

NEW JERSEY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL

Minutes

April 14, 2021, 10:00 am

This meeting was conducted exclusively via video/teleconference

Microsoft Teams meeting

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Or call in (audio only), +1 609-300-7196, Access Code 11192748#

Notices of the meeting were sent to the Asbury Park Press, The Times (Trenton), Bergen Record, The Press (Pleasantville), and the Courier-Post (Cherry Hill).

Minutes

I. Administrative Issues/Correspondence

- A. Attendance: 18/39 participants, 46.1%
- B. Review of Previous Meeting Minutes: Minutes approved with minor edit.
- C. Additional Federal Funding for Behavioral Health
 1. \$1.5B block grant funds
 2. \$1.5B additional funding for education
 3. Additional federal funding for BH services
 4. Additional federal funding to enhance BH workforce

II. State Partners Involvement (Phil Lubitz)

- A. SHA (Diane Riley)
 1. Additional funding in COVID relief, possible Infrastructure Bill brings more capital and operating funding opportunities.
 2. 15% state increase in housing investment however shifting in program investment. For example less in Affordable Housing Trust Fund and investment in homeownership and workforce housing. No new mental health subsidies but increases in voucher payment standards to upgrade to current rent levels.
 3. Assessing additional funds and impacts on housing
 4. This is on the SHC website: "DHS distributes all new rental subsidies and makes the determination of who is eligible to receive them. There are no new rental subsidies available at this time." Supportive Housing Connection (SHC) manages vouchers, leases etc. They do not approve vouchers or distribute vouchers.
 5. Q&A
 - Q (J. Guttstein): Small area FMRs? (allows for more impactful payment standard) A: No. During pandemic, lots of peoples income as changed, so the Department picks up the outstanding balance, so FMRs will not be expanded. This issue is a matter of advocacy we should be working on. It should be mirroring HUD as much as possible.
 - Q (J. Barugel): Is there a single source where one can 'wrap one's arms around this'?

A: As a consumer there is no one single place. I tell them: do you have Medicaid; do you have this/that? Have you applied to a housing voucher? Have you gone on to various websites to look for affordable opportunities there? Have you gone to a provider that provides supportive housing? A few housing resources on SHA website under Housing Hub which includes resource bulletins, and housing search. SHA NJ will be releasing an expanded resource directory of members with search ability by geography, service and programs.

Q: Can you also connect people with their local Continuum of Care that have coordinated entry? Challenge is for individuals who aren't homeless, so perhaps that is the issue in this instance.

A: Sign up for Homeless System via the County Continuum of Care.

Q: In the light of new federal funding, will there be better opportunities for housing? A: Yes, but there will always be a waiting list, although it should move faster with additional funding.

Q/Comment (Heather Simms): In Jersey City we have had Housing Navigators and HomeFinders. There should be someone who can assist. A: Housing navigators would be a great presentation. SHA has provided training around housing navigators (about 70% are DDD providers). Housing navigators are listed under Housing Hub.

Q/Comment: Robin Nyland: County Mental Health Analysts can help, and often know how to connect, Supportive Housing Coalition (SHC) can help.

B. Division of Aging (Pat Matthews)

1. Public Hearing for the Division of Aging Services State Plan of Aging 2021-2025
2. April 29, 2021 at 10 AM to allow New Jersey residents to provide input into the state's plans for services to older residents for 2021-2025.
3. The division is requesting assistance in disseminating information on this State Plan on Aging Listening Session being held April 29th. Our flyer is attached. This is chance for older adults and those who assist them, to share their thoughts through testimony. We ask that you please share this opportunity with your networks and encourage those who are interested to register to speak, listen to the session on [Youtube](#) or share written testimony via [e-mail](#).
4. Anyone interested in aging issues may attend the session. If you would prefer to watch and listen and NOT provide spoken testimony, you can view the session on Youtube here: [Link](#)

Please reach out with any specific questions you may have to doas@dhs.nj.gov or caroline.coghlan@dhs.nj.gov

C. DoE (Damian Petino)

1. March 15 to May 15, SR2 funds
2. School performance report: <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/>
3. What Works During the Pandemic (sharing success stories) <https://www.nj.gov/education/leapct/#/home>
4. 4/22/21, 3:00 Career Readiness Webinar/Zoom Session, Career Assistance Navigator (open to the public) <https://newstartcareernetwork.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUqceqoqTwqHNCKTektEX69zXiL2cz-sras>

D. DVRS (John Tkacz)

1. New housing specialist, Toni Scott, will be at the SSEAC meeting tomorrow.
2. Additional staff are going to be retiring.
3. Q&A: Q: Contacting staff? A: Via phone and remotely.

E. DCF CSOC

1. CSOC Social Media Kit (Video presented to Council)

III. Open Public Comment and Announcements Phil Lubitz

A. CSP NJ (Heather Simms)

1. Working with people discharged from state hospitals and providing them with cell phone to help with recidivist.
2. Peer Advocate Programs being revamped (Middlesex County)

IV. Adjournment

A. Next meeting May 12, 2021, 10:00 am

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1. Phone Conference ID: 681 413 931#
 2. New 5% Block Grant Set-Aside
 3. Presentation on Consumers Being Released from State Prisons
- B. Solicitation for Presentations
1. Request for Harry Reyes to talk about gaps in housing, especially as it pertains to Housing, and coordination.
- C. Upcoming Meeting Agenda Content (Requested by Chairman of BHPC):
1. 5/12/21 Jim McGreevy's Group on Prisoner Release (Connie Greene will expedite)
 2. 5/12/21 Additional Federal Funding
 3. Upcoming: Housing Navigators (Heather Simms, CSP NJ)
 4. Upcoming (requested); Department of Corrections / Edna Mahan