

TO: Members of the MH/EI/ID Advisory Board  
FROM: Brandon Savochnka, Human Services Director  
RE: Thursday, May 18, 2023 Board Meeting  
LOCATION: Carmine A. Scotece Conference Room #132, 1st Floor  
Butler Co. Government Center Annex and via Zoom  
TIME: 3:00 p.m.

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order/Welcome
- II. Public Comment for Agenda Items
- III. ✓ Approval of Minutes
- IV. Mental Health Report
- V. Early Intervention Report
- VI. Intellectual Disabilities Report
- VII. Fiscal Report
- VIII. New Business
  - A. MH/EI/ID Administrator Report
- IX. Board Members Concerns/Comments/Announcements
- X. Public Comment for General Items
- XI. ✓ Adjournment

The next Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 20, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

✓ Indicates voting item

**Mental Health/Early Intervention/Intellectual Disabilities Program  
Board Minutes  
February 16, 2023  
Butler County Human Services Conference Room and via Zoom**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Mr. Peter Szura	Dr. Kathy Selvaggi
Ms. Susan Stover	Ms. Jackie Eppler
Mr. Shawn Pugh	Ms. Shirley Warburton
Ms. Cathryn Heakins	

**MH/EI/ID Administrative Office:**

Mr. Brandon Savochka	Mr. Cory Achezinski
Ms. Marni Rettig	Ms. Grace Abbruzzese
Ms. Sarah Wearing	

**Visitors:**

Bette Peoples, Grapevine Center

**Call to Order**

Mr. Szura called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Introductions were made.

**Public Comment for Agenda Items**

There were no public comments.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Szura asked the Board for approval of the minutes from the November meeting. Mr. Pugh made a motion to approve, Ms. Stover seconded.

In favor:	7
Opposed:	0
Abstentions	0

**Mental Health Report**

Ms. Rettig announced that we were awarded a grant to expand our crisis program. We will receive \$250,000 and will use it for staffing, new equipment; cell phones, and two vehicles for mobile crisis services.

Ms. Rettig submitted a proposal for a grant for \$243,000 to work with first responders on collaborative activities to put together a multi-disciplinary team. We would contract with a consultant to oversee this process. We would also use some of the money to pay for CIT (Crisis Intervention Training), Mental Health 1<sup>st</sup> Aid training, outreach and community education activities, and to purchase tracking software for the crisis team.

Ms. Rettig gave an update on the proposal she had written to the state in September for a grant for \$150,000 in ACLU lawsuit money. This would be used for staffing for our transitional forensic house in Butler. We found out in January that we will receive this grant.

Ms. Rettig reported that we opened our Beacon Behavioral Health Network on February 1<sup>st</sup> to independently licensed practitioners, including licensed social workers, and licensed marriage and family counselors. Should any of our larger clinics be full they could refer out to smaller independent licensed practitioners.

Ms. Rettig announced we will soon reach the one-year anniversary for our multi-systemic therapy program for youth ages 9 to 17 years old. This program is for children who are at risk of out-of-home placement in a residential treatment facility. Over the past year we have served 21 children through the MST psychiatric program. Currently there are 10 children in the program, 11 children have been discharged, and so far, none of these children have had to go to an out-of-home placement. We plan to meet with MHY Family Services to talk about what we have learned through this past year, how to keep momentum, follow-up on these children, and plan for longer term outcomes. Ms. Rettig noted our residential treatment numbers have been down this past year.

Ms. Rettig reported that we met with Freeport Area School District to see how we can better support the district. Freeport Area School District is located in both Armstrong and Butler Counties.

Ms. Rettig announced that we have behavioral health money for early mental health training for providers. Ms. Rettig said that she and Leslie Johnson have been working with UPMC's Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma program. We plan to host an early mental health training on April 20<sup>th</sup>. We plan to have another training in the fall.

Ms. Rettig reported the Community Support Program, provided gifts to our residents at Torrance State Hospital during the past holiday season. They also provided gifts to the LTSR and sent pizza to the patients at Butler Hospital's two mental health units.

### **Early Intervention Report**

Ms. Wearing reported that as of the end of January there were 421 children with active plans, and 37 children active in tracking, for a total of 458 children within the Early Intervention program. There were 57 referrals.

### **Intellectual Disabilities Report**

Ms. Wearing gave a summary of the Christmas Party that was held in December. She announced that this year the Christmas Party will be held at the Vagabond Center to allow for more people to attend.

Ms. Wearing gave a review of recent activities including an art night and she shared photos of the finished paintings. Participants also decorated sugar cookies. A Parent Group was held in January and they discussed waiver funding. The February Parent Group was held at the Grace Community Wellness Center, 15 parents attended. Tricia Pritchard spoke about communications and connections.

Ms. Wearing announced a vendor fair is planned for May 10<sup>th</sup> at the Tanglewood Center from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Wearing reported that she met with the Freeport Area School District's Special Education Director and the school psychologist, to create relationships and plan for next school year.

Ms. Wearing announced that we received \$30,000 in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) monies for respite or emergency situations. This money has all been authorized to support 20+ individuals.

Ms. Wearing reviewed upcoming events that were published in the Winter 2023 edition of "The Vision" newsletter.

### **Fiscal Report**

Mr. Achezinski reviewed the fiscal report which was through December 31, 2022.

### **New Business**

#### **MH/EI/ID Administrator Report**

Mr. Savochka announced that today was his first meeting as a board member with PACHSA (Pennsylvania Association of County Human Services Administrators).

Mr. Savochka gave an update on housing. The warming center has been operating since December 1<sup>st</sup> and will remain open until March 31<sup>st</sup>. The average number of individuals who stay there each night is seven. A case manager is available daily to help individuals get connected to the services they need.

The Family Connections Center, formerly the YWCA, currently has five apartments available for families. A sixth apartment will soon be ready. The average length of stay is 23 days. Catholic Charities places families there and then connects them to permanent housing.

Mr. Savochka announced CIT (Crisis Intervention Training) is scheduled for May 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> at Monarch Place. Invitations will be sent to local municipalities. The goal is to have another 20 officers trained within the County.

One of CCAP's (County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania) main priorities is an increase for county funding for the Block Grant. There was a 10% cut to the Block Grant in 2012. It is imperative that we get an increase this year so that we do not have to cut any programs.

Mr. Savochka reported that he will meet with Butler County Community College regarding a scholarship program through HealthChoices, Southwest Six, and our partnership with Beacon Health. This program would be for graduating students who want to further their education to the Bachelor's level in the fields of psychology, social work, or sociology, and are willing to commit to work in our crisis department at Center for Community Resources.

Mr. Savochka asked the board members to recommend any individuals who may be interested in joining our board. Applications and a list of available categories will be emailed to board members.

**Board Members' Concerns/Comments/Announcements**

There were none

**Public Comment for General Items**

There were no public comments.

**Adjournment**

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

APPROVED AS TO FORMAT:

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Pete Szura, Chairperson

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Susan Stover, Board Secretary

SUBMITTED BY:

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Grace B. Abbruzzese

cc: Mr. Richard Latsko, OMHSAS  
Ms. Michele O'Toole, Western Regional Program Manager  
Advisory Board Members