



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health &
Developmental Disabilities

Kevin Tanner, Commissioner

DBHDD

Office of the Commissioner

Behavioral Health Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
(Hybrid Meeting)**

**200 Piedmont Avenue, S.E. West Tower, 5th Floor, Board Room 512
Atlanta, GA 30334**

Meeting Called By: Kevin Tanner, Chairman

Facilitator: Kevin Tanner, Chairman

BHCC Liaison: Chelsee Nabritt, Board and Special Project Manager

Council Members:

In-Person: Commissioner Kevin Tanner (*DBHDD*), Alexia Jones (*Adult Consumer*), Commissioner Amy Jacobs (*DECAL*), Brian Pettersson, Esq. (*DHS*), Commissioner Kathleen Toomey (*DPH*), Commissioner Christopher Nunn (*DCA*), Nathan Call (*Expert on Child & Adolescent Health*), Commissioner Patricia Ross (*GDVS*), Stanley Jones, Esq., (*Family Representative*)

Video Conference: Michael Smith (*DCH*), Ombudsman Jacquice Stone (*ODOS*), Director Jerry Bruce (*OCA*), Commissioner Greg Dozier (*TCSG*), Representative Katie Dempsey (*District 13*), Commissioner Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb (*DJJ*), Veda Johnson (*Pediatrician*), Shaun Owen (*DOE*), Joyette Holmes (*PAP*), Sherri Bloodworth (*DCS*)

Absent: Senator Kay Kirkpatrick (*District 32*), Commissioner Tyrone Oliver (*GDC*)

DBHDD Leadership: Brandon Kenney, *Assistant Commissioner of Operations*, Monica Patel, Esq., *Assistant Commissioner for Agency Affairs and Chief Legal Officer*, Brenda Woodard, Esq., *General Counsel*

Agenda

Call to Order:

Chairman Kevin Tanner called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Chairman Kevin Tanner invited the guest speaker from the Respect Institute to the podium to share her story with the council. Jen Banathy, Organizational Development Coordinator at the Respect Institute, informed the council that Toyia Adams was unable to attend the meeting due to a sickness and expressed that she was excited to share her recovery journey with the council. Mrs. Banathy explained that she serves as a mentor at the Respect Institute, where she helps individuals build confidence and share their recovery stories with community leaders, judges, schools, and legislators and more. She shared that her role is deeply personal to her because she once struggled to share her own story and later realized that no one could advocate for her better than herself. Jen thanked the council for their time and attention before concluding her remarks and leaving the podium.

Action Items:

There was 1 item on the agenda that required approval.

Approval of the November 5, 2024, meeting minutes: Chairman Kevin Tanner asked for a motion of approval. Commissioner Christopher Nunn made a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Kathleen Toomey. The motion passed unanimously.

BHCC Initiative Updates:

Chairman Tanner introduced Renee Johnson, Director of the Georgia Health Policy Center at Georgia State University, to present an update on Mindworks Georgia. Mrs. Johnson explained that Mindworks Georgia is working on a grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, aimed at addressing disparities and improving the quality of care for medically underserved populations through patient-centered outcomes research. She highlighted how multiple state agencies—such as the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Community Health, Georgia Department of Education, Morehouse School of Medicine, and others—are collaborating on a five-year project to support these communities and emphasized the potential impact on underserved citizens across the state. Mrs. Johnson also noted that the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission included several recommendations in their report and discussed how the state adopted these recommendations and the effects of their implementation.

Chairman Tanner thanked Mrs. Renee Johnson and her team for their hard work and encouraged them to continue providing updates on the grant opportunity at future council meetings, as it directly affects many agencies and forms partnerships and advances the project's primary goals.

Chairman Tanner then introduced Danielle Fish, MATCH Clinical Specialist with the Office of Children, Young Adults and Families, to provide an update on the MATCH Committee. Mrs. Fish mentioned that Heather Stanley was unexpectedly out of the office and mentioned that she is excited to present the MATCH Committee update on her behalf. Mrs. Fish highlighted the support gaps identified by the MATCH Clinical Team and discussed how new processes have been implemented to promote growth and improvement. Mrs. Fish also outlined key focus areas of current pilot programs and explained that, if successful, these initiatives are expected to have a positive impact on those areas.

Chairman Tanner then introduced Patricia Ross, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service to provide an update on the Department's mental and behavioral health efforts. Commissioner Ross highlighted the growing need for increased support for veterans facing mental and behavioral health challenges, especially among aging veterans and those affected by trauma. Commissioner Ross also discussed challenges with underutilized facilities and emphasized the impact of the state's suicide prevention efforts, and how she values the collaboration with other state agencies and is thankful for their efforts in supporting veterans and their families.

Chairman Tanner thanked the presenters for sharing their insights with the council. He acknowledged the collaborative efforts taking place across state agencies and encouraged continued partnership to support the initiatives discussed throughout the meeting. Chairman Tanner then asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding today's presentations.

Adjournment:

There was no further business for the day, Chairman Tanner asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Christopher Nunn, which was seconded by Brian Pettersson, Esq. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.


Special Notes:

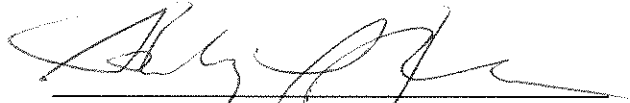
The next scheduled meeting will be May 8, 2025.

Respectfully submitted by:

Chelsee Nabritt, Board and Special Project Manager

Signatures:



Chairman, Kevin Tanner

Secretary, Stanley Jones, Esq.