

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**



Department of Behavioral Health Behavioral Health Planning Council (BHPC)
In-Person/Virtual Meeting
June 30, 2023, 10:00am-12:00pm

MINUTES

Meeting Called to Order at 10:09am

BHPC Members: Alvin Hinkle, Charles Gervin, Elizabeth Maldonado, Eric Scharf, Esther Ford, Gail Advent, Hilary Kascser, Jaclyn Verner, Jean Harris, Jennifer Moore, Luis Diaz, Mark LeVota, Masi Sithole, Nadine Parker, Nicole Denny, Nicole Gilbert, Roz Parker

DBH: Barbara Bazron, Camil Douthit, Crystal Williams, Denise McKain, Jean Moise, Laquita Howard, Marina Soto, Melody Calkins, Mia Olsen, Philippa Stuart, Randy Raybon, Renee Evans-Jackman, Richard Bebout, Sharon Hunt, Toussaint Tingling Clemmons, Trina Logan

DC Government: Jenifer Joyce (DHCF)

Public Attendees: Lauren Swank, Elyssa Clauson, Nicholas Weil, Rachael Shpak

Department of Behavioral Health Updates – (Barabara Bazron, DBH Director)

- Announced new Chief Clinical Officer, Jonathan Shepherd, MD, to start 8/14; Dr. Shepard is board certified in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Adult Psychiatry.
- Acknowledged the importance and history of the Juneteenth holiday.
- The Medicaid MCO carve-in date has been moved from 10/1/23 to 4/1/24. Delay due to protests leading to delay in the ratification of the MCO contracts by six months.
- Provided a snapshot of the FY 24 DBH budget that reflects at 2.2% increase from FY 23. Details in slide deck.
- Informed BHPC of the Opioid Litigations Proceeds Act of 2022 from which the District will receive \$49 million over 18 years. A 21-member Commission will recommend to the Mayor how the funds should be spent. Dr. Bazron and Mr. Lavota will be on the Commission. The Mayor will appoint members who are in recovery or family of those in recovery to the Commission. Application link is in the slide-deck.
- Reported on the June 28th Public Roundtable on the District's Opioid/Fentanyl Crisis. Highlighted the need for enhanced role of peers and the increased need for long-term housing for those in recovery.

- Esther Ford asked for clarification on Peer Support Education. Dr. Bazron noted DBH will be adopting a national curriculum. Trina Logan noted ongoing peer training, but to adopt the national standards we will need to increase the number of required supervised hour to 500.
- Esther Ford asked about additional funds for BH outreach to Wards 1,5, and 7. Dr. Bazron clarified that this was Council’s addition, but that DBH does outreach to all Wards.
- Dr. Bazron clarified that the Sobering Center will be located at 35K St. NE and that she will announce to the BHPC when it is open.

Dr. Bazron provided time for questions and input from the BHPC:

- Jean Harris noted need for screening for co-occurring disorders. Dr. Bazron confirmed that DBH does stress this.
- Hilary Kascser noted need for addressing Hoarding Disorder.
- Charles Gervin noted a need for more outreach and education, bringing in more partners.
- Gail Advent noted a need for more education about our services, and on educating parents about drug use.
- Elizabeth Maldonado noted need for assistance with Medicaid renewal now that Covid is over. Jennifer Joyce of DHCF dropped in a link for resources in the chat. Attached in packet.
- Masi Sithole asked how DC and the US are doing in relation to Africa, China, and other countries around the world regarding handling the Opioid crisis. Dr. Bazron noted she has recently been to Africa as a subject matter expert.

Systems Needs Review and BHPC Observations – (Mark LeVota, BHPC Chair)

- Mark LeVota framed discussion into three categories: service needs for MH, SUD, and Co-occurring disorders; needs across the age spectrum; and needs across the spectrum of services from prevention, early intervention, and harm reduction onward. Requested this time for BHCP to provide insights for SAMSHA Combined Block Grant and to Dr. Bazron.
 - Elizabeth Maldonado - Coordination of care, being referred out if a service like community support is needed. Coordinating with NAMI, etc.
 - Charles Gervin - Getting good care currently requires “a lot of leg-work.” Need better coordination to ensure a “cohesive network.”
 - Esther Ford - Providers are full. Need more psychiatrist, especially since COVID.
 - Jean Harris- Need to better engage people not in the system; need to ensure appropriate assessments/next steps for other systems.
 - Elizabeth Maldonado - Blood work is not authorized as often as necessary (some need monthly blood tests).
 - Charles Gervin – We’re moving toward an greater sense of what behavioral health means; “it’s about behavioral” (not MH or SUD solely), requires a broader community; “the general health of the community”; a greater network to distribute information on what is

healthy behavior for the community; a greater conversation with all of the providers and a recognition that they are one community.

- Mark LeVota - What about services across the age continuum?
 - Masi Sithole - We need greater peer participation.
 - Jean Harris - Transitions from one age group to another are challenging.
 - Nicole Gilbert (CFSA) - Challenges exist around engaging youth and keeping them connected. We need more engagement specialists/dedicated staff. Expand SUD interventions in the schools.
 - Gail Advent - Two areas get most attention (gap infant/early childhood and seniors). Need better transitions. Need a full spectrum of life perspective.
 - Elizabeth Maldonado - Need more resources for day care for seniors.
 - Esther Ford - Many people in the system for years don't know they have a MH diagnosis. Seniors are different, has never seen a pamphlet for older adults regarding mental health.
 - Hilary Kascser - Need Hoarding Disorder resources.
- Mark LeVota - Will defer conversation about the spectrum of care due to time. Requested members submit ideas in chat.

Proposed Bylaws Amendments (Mark LeVota, Chair)]

- Mark Levota - Move to consider proposed bylaws amendments as a block.
 - Seconded by Esther Ford
- Mark LeVota- Proposed discussion of amendments?
- Seconded by Esther Ford
 - Masi Sithole– Asked about possible additions. Chair noted need to seat people for the start of Fiscal Year on October 1st. Then we could discuss further changes.
 - Hilary Kascser - Noted she added editorial changes in the chat. Chair considers this a technical change that would not need a separate vote.
 - Masi Sithole - Requested addition of a table of contents. Chair noted a revised copy of the bylaws will be circulated.
 - Jean Harris – Wants clearer definition of “community members with lived experience.” If a member has lived experience but be associated with DBH; is that still counted? Chair responded that the required 51% cannot be government employees. Suggested we determine if the bylaws are being appropriately followed.
 - Charles Gervin - Are we all working with the same definition of ‘lived experience’? Chair responded that bylaw 3.1.a distinguishes this, but we could review later.
 - Masi Sithole - Does the 51% apply to the officers. Chair responded that this is not currently in the bylaws, but we could review in the future.
- Mark LeVota – Noted quorum is present. Requested vote on accepting bylaws amendments. No objections were noted. Amendments were accepted.

Public Comments (Mark LeVota, Chair)

- Nicholas Weil noted dial-in instructions on the website didn't work correctly. Chair noted that the Executive Committee will discuss meeting format.
- Renee Evans-Jackman (Director, DBH Grants Management) granted time for presentation.
 - Combined Block Grant Application has recently been released.
 - Will require a letter signed by the BHPC Chair.
 - Draft to BHPC to review in August.
 - Slide 3 has areas of focus to review for Application.

Standing Committee Reports

- Mark LeVota noted there were no reports for this meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:57am.