

**S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING**  
**SCDMH Administration**  
**2414 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201**  
**October 6, 2023**

A Business Meeting of the S.C. Mental Health Commission was held in Room 320 at the S.C. Department of Mental Health Administration Building on Friday, October 6, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. The meeting notice and agenda were posted prior to the meeting and notice made to all individuals and news media who requested information in accordance with State law.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Levy called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Levy expressed heartfelt condolences to the family of Mr. Steve Sawtelle and to the family of Rev. John Ashmore Brown, Jr. Mr. Sawtelle passed away unexpectedly on Friday, September 22, 2023. He worked as a Liberty Nurse Practitioner at Brian Psychiatric Forensic Hospital. Rev. Brown served as Director of Crisis and Forensic Services at Columbia Area Mental Health Center from 1990-2013.

Chaplain Kynan Robinson provided the invocation.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

Chairman Levy welcomed everyone. Visitors present virtually were: Alicia Kearse, Advocate/Investigator, Disability Rights, SC; Paul Koch, Chief of Staff, South Carolina Department of Administration; Bill Lindsay, Executive Director, NAMI SC; Judith McInnis, Attorney, Burr & Forman LLP; Wanda McMichael, SCPS Program Manager, Liberty Healthcare Corporation; and Susan von Schenk, Capital Information Affiliates (CIA).

Chairman Levy announced Dr. Maxwell's reappointment to the Commission filling the seat for South Carolina's Fifth Congressional District was approved by the Governor. She will go before the Senate in January 2024.

Chairman Levy announced that yesterday was Mr. Pearce's birthday. On behalf of the Commission and everyone present, he wished him a happy birthday!

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*There being no amendments or corrections to the agenda, the agenda was approved as presented.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*There being no amendments or corrections to the minutes of the Commission meeting of September 8, 2023, the minutes were approved as presented.*

**MONTHLY/QUARTERLY INFORMATION REPORTS**

Ms. Hutto, presented the items listed under Monthly/Quarterly Informational Reports, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.

Ms. Hutto reported for the month of September 2023 a total of three pending investigations for the Office of Public Safety.

Ms. Hutto reported that as of yesterday there were 29 pending SLED investigations. Two cases were assigned to SLED, of which the oldest is from April 2023; 20 cases were assigned to Long-term Care Ombudsman Office; six cases were assigned to local law enforcement; and one case is with the Department of Social Services (DSS) Adult Protective Services. Ms. Hutto reported two case closures concerning two separate incidents; one on August 12, 2023 and one on

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2023

August 20, 2023. Both cases involved patient abuse by Wellpath employees and were investigated by SLED. In both incidents, the employees were removed and arrested. There was discussion about Wellpath Recovery Solutions and contract monitoring oversight.

Ms. Hutto highlighted the following from the Patient Advocacy Report:

- 88 calls to patient advocacy in August 2023; a total of 663 year to date.
- 89 complaints were resolved in August 2023; a total of 639 year to date.
- The number of complaints by category resolved in August is 111 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*).

**LETTER OF INTENT TO EXPLORE DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SURPLUS PROPERTY  
AT CRAFTS FARROW**

Ms. Hutto presented a letter dated September 26, 2023 providing notice of the City of Columbia's interest in entering into discussions with DMH to explore the possibility of DMH declaring certain land (and improvements if applicable) within its Crafts-Farrow campus as surplus property pursuant to SC Code Section 1-11-58(A)(4) and transferring such property to the City of Columbia. A copy of the letter had been provided to the Commission.

Ms. Hutto presented a request for Commission approval for the Department to engage into formal discussions with the City of Columbia with the potential of declaring certain land within its Crafts-Farrow campus as surplus property that could potentially be sold to the City of Columbia.

*Following discussion, a motion was made and duly seconded to approve Ms. Hutto's request as presented.*

*All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.*

Update on US Department of Justice's (DOJ) Investigation Report

Ms. Hutto announced Department leadership will meet with representatives from the DOJ on Friday, October 13, 2023 concerning their investigation of South Carolina's use of community residential care facilities to serve adults with serious mental illness. She said the Department hopes to use the case to improve patient care. Dr. Bank noted the Department's negotiations with DOJ are in concert with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

**QUARTERLY OLMSTEAD UPDATE**

Ms. Tracy Richardson, Director, Office of Transition Programs, distributed a handout on "Olmstead Funds Tracking At A Glance," a copy of which is filed with the minutes in the Office of the State Director. At the May 12, 2023 meeting, the Commission approved \$500,000 from the proceeds from the Bull Street property parcel sales to create an "Olmstead Fund" to assist hospitalized patients' transition from the hospital to community housing, as well as periodically assist those patients in other secure institutional settings seeking admission to a DMH hospital when appropriate community housing would enable diversion of the patient to community treatment. Ms. Richardson reported the following since August 2023:

- Number of patients assisted: 10
- Total amount paid for patients: \$22,415.00
- Reimbursed amount as of September 25, 2023: \$200.00
- Amount of funding remaining: \$477,785.00

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Public Relations Update

Dr. Bank introduced David Diana, Marketing Director. Mr. Diana is leading efforts to develop ideas and initiatives to effectively promote and inform the public about the services and service outcomes provided by the Department. He gave

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2023

a presentation on public engagement opportunities, a copy of which is filed with the minutes in the Office of the State Director. Following are highlights from the presentation:

- Foundational Elements
  - Created new logo and design standards (July 2021)
  - Provide support to various departments within DMH to build visual elements, such as infographics and “At A Glance.”
    - Human Resources Recruiting Support
    - Grant Program Public Engagement Support
    - TV Ads & Parent/Employee Videos
    - Multi-Media Public Engagement Campaigns
      - Broadcast TV across SC major markets (:30 and :60 second spots)
      - Streaming TV (:30 and :60 second spots)
      - Targeted Digital Internet Ad Campaigns (e.g., search-based: geo-fencing)
      - Social Media Ad Campaigns
      - Email Marketing Campaigns
      - Billboards
- Public Engagement – Current/Ongoing Efforts
  - Annual Lowcountry Mental Health Conference
  - “A Look Within” – SCDMH Podcast
  - DMH Internal Newsletter “In the Know”
- Public Engagement – Upcoming and Future Possibilities
  - New DMH Website Roll-Out
  - List Building and Email Marketing
  - More Website Interactivity
  - Continued Brand Development: Flagship Brochure
  - More consistent multi-media awareness campaigns
  - Community Center, Program, Legislative Support
    - Formation of Communications Committee
    - Design Center/Program Public Education Materials
    - Open new communication channels (e.g., legislative)
    - Marketing Consultations
    - Event Support
  - Event Development, Management and Delivery
    - Brainstorm/consider additional events: a second annual event (upstate/midlands areas); unique educational opportunities for the community and referral sources (education program for adolescents; education program for parents; Spanish speaking conference for community)

Dr. Levy said we have a lot of great programs that nobody knows about. He talked about the two programs that Lexington Community Mental Health Center presented earlier today, “Uplift Lexington County” and MultiDimensional Family Therapy (MDFT), and asked how do families in Lexington and the senator that represents that area learn about those services. He talked about aligning the website with what people need.

Dr. Jones commended Mr. Diana on his multi-media approach and said, “we cannot over sell – we have so many good stories to tell, so we’ve got to get the word out.” He talked about revisiting the idea of convening a conference or forum statewide through South Carolina ETV, partnering with the Governor’s Office and the State Superintendent of Education for the purpose of addressing the complications and solutions in dealing with the mental health and substance abuse challenges of young people in South Carolina.

Announcements

On behalf of Senior Management, Dr. Bank requested the Commission’s endorsement to honor former State Director John Magill by naming Conference Room 323 the John Magill Conference Room. Mr. Magill served as the State Director

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2023

of the Department of Mental Health for 13 years, from 2006 to 2019, the longest serving State mental health director in America.

*By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved naming Conference Room 323 the John Magill Conference Room.*

*All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.*

Boston Consulting Group, Inc. Interim Report

There was discussion about the first interim report prepared by the Boston Consulting Group, Inc. (BCG), a copy of which had been provided to the Commission and is filed with the minutes in the Office of the State Director. The next report is due by January 1, 2024.

Bull Street Corridor

Dr. Bank said there is still talk about relocating state agencies currently located on Bull Street. Ms. Calcote reported the South Carolina Department of Administration (DOA) conducted a survey of space needs and advertised a request for proposal (RFP). DOA received the proposals and scheduled with each agency involved visits to tour the buildings and provide feedback. DOA has received facility inspection reports for each of the inhabited buildings.

FY25 Budget

Dr. Bank said work continues on the proposed FY25 budget request. He noted the construction of the Psychiatric Residential Care Facility (PRTF) is under emergency procurement. The timeline for construction is approximately two years. Ms. Calcote said a committee of representatives from DMH, DOA, DJJ, DHHS, and the Department of Children's Advocacy will be reviewing proposals for the project. The Department is in the process of hiring a project manager for that construction.

**DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE**

Community Mental Health Services

Ms. Deborah Blalock, Deputy Director, Community Mental Health Services, presented the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) report. Following are highlights from the report:

- The Center Directors Retreat was held last week at Devil's Fork State Park. Ms. Blalock reported that a large amount of their focus was on developing Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams across the centers. They are in the process of developing thirteen ACT teams to cover 13 mental health centers. Three of the centers do not have enough qualifying patients to qualify for an ACT team: Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center, Tri-County Mental Health Center, and Coastal Empire Mental Health Center. An ACT team consists of a community-based group of medical, behavioral health and rehabilitation professionals who use a team approach to meet the needs of an individual with severe and persistent mental illness. The program serves patients 18 years of age and older.
- Ms. Blalock announced the following SAMHSA funded grant awards:
  - \$3.5 million zero suicide grant that will be used over five years. The grant will be used to follow patients through care and will involve DIS, DOC, and Lexington Community Mental Health Center.
  - \$8.6 million to be used over three years to further the 988 continuum of care.
  - \$2.25 million to be used over five years to support Pee Dee Mental Health Center and its development of Roads of Independence.

Ms. Blalock expressed appreciation for Ms. Mahri Irvine and the Grants Department for their great work with processing grant applications.

- Ms. Blalock announced the next Board Training will be held virtually on December 8, 2023 from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m.
- Ms. Blalock reported that in 2023 a total of \$8.7 million was spent on the community hospital bed project where funds were provided for admissions for individuals who are indigent in 13 hospitals across the state. That amount supported 1,806 individuals who were committed to a psychiatric hospital that did not have a form of funding, and 14,500 bed days.

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2023

- Ms. Blalock presented the CMHS Trends and Transparency Monthly Indicators (TMI) spreadsheets, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.
- Ms. Blalock said the Office of Transition Programs does a remarkable job with the movement of patients out of the Community Residential Care Facilities (CRCF). The mental health centers contribute to the movement of patients from community residential care facilities (CRCF) out into the community. Since June 1, 2023, the mental health centers moved 39 patients out of CRCFs into the community.
- Since June 1, 2023, the Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center 988 call center has successfully answered 1,792 calls.
- Ms. Blalock referenced the October 2023 DMH's podcast, *A Look Within: Conversations on Mental Health and Well-being*. The topic was on autism. She noted that if a person is duly diagnosed with a mental health issue and autism, DMH serves the mental health needs, but does not have the capacity to treat autism. DDSN works with individuals with autism.
- Ms. Blalock said that shortly after Dr. Bank became the Acting State Director he asked her to take on some additional duties as Chief Deputy Director to assist him with duties that were not necessarily community related but interfaced with community. Those extra duties take up a lot of her time. They had conversations with the DOA about creating another Assistant Deputy Director position in CMHS. Presently, Ms. Denise Morgan is Assistant Deputy Director and oversees program areas such as school mental health, housing, etc. As Deputy Director of Community Mental Health Services, Ms. Blalock directly supervises the mental health center directors, with the exception of one individual who is her brother-in-law and reports through Ms. Calcote, Deputy Director, Administrative Services. Ms. Blalock announced the DOA approved the creation of an additional Assistant Deputy Director position in CMHS. The position responsibilities include the direct supervision of the mental health center directors. The position was posted yesterday. Ms. Blalock will be the Deputy Director of Community Services with the additional duties as a Chief Deputy Director. There was discussion concerning Commission approval of new positions and restructuring. Ms. Hutto referred to the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 44, Chapter 9, Section 44-9-50 and said the Divisions of the Department are approved by the Commission.
- Ms. Blalock announced DMH and the South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy (SCDCA) have partnered with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and on September 11, 2023 launched a new, online, interactive mental health screener for kids under the age of 18, *Hope Connects SC Kids*, located on the website at [hope.connectssckids.org](http://hope.connectssckids.org). Since inception, 27 individuals have used this resource.
- Ms. Blalock distributed copies of cards/letters written by adult patients at the Aiken-Barnwell Mental Health Center that were sent to adolescent patients to give them encouragement.

Administrative Services & Financial Status Update

Ms. Debbie Calcote, Deputy Director, Administrative Services, presented the Administrative Services and monthly financial report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Following are highlights from the report:

- Ms. Calcote announced the contract for the community mental health services electronic health record (EHR) has been awarded. An implementation group has been established and is moving forward with beginning the process of implementation, which could take up to two years to rollout. The EHR replaces the internally developed outpatient electronic medical record (EMR).
- As of August 31, 2023, the Department anticipates ending FY24 with a projected negative balance of approximately of \$8,760,129. Ms. Calcote explained a new approach in monthly reporting beginning with the August 2023 report. Expenditures will be reflected as received. There was discussion.

HR Report

Ms. Calcote presented an update on DMH new hires and locations for the period July 5, 2023 through September 18, 2023, a copy of which had been provided to the Commission. Chairman Levy asked if there is a sense for what form of advertising has been helpful when it comes to recruitment. Ms. Calcote will follow up.

Major Construction/Renovations Update

Ms. Calcote reported the following:

- Fewell Pavilion construction will be substantially complete in December 2023, pending the delivery and installation of the generators.

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2023

- Sumter Veterans Nursing Home is 70% complete. The date for substantial completion is July 2024.
- Bryan Hospital Hall Lodge D will be ready for patient occupancy on November 1, 2023.

Division of Inpatient Services (DIS)

Dr. Versie Bellamy, Deputy Director, Division of Inpatient Services, presented the Division of Inpatient Services report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Following are highlights from her report:

- Dr. Bellamy reported Lodge D is in the process of nearing completion and cleared for final inspections. As announced earlier, Lodge D will be ready for patient occupancy beginning next month.
- Dr. Bellamy reported that as of the last new hire orientation a total of 26 registered nurses have been hired (nine of which were previously agency staff and came onboard fulltime); five LPN new hires (two of which were previously agency staff); 18 certified nursing assistants to work in the long-term care division (four of which were previously agency staff); and 57 new behavioral assistants to work in the psychiatric facilities.
- Dr. Bellamy announced Dr. Sheena Willis, Clinical Services Director, and for the past two years served as the Interim Facility Director for Bryan Psychiatric Hospital Civil, tendered her resignation effective September 29, 2023 and will be employed with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Resources. Dr. Bellamy expressed appreciation for her service and wished her well, and said she will be greatly missed.
- As of today, there is a total of 115 individuals on the Forensic Ready for Admission Waitlist. Dr. Bellamy presented a report on the impact of the passage of amendments to fitness to stand trial *S.C. Code Ann. Section 44-23-430* in 2022 [Act #145 of 2022], a copy of which had been provided to the Commission. Jail-based competency restoration programs are now enabling DMH to serve up to an additional 45 defendants for treatment, expanding overall forensic capacity by 21%. However, the demand for admission has increased by 40%. Since the change to 180 days, defendants are being more effectively restored to competency with an average inpatient stay of only 66 days. Dr. Bellamy reported there is significant progress that is being made in opening the new jail-based program within the Charleston County jail, which will allow jail-based restoration services to an additional 20 defendants and will increase capacity by an additional 10%. She noted Dr. Kelly Gothard was interviewed for an article which was recently featured in the *Post & Courier* about the jail-based competency restoration program in Charleston.
- Dr. Bellamy presented the BPH and Harris Bed Turnover Report for October 2022 through September 2023, a copy of which is filed with the minutes in the Office of the State Director. During the month of September 2023, BPH had a total of eight discharges of which six were greater than 90 days length of stay and two were 30-90 days length of stay. BPH's census has remained near full. The census at BPH today is 123. Harris had a total of 10 discharges of which nine were greater than 90 days length of stay and one was 30-90 days length of stay. Harris' census today is 97 and one bed is being held for a patient coming from jail scheduled to come in next week.
- In response to Dr. Jones' question from the September 8, 2023 Commission meeting about issues preventing defendants on the forensic waitlist for over 120 days from being placed, Dr. Bellamy explained those who are waiting over 120 days are defendants waiting on competency restoration. Approximately 20% of those defendants are on bond, which make it difficult to admit due to transportation coordination, and sometimes just trying to locate them. This category does reflect an increase to overall wait time due to the sustained demand for restoration.
- Dr. Jones asked about the 220 on the waitlist at Morris Village. Dr. Bellamy explained that Morris Village's capacity is at 42 and the census has been exceeding that staying above capacity on most days. Most of the individuals on that wait list are voluntary.

Approval of Minutes of the Governing Body for Inpatient Facilities of July 12, 2023

Dr. Bellamy presented the July 12, 2023 quarterly Inpatient Facilities Governing Body minutes, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.

***By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved the Inpatient Facilities Governing Body Minutes from the July 12, 2023 meeting.***

***All voted in favor of the above motion; the motion carried.***

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2023

Medical Services

Dr. Chad Pollock, Acting Medical Director, presented the Medical Services report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Following are highlights from his report.

- Dr. Pollock continues efforts in collecting national data on long-acting injectables to highlight how well DME is doing in providing LAIs to patients compared to other states.
- Dr. Pollock recently attended a training called “Constitutional Standards and Legal Limits for Judicial Commitment of People with Disabilities” led by Ms. Rochelle Caton, Director of Patient Advocacy. This course details the history of commitment law in South Carolina and the current law and procedures for involuntary commitment. This course is offered to all Designated Examiners across the state, including private/public hospitals as well as residency training programs. It is mandated for all Designated Examiners within DMH.
- This fiscal year through August 2023, Transition Specialists have assisted with 34 discharges. 56% of the discharges were discharged to a CRCF and 35% of the discharges returned home to family. Of the 34 discharges, one patient was in the hospital for 15 years, 7 months.
- Dr. Pollock shared a story about a patient who was admitted in 2015 to Bryan Forensic and subsequently transferred to Bryan Civil in 2019, where he was one of Dr. Pollock’s patients. The patient developed a very close relationship with his treatment team. He had been on five antipsychotic medications and never got to the point of where he was close to being discharged. A couple of nurses worked closely with him and were able to get him to allow the team to draw labs. Subsequently he was put on a medication in combination with a long-acting injection. Dr. Pollock said he was excited to learn that while visiting at BPH last week that the patient had been discharged.

**OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*At 12:55 p.m. by motion duly made and seconded, the Commission adjourned the business meeting.*

*All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.*

**ATTENDANCE**

**Commission Members**  
Dr. Elliott Levy, Chair  
Dr. Carl Jones, Vice Chair

Mr. Bobby Mann  
Dr. Crystal Maxwell  
Mr. Greg Pearce

**Visitors/Staff**  
Dr. Robert Bank  
Dr. Versie Bellamy  
Deborah Blalock  
Debbie Calcote  
Robin Crawford  
David Diana  
Dr. Patricia Handley  
Elizabeth Hutto  
Dr. Chad Pollock  
Tracy Richardson  
Chaplain Kynan Robinson  
Brett Williams

present virtually via Zoom  
Janet Bell  
Mirtha Brown  
Leigh Ann Chmura  
Melanie Gambrell  
Dr. Kelly Gothard  
Dr. Maryjane Hicks  
Kathy Hugg  
Keith Jackson

present virtually via Zoom  
Charice Jones  
Alicia Kearse  
Paul Koch  
Bill Lindsey  
Judith McInnis  
Wanda McMichael  
Margaret Meriwether  
Dr. Lynelle Reavis

present virtually via Zoom  
Vicki Redding  
Shawnta Reeder-Locks  
Dr. Kimberly Rudd  
Kellie Silveira  
Eric Turner  
Susan von Schenk  
Lindsay Walker  
Kevin Woods

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2023

***APPROVALS***



**Dr. Elliott Levy**  
**Chair**



**Kim Ballentine**  
**Recording Secretary**