

NEW JERSEY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL

Minutes

June 10, 2026, 10:00 am

This meeting was conducted exclusively through MS Teams video teleconference & conference call

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Dial-in Number: +1 609-300-7196, PIN: 306216820#

As required by the Open Public Meetings Act N.J.S.A. 10:4-10 - Statement in minutes of meeting on adequate notice. As required by P.L. 2025, c72, beginning March 1, 2026 all legal notices will be published on the Department of Human Services (DHS) official website. DHS public notices can be found at: <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/notices/index.shtml>). As defined by P.L. 2025, c. 72 (N.J.S.A Section 35:3-1 et al), "legal notices" mean any resolution, official proclamation, notice, or advertisement of any sort, kind, or character, including proposals for bids on public work and otherwise, required by law or by the order or rule of any court.

Additionally, DHS Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) public meeting notices under the Open Public Meetings Act including the New Jersey Community Mental Health Citizen's Advisory Board and the New Jersey Behavioral Health Planning Council will be published on the DHS official website. The complete text of each legal notice may be obtained or viewed by the public on the DMHAS webpage at: <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/notices/overview/>.

The Secretary of State maintains a centralized, publicly accessible directory of legal notice hyperlinks submitted by public entities across the State. <https://www.nj.gov/state/statewide-legal-notices-list.shtml>.

Participants:

Heather Simms (Chair)	Connie Greene (Vice-Chair)	Donna Migliorino (DMHAS)
Jennifer Rutberg (DoA),	Kurtis Baker	Maurice Ingram (DoE)
Darlema Bey	Winifred Chain	Francis Walker (YJC)
Christina Nicodemus (DoC)	Chris Morrison (DoH)	Julia Barugel
Elisabeth Marchese	Shawn Buskirk	Harry Coe
Zoe Karch (SHA-NJ)	Michael Ippoliti	Jennifer Gietka (DFD)
Angela Calzone	Jada Abdullah (NJAMHAA)	Irina Stuchinsky(DMAHS)

DMHAS, CSOC, DDD, DMAHS, DoAS & DoH Staff:

Susannah Combs	Mark Kruszczyński	Clarence Pearson
Allison Baillie (CSOC)	Helen Staton	Jonathan Sabin
Brittany Thorne	James Chen	Nancy Edouard (DoA)
Margie Agudelo (CSOC)	Kristy Ritvalsky (DoE, Presenter)	
Lily Cho		

Guests:

Adam Chrono	Theresa Pringle	Jessica Groelly (DoC)
Kelly Allen	Karen Howland	Abigail Lewis
Lisa Lawson	Rocchina Santini	Anna Guida
Anne Smullen-Thieling	Nina Smuklavskaya	Diane Litterer
Esther Utah	G.H.	Rachel Morgan
Mya Caba	Sidney Walters	Sophie Wilkinson

I. Administrative Issues/Correspondence (Heather Simms)

- A. Attendance, 21/34, 61.7% attendance, quorum *exceeded*.
- B. Minutes of May 13, 2026, meeting, approved with no edits.

II. BHPC Retreat 050426

- A. Executive Committee will be reaching out to members and others for opportunities for involvement so that members' expertise can have the greatest positive feedback to the Council.

III. System Partner Updates (Heather Simms)

Going forward all system partners are requested to provide the Council with brief, written updates by the Wednesday prior to the next BHPC meeting. Those updates will be provided to the Council prior to the meeting; this will give Council members an opportunity to pose questions to the system partners in a timely manner.

A. Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Donna Migliorino and Mark Kruszczyński).

1. Mental health
 - a. Block Grant, 2- year mini grant.
 - i. We are currently working on the mini-grant and will provide you with information as soon as possible.
 - ii. Implementation report is in progress as well.
2. Addictions
 - a. Recent media awards
 - i. “There’s More To My Story” - received a Bronze Telly Award in the Craft–Use of Color category,
 - ii. “Their Life Is In Your Hands” campaign promoting free naloxone at participating pharmacies earned a Bronze Telly Award in the Craft–Art Direction category.
3. WebBGAS: <https://bgas.samhsa.gov/Module/BGAS/Users>
Username: CitizenNJ
Password: citizen

B. Children’s Systems of Care, (Margie Agudelo, DCF CSOC).

1. New Commissioner, Joseph Ribson has begun
2. Allison Ballie will be taking over as Liaison.

C. Division of Developmental Disabilities (Jonathan Sabin)

1. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) participates in every survey cycle with National Core Indicators - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NCI-IDD), a national effort to measure and improve the performance of public developmental disabilities agencies through the use of surveys. The deadline for ALL NCI-IDD Surveys is June 30, 2026. To learn more, visit <https://idd.nationalcoreindicators.org/>.
2. May is National Water Safety Month, an annual campaign to educate the public about water safety and drowning prevention, particularly as people prepare for summer recreational activities. While water activities can provide enjoyment, exercise, and social opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are at much greater risk for water-related injury and drowning.
3. Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha recently announced the launch of the Direct Care Professional Advisory Council. The Council held its first meeting on

May 13, 2026 and will convene over the next year to provide feedback on state programs and policies. The purpose of the Council is to; support, grow, and stabilize the direct care workforce; strengthen job quality and stability and ensure workers' voices inform policy decisions.

- D. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) (Tatyana Brown, not present)
1. No update given.
- E. Department of Education (Maurice Ingram):
1. The NJ Student Health Survey Reports provide statewide data on student health behaviors and risk factors that help inform the kind of work you're seeing today: [New Jersey Student Health Survey Reports](#)
 2. See item IV below, for today's presentation by the NJ Department of Education
- F. Division of Aging (Jennifer Rutberg, present):
1. Senior Wellness Grants have been awarded.
The Senior Wellness Pilot Program grant seeks to enhance social connections and support for older adults and people with disabilities at risk for social isolation to their communities. Social participation and inclusion are vital components of an age-friendly New Jersey and can mutually benefit the health and wellbeing of both socially isolated older adults and the people who interact with them. The program is designed to advance efforts that enable sustained social connections among this at-risk population, resulting in measurable improvement in wellbeing. The awardees are:
 - o Family & Children's Service Inc of Monmouth County
 - o Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY Inc (Bergen County)
 - o Bergen Family Center (BFC)
 - o Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc
 - o TASK, Inc
 - o Mental Health Association in New Jersey, Inc
 - o Adult Day Center of Somerset County, Inc
 - o Jersey Cares, Inc
 - o Township of Bloomfield - Department of Human Services
 - o Lakewood Community Services Corp
 - o Raritan Valley Young Men's Christian Association, A NJ Non Profit Corporation
 - o City of Union City
 - o HOPES Community Action Partnership, Inc
 - o Borough of Red Bank
 - o Center for Family Services, Inc
 - o Community Services, Inc. of Ocean County
 - o Jewish Family Service & Children's Center of Clifton-Passaic, Inc
 - o Borough of Leonia
- G. Youth Justice Commission (YJC) (formerly JJC), Francis Walker, present
1. No updates
- H. Department of Corrections (Jessica Groelly, Christina Nicodemus, present). No updates
1. No updates
- I. Div. of Medical Assistance and Health Services (NJ Family Care/State Medicaid, Suchartiha Reddy, absent)

1. See:
<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/documents/pdf/resources/providers/BH-Integration-Phase-1-Transition-Period-v1-5-12-26.pdf>
- J. Department of Health: (Chris Morrison):
 1. No updates
- K. NJAMHAA (Jada Abdulla):
 1. No updates
- L. Division of Family Development (Jennifer Gietka):
 1. No updates.
- M. Supported Housing Association (Karen Howland),
 1. No updates.
- N. NJ County Mental Health Administrators Association (Elisabeth Marchese, present).
 1. No updates
- O. NJ Hospital Association (Deena Tampi) not present).
 1. No updates
- P. NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJ HMFA), (Donna Spencer, present)).
 1. No updates.

IV. **Suicide Prevention for Non-Certificated Staff: A Presentation from the NJ Department of Education** (Kristy Ritvalsy, RU Center for Comprehensive School Mental Health, School of Health Related Professions, Rutgers Center for Comprehensive School Mental Health)

- A. The PowerPoint presentation will be shared with the BHPC once it is formally approved for public distribution by NJ DoE
- B. Presentation/training module is for non-instructional staff (i.e., bus drivers, custodians, school lunch staff). Non-instructional staff see/interact with students on a consistent, regular basis.
- C. 40-minute, self-paced online module, containing 34 slides, 3 knowledge checks and 4+4 pre & post assessment questions each.
- D. Core Module content:
 1. Intro, Risk factors and warning signs,
 2. Protective factors and prevention,
 3. Vulnerable populations, Interventions,
 4. Protocol and legal duty,
 5. Summary, resources and module evaluation
- E. Suicide Prevention
- F. Culturally responsive.
- G. Duty to warn: Safety overrides confidentiality.
- H. Q&A
 1. Q: Is hope squad in schools now? A:
 2. Q: is this applicable to all grade levels? A: Yes
 3. Comment (WC), This is an excellent training.

4. Q: Very informative. You mentioned the LGBTQI+ and Black youth populations not receiving the level of resources necessary to address their issues. What is the plan to address these issues. A: The plan is for the DOE to encourage all statewide stakeholders to collaborate with all parties involved in school populations to address all populations and to identify unique needs and approaches. Statewide training (incorporated culturally sensitive best practices) are given across the state.
 5. See:
https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/wellness/mh/docs/NJDOE_MentalHealthGuide.pdf
 6. Q: Will a hard copy version of the module be available? A: No, the module will live in a learning management system (electronic only). Supplemental topics will be provided by DoE. An electronic version of the presentation shared by NJ DoE with the BHPC will be shared with the BHPC once it has been vetted and approved by the NJ DoE.
- I. For further questions please Contact: safesupportiveschools@doe.nj.gov

VI. Open Public Comment and Announcements:

A. Public Comment

1. Recent Community Mental Health Law Project meeting
2. Question about Gaps In Services: Social connections using art therapy, athletics, and stigma in medical offices
3. NJPRA Conference, virtual, 6/11/26, see: <https://njpra.org/>
4. NAMI Conference 6/12/26 & 6/13/26, Princeton, Crown Plaza
5. Comment, work requirements for Medicaid: Response: H.R.1. has been getting a lot of attention from Community Mental Health Law Project and other reputable entities, who strongly advocate all affected parties read their mail.
 - i. NJ Department of Human Services is keeping a web page updated regarding the changes from H.R.1: [Federal Changes to NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid | Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services](#) Please keep checking for new updates. Here is a quick summary: **Beginning October 1, 2026:**
 - Some non-citizen immigrants may no longer qualify for NJ FamilyCare.
 - Refugees
 - Asylees
 - Humanitarian parolees
 - Victims of domestic violence or human trafficking
 - Non-citizens who may continue to qualify for NJ Family Care.
 - Lawful Permanent Residents of at least 5 years (calculated from date on green card)
 - Note: Some Lawful Permanent Residents may not be subject to the 5-year wait — please see more details below.
 - Cuban/Haitian Entrants
 - Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrants
 - Children under 19
 - Lawfully present non-citizens who are:
 - Pregnant, or
 - Under the age of 21
 - ii. Beginning January 1, 2027:
 - Certain adults aged 19 to 64 will have to work, volunteer, or go to school to keep their coverage or qualify for NJ FamilyCare. This is called

“community engagement.” These members must also renew their coverage every 6 months (instead of every 12 months).

- Other adults aged 19 to 64 may be exempt from the requirement to work, volunteer, or go to school, but they may still have to renew their coverage every 6 months.

iii. For medical office issues, it can be helpful to have the MCO negotiate arrangements. After all, the MCO is paying the medical practice.

VII. Adjournment: Time: 12:08 pm.

A. Next meeting: 7/8/26 10:00 am –noon.

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Or call in (audio only)

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B. Future Agenda Items/Additional Items for Meetings in 2026

1. Use of psychedelics / psilocybin for mental health disorders (Connie Greene’s suggestion made 12/10/25)
3. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP): (Connie Greene)
4. NJ DoE Threat Assessment Protocols
5. Pretrial Services in Camden County
7. JJC Discussion (Filomena DiNuzzo)
6. DVR (Tatyana Brown)
7. Presentation on SUD prevention efforts at County Jails?
8. Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) (Suzanne B.)
9. AIR, Youth Suicide Prevention (kurt@air.ngo)
10. SUD and JJC (Francis Walker, JJC)
11. Experiences of Consumers in SUD Crisis
12. Immigration and Mental Health (suggested by A. Lewis, 01/14/26).
13. Grief Counselling for People with Lived Experienced (D. Bey, suggested 1/14/26)
14. Attorney General Office to Speak About Mental Health Courts (D. Bey, suggested 1/14/26)
15. Having Peer Coalition at the Council (Suggested by Elena Kravitz 1/14/26).
16. Start Services (NJ DDD) consultative service, proactive to mitigate mental health emergencies, short term services (Suggested by Elena Kravitz 1/14/26).
17. Information for consumers with Dual Diagnosis (DDD and MH/SUD) (Suggested by Janet Martinez 1/14/26)
18. Outcomes for individuals.
19. NJ Start (DD), See <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2025/approved/20251222.shtml#:~:text=START%20Services%20NJ%20is%20a,and%20community-based%20residential%20programs>.
20. Request about advocacy methods (see NAMI NJ)
21. Family AND consumer voice. Especially now with Medicaid changes for 51/49 for outpatient services for state licensed providers. 51% In-person and 49 % telehealth. How that impacting consumers? (RM). See

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/news/pressreleases/2025/approved/20251222.shtml>

22. NJ State Budget Presentation

DRAFT