referrals to community services. The project allowed hiring of counselors to go door-to-door and check on survivors, identify their needs and make referrals to community services for basic needs and mental health treatment if warranted.

On April 6, 2020, DBHDD launched the Georgia COVID -19 Emotional Support Line (866-399-8938) to provide free, confidential, anonymous assistance, and emotional support as a result from the COVID-19 pandemic. The support line is staffed with volunteers from the communities and DBHDD staff from the hours of 8:00 am-11:00 pm. The CCP funding allowed the hiring of crisis counselors in each DBHDD 6 regional offices.

Jill Mays, director Division of Behavioral Health Prevention & Federal Grants gave an overview of their work with the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTS) called the State Opioid Adapted Response (SOAR). The program is a partnership between DBHDD, Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC), and Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB).

The State Opioid Adapted Response (SOAR) is a newly developed training for Georgia Law Enforcement and other first responders. The training was launched in September 2020. The training includes:

1. 4-hour interactive training with three video segments; officer safety, de-escalation techniques, and proper administration of Narcan to reverse overdoses.
2. Participants completing the training receive free Narcan and can receive additional kit if they inform DBHDD of reversal attempts.

The goal of opioid-related trainings to law enforcement other first responders across Georgia is to safely respond to opioid related crises. The training includes:

1. Build effective relationships among officers and communities to increase awareness and prevent substance abuse.
2. Identify symptoms of opioid use.
3. Use conflict de-escalation tactics during encounters with individuals who may be using substances.
4. Learn methods for protecting themselves from accidental exposure to dangerous opioids, particularly fentanyl.
5. Proper use of Narcan to reverse overdoses and save lives.

To date, 122 law enforcement officers have been trained. Development of an online portal to report the outcomes of the officer's attempts to save lives is being considered as well as incentives of offering a free replacement Narcan kit.

It Takes A Village Media Campaign is a partnership between DBHDD and GPSTS. This partnership is great example of what happens when working towards a common goal to get a common response is achieved.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

There was no further business. Chair Fitzgerald asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Tyrone Oliver and seconded by Commissioner Timothy Ward. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

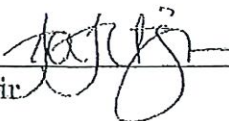
Special Notes

The next scheduled meeting of the Georgia Behavioral Health Coordinating Council will be held on **Wednesday, February 10, 2021.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Tracy Gamble, BHCC Liaison

Signatures:

Chair 

Secretary 

