

**S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING**  
**SCDMH Administration**  
**2414 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201**  
**June 7, 2024**

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, June 7, 2024, 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 10:33 a.m. Chaplain Malcolm Simpson provided the invocation.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

Chairman Levy welcomed everyone. Visitors present virtually were: Gail Cordial, Director, Policy & Government Relations, Alkermes; Billy Lindsey, Executive Director, NAMI SC; Kathy Martin, Attorney, Disability Rights South Carolina; Wanda McMichael, Program Manager, Liberty Healthcare Corporation; and Susan von Schenk, Capital Information Affiliates (CIA).

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Chairman Levy stated the following:

*“As everyone knows, members of the House blocked a vote, killing a bill that would have combined six health related agencies into one executive office of health and policy. It was to be overseen by a director who would answer directly to the Governor. Lawmakers returned to the State House this month to finish the budget along with a few other things. In order to bring up the health agency merger bill, it would require a two-thirds vote for each chamber to change the assembly’s sine die agreement. This is a bill that Governor McMaster is supportive of and would like to see with support by both the House and the Senate. A good bit of money has been invested into consultants for their recommendations on how to make this work. The sine die agreement has been changed only twice in recent history and doesn’t happen that often. One change was in regards to a Boeing economic deal and the other was in regards to taking down the Confederate Flag.*

*Both House and Senate versions of the bill include the elimination of our Commission and developing a state advisory board. It is unclear if the commissioners automatically become the new advisory board or if the new director chosen by the Governor appoints new members. If the bill reemerges this month and the restructuring bill passes, the Commission will no longer exist. Also, the timing of the various steps of transfer of power are undetermined, ranging from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 to January 2025, or even not at all.*

*The South Carolina Department of Mental Health was founded in 1964 along with its commissioners. It is considered the governing board for the Department and consists of members from each of the congressional districts, appointed by the Governor, upon the advice and consent of the Senate. Today, out of seven members, we are down to four. With the bill S.915 still looming large, it has put a pause on moving forward to fill the additional spots. In addition, if the sine die agreement is changed this could very well be our last meeting as a Commission.*

*With that being said, as chairman, I am afforded the opportunity to recognize people within our Department who have done special things. Given the possibility that I could potentially have no power by the end of the month, I wanted to make sure that our commissioners are recognized. I met with a colleague who thought that our commissioners make a salary in this role. They absolutely do not and simply receive mileage for the drive each month to our meeting. Our commissioners are appointed volunteers who have*



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*graciously offered their time, their expertise, and recommendations to help guide our leadership. Each have very full lives with work and family and are simply here because they care about mental health. Each most likely have their own personal reasons why they decided to take a five-year unpaid commitment with its associated stressors. All of our members provide input and offers different skills and perspectives to make it a balanced commission.*

*The Order of the Brick is awarded by the South Carolina Mental Health Commission and honors individuals who have made outstanding efforts to support the SCDMH mission. This handmade brick was from the 1827 wall that formerly surrounded the SC State Hospital. When the wall was lowered in 1962, the bricks were used for new building projects, including construction of the Chapel of Hope. My hope is that we continue to work together and not be disbanded, but just in case...*

*I am honored to present these bricks to Dr. Carl Jones, Mr. Bobby Mann, and Dr. Crystal Maxwell in appreciation for their dedicated services to the SC Mental Health Commission. It has been quite a journey and a true joy to work with others that share the same love for DMH as I do. With the hopes of this being premature and that we get to continue in our role, I am thankful that I have had the opportunity to work with each of you on the Commission and know that the Department has been lucky to have you on their team."*

Chairman Levy presented each Commission member with the "Order of the Brick" award. Following, Vice Chairman Jones presented Chairman Levy with the "Order of the Brick" award. The awards were in appreciation of their dedicated service to the S.C. Mental Health Commission.

Elliott Levy, M.D., Chair  
Representing South Carolina Congressional District 1, 2021-2024

Carl Edison Jones, Ph.D., Vice Chair,  
Representing South Carolina Congressional District 6, 2022-2024

Bobby H. Mann, Jr.  
Representing South Carolina Congressional District 4, 2021-2024

Crystal A. Maxwell, M.D.  
Representing South Carolina Congressional District 5, 2021-2024

***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 May 3, 2024, the minutes were approved as presented.*

***MONTHLY/QUARTERLY INFORMATION REPORTS***

Ms. Elizabeth Hutto, General Counsel, 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 May 2024 a total of two pending investigation for the Office of Public Safety.

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Ms. Hutto reported that as of yesterday there were 28 pending SLED investigations. Three cases were assigned to SLED 19 cases were assigned to Long-term Care Ombudsman Office, four cases were assigned to local law enforcement; two cases are with the DMH patient advocate.

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

- 141 calls to patient advocacy in April 2024; a total of 773 year to date. Ms. Hutto noted that one patient repeatedly called the toll-free line in excess of 250 times during the month of March. Therefore, data for calls in 2024 will be skewed.
- 109 complaints were resolved in April 2024; a total of 401 year to date.
- The number of complaints by category resolved in April 2024 is 139 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*).

***ISSUE ACTION PAPER (IAP) – EASEMENT FROM WACCAMAW MHC TO SANTEE COOPER***

Ms. Hutto presented an IAP requesting Commission approve in principle an easement to the South Carolina Public Service Authority for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a permanent electric power connection across a 20 foot strip of land owned by the DMH located at the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health. The easement is needed in order to provide permanent electric power service to new construction in the area and will occupy 0.059 acres. The easement will be executed by the South Carolina Department of Administration (DOA). A copy of the request, including a Certificate of Ownership and Dedication (“Plat”) and Draft Easement Form had been provided to the Commission.

***By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved the request as presented.***

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

***LEGISLATIVE UPDATE***

Dr. Bank said he had no additional updates or remarks to Chairman Levy’s comments on the status of the healthcare agency restructuring bill S.915. He reported that the House and Senate conference committee will meet later this month to finalize the state’s FY25 budget.

***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

Dr. Bank commended DMH staff on their great work with the move of the contracted veterans nursing homes from DMH to the South Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs (SCDVA), which will occur on July 1, 2024. DMH has provided support to the SCDVA during the transfer period as well as the necessary resources so they will be successful. He noted that nine (9) DMH employees will transfer to SCDVA. DMH will continue to work with SCDVA and DOA to determine the best process for C.M. Tucker Stone Pavilion (Stone) to become a contract home as well. Stone will move to the SCDVA effective July 1, 2025.

There was discussion regarding the relocation of state agencies from the Bull Street corridor to Otarre Parkway in Cayce, S.C. DOA has been tasked with the planning of the move.

***DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE***

**Medical Affairs Update**

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



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- Entitlement Specialists
  - In April 2024 a total of 11 Social Security applications and 7 OSS (optional state supplementation) applications were processed.
- Transition Specialists Programs
  - Transition Specialists assisted with a total of 37 discharges for the month of April 2024; a total of 218 discharges year to date.
  - FY2024 average length of stay for patients at discharge is 1 year 2 months.
- DMH CRCF
  - Total number of admissions in April 2024: 2
  - Total number of discharges in April 2024: 0
  - Total count of discharges from DMH CRCF since July 2023: 17
  - Average length of stay for residents who are currently living in DMH CRCF at discharge: 1.49 years
- Community/ED Telepsychiatry/Organizational Improvement
  - 42% (6,135 out of 14,716) of all physician and nurse practitioner visits provided in the community were done by telehealth.
  - ED Telepsychiatry has 28 hospital partners across the state with three more in process. Thirteen of the EDs are looking at transitioning to EmPATH (Emergency Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment and Healing) units.

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:

- Ms. Blalock presented the CMHS Trends and Transparency Monthly Indicators (TMI) spreadsheets, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Block Grant onsite visit is scheduled August 13-15, 2024. In addition to the August onsite visit, DMH has been asked to prepare a 60-minute virtual pre-visit presentation in July 2024.
- SAMHSA, Center for Mental Health Services, conducted a monitoring visit for the PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) program. The visit began yesterday, June 6, and will end today.
- Ms. Blalock announced that Dr. Ebony Gaffney will serve as the Interim Executive Director, Spartanburg Mental Health Center effective June 26, 2024.
- The Department is working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services (PPP) and the South Carolina Department of Corrections (DOC) to memorialize the interactions between the agencies and individuals with mental illness.
- Ms. Blalock reported from July 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024 a total of approximately \$6 million was spent on the community hospital bed project where funds were provided for admissions for individuals who are indigent in hospitals across the state. That amount supported 1,282 individuals who were committed to a psychiatric hospital that did not have a form of funding, and 10,035 bed days with an average length of stay of 7.83 days.
- Ms. Blalock announced that effective May 17, 2024 Ms. Jennifer Butler assumed a new role for DMH as the Director of Public Education. In this position, Ms. Butler will be the clinical legislative liaison and will support Ms. Robin Crawford, Director of Governmental Affairs, specifically on issues requiring clinical knowledge on bills that may affect DMH. Additionally, Ms. Butler will be giving presentations for DMH in response to the many requests received from around the state and country.
- The 988 Crisis Call Center operated by the Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center opened on June 1, 2023. As of last night, Charleston 988 has provided service to 4,804 callers. The Mobile Crisis Call Center which was started in October 2020 just hit its 100,000 caller mark about three weeks ago.
- Three DMH employees attended the 2024 National Council for Mental Wellbeing's 20<sup>th</sup> Hill day June 5-7, 2024 in Washington, D.C.: Ms. Robin Crawford, Director of Governmental Affairs; Mr. Matthew Dorman, Executive Director, Berkeley Community Mental Health Center; and Ms. Angie Salley, Executive Director, Coastal Empire Mental Health Center. Leaders from hundreds of organizations that provide mental health and substance use



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treatment and care gather and urge lawmakers to take swift action on bills to improve access to care. This event provides opportunity to meet elected officials and their staff and to express needs to the legislative delegation.

- Ms. Blalock gave a presentation on “Mental Health Awareness Month Activities,” a copy of which is filed with the minutes in the office of the State Director. The presentation included photos of activities throughout the state during Mental Health Awareness Month. She thanked the Commission for their advocacy and support of all the work in support of mental health that happens across the state.

### Administrative Services & Financial Status

Ms. Debbie Calcote, Deputy Director, Administrative Services, presented the Administrative Services and monthly financial report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. As of April 30, 2024, including the one-time funding of \$11.6 million the Department anticipates ending FY24 with a deficit of approximately \$319,000. The Department has expended 83.33% of state appropriations as of April 30, 2024.

Ms. Calcote announced the following DMH employees will transfer from DMH to the SCDVA and expressed appreciation for their service at DMH, and said their expertise will benefit SCDVA just as it has at DMH: Charles Gambrell, Rebecca Chandler, Anthony Fields, Shemera Stephens, Myrna Mattos, Ted Jones, Daniel Paxton and Robert Hoskins.

### Long-Term Care

Dr. Bellamy, Deputy Director, Division of Long-Term Care (LTC) presented the LTC report. Following are highlights from the report:

- LTC has been focused on the transfer of the contracted veterans nursing homes from DMH to SCDVA effective July 1, 2024. Dr. Bellamy said the efforts in that transition are going well ensuring continuity of services to the veterans. Efforts have begun in preparation for Stone’s transition from DMH to SCDVA effective July 1, 2025.
- It is anticipated that the DHEC inspection for Certification of Occupancy at the Fewell Building (Tucker Campus in Columbia) will be next week.
- Dr. Bellamy said LTC is focusing on strategies to increase census and rebranding C.M. Tucker Roddey Pavilion. She is working with the Office of Transition Programs on movement of residents into the community into enhanced beds as well as other nursing home beds and CRCFs. A pilot program for restorative care will be launched later this month.
- Dr. Bellamy talked about the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed staffing regulations for long-term care facilities. The new regulations would increase staffing hours per patient day. This will be a challenge for all nursing homes nationwide. She has met with Gwen Watson, Director of Human Resources, and her staff to begin conversations about developing a plan for compliance. The implementation of the staffing requirements is projected for 2026.
- Dr. Bellamy thanked all the staff who worked with the veteran population that will be transitioning to SCDVA, and with whom she has had the opportunity to work with for a number of years. She said she is confident they will do a great job.

### Inpatient Services

- Mr. Allen McEniry, Director, Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital (PBH) reported the Joint Commission conducted an on-site survey at PBH last month. PBH received no patient care issues. Follow up items identified were related to physical plant and environmental care issues. He anticipates the follow-up survey will take place in about 45 days.
- Mr. Keith Jackson, Director, Bryan, reported efforts are underway to increase the average daily census at PBH from 98 to 115. Some of the longer-term patients at G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital (Bryan) will be transferred to PBH to make room for Forensic patients at Bryan. As of today, there are 114 individuals on the forensic ready for admission waitlist.
- Dr. Bank reported today’s census at William S. Hall Institute at 21.
- George McConnell, Director, Morris Village, Dr. Harvey “Trey” Causey, and Dr. Bank continue to look into the possibility of bringing patients to Morris Village not only for 30-day program, but also providing residential



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treatment. Morris Village will be accommodating the Crisis Intervention Program by the end of the summer / beginning of fall with a total of nine beds.

**OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

Dr. Bank announced three DMH employees completed the South Carolina Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program: Ms. Tracy Richardson, Director of Office of Transition Program; Mr. Lee Bodie, Budget Director; and Ms. Kathy Hugg, Executive Director, Columbia Area Mental Health Center. The CPM program is a nationally accredited management development program for managers and supervisors in South Carolina state government, and is provided by the DOA's Division of State Human Resources. The mission of the CPM program is to provide quality training for public administrators, to assist agencies in developing future leaders, and to recognize management as a profession in the public sector. The CPM program promotes on-the-job application of learning and gives participants experience in solving agency problems. DMH staff participants in the program are selected and approved by Senior Management.

Chairman Levy reminded the Commissioners pursuant to the Bylaws of the South Carolina Mental Health Commission, election of Commission officers shall be held each year at the first Commission meeting in July. He noted, however, if the restructuring bill reemerges and passes, the Commission will no longer exist.

Dr. Bank expressed appreciation to the Commission for the tremendous support extended to him as the Acting State Director.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*At 11:39 a.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, virtually via Zoom

**Visitors/Staff**

Dr. Robert Bank  
Deborah Blalock  
Mark Binkley  
Dr. Versie Bellamy  
Debbie Calcote  
Elizabeth Hutto  
Keith Jackson  
George McConnell  
Dr. Chad Pollock  
Tracy Richardson  
Gwen Watson  
Brett Williams

present virtually via Zoom  
Lee Bodie  
Jackie Brown  
Gail Cordial  
Akiko Dettorre  
Melanie Gambrell  
Dr. Kelly Gothard  
Jeffery Ham  
Dr. Maryjane Hicks  
Joy Hodge  
Kathy Hugg  
Mahri Irvine  
Louise Johnson

present virtually via Zoom  
Charice Jones  
Amy Kilpatrick  
Tracy LaPointe  
Bill Lindsey  
Sarah Main  
Phil Manly  
Kathy Martin  
Allen McEniry  
Wanda McMichael  
Carly Patterson  
Valarie Perkins  
Dr. Lynelle Reavis

present virtually via Zoom  
Vicki Redding  
Shawnta Reeder-Locks  
Alicia Sanders  
Chaplain Malcolm Simpson  
Eric Turner  
Susan von Schenk  
Lindsay Walker  
Bryant Williams  
Kevin Woods

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*APPROVALS*

*Elliott E. Levy*

Dr. Elliott Levy  
Chair

*Kim Ballentine*

Kim Ballentine  
Recording Secretary