

SOUTH CAROLINA MENTAL HEALTH STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

January 10, 2024

Minutes

Members Present

Janie Simpson, Chair
Carol Rudder
Chris Allen
LaToya Abney
Chris Kunkle
Beth Franco
Beverly Griffin

Aaron Brown
Stuart Shields
Michelle Mitchum
Deborah Blalock
Robert Bank, MD
Mandy Holloran
Versie Bellamy

Louise Johnson
Angela Carroll
Hannah Bonsu
Tray Stone
Amy Jolly

Guests

Valarie Perkins
Tracy Richardson
Bonita Shropshire

Mahri Irvine
Nichole Lawder
Matt McCall

Alicia Coleman
Christi Wright

Staff

Erin Bramlitt
Michele Murff
Megan Knight

Documents Distributed

November 15, 2023 Minutes

January 10, 2024 Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Janie Simpson called the meeting to order at 10:00AM. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

Approval of Agenda

On the motion of Ms. Bonita Shropshire and seconded by Ms. LaToya Abney, the agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

Angela Carroll has been added to the list of attendees for the November 15, 2023 minutes.

On the motion of Mr. Chris Allen, seconded by Dr. Chris Kunkle, the minutes were approved with the above changes.

Comments from the SCDMH Acting State Director, Dr. Robert Bank

Dr. Bank reported that, based on the recommendations of the Boston Consulting Group, Bill S915 has been presented to the General Assembly on January 8, 2024, with the following changes to existing State structures:

1. The bill establishes the Executive Office of Health and Policy with existing agencies— Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the public health sector of the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the Department on Aging (DOA), the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN), and the Department of Mental Health (DMH)—under it.
2. The Secretary of the State Office of Public Health and Policy will be a cabinet member appointed by the Governor of South Carolina and confirmed by the Senate.
3. The bill also lists changes to the affected agencies' names, including DMH, which would become the Department of Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse Services as the bill stands.

There was time for questions and discussion amongst the Council about these topics, including that the State Planning Council will continue to meet to satisfy requirements of Federal funding.

The final report from the Boston Reporting Group is expected to be published in April 2024.

Comments from the Chairperson

Ms. Janie Simpson shared upcoming opportunities. The HOPE Rising Conference will be held on February 23, 2024 and is an opportunity for community members to learn more about suicide awareness, prevention, and advocacy. Mental Health Advocacy Day will be March 6, 2024 at the State House. Ms. Megan Knight sent flyers for both events to State Planning Council attendees on January 10, 2024.

Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) Update

Ms. Deborah Blalock reported that the Department of Justice (DOJ) has been investigating South Carolina for unnecessary separation of mentally ill patients from the community. SCDMH is working with DHHS and the DOJ to address these issues. They are currently meeting to determine details of the work that needs to be done, and the partnership has been successful so far.

Ms. Blalock then gave an update on 988. There are currently two call centers in South Carolina: one is at Mental Health America Greenville County (MHAGC), and one is at the Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center. There has been an increase in calls and an improvement in the answer rate, which is currently 72% with a goal of 100%. Vibrant, the company supporting 988 systems nationally, is currently having technical issues nation-wide.

Ms. Blalock shared that CMHS is also working to be embedded in more detention centers across the state by getting funding to establish contracts with these centers.

The DOJ requires Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams. These teams are in development at 13 of the 16 mental health centers. Three centers have not started due to smaller patient populations.

July is the initial go-live of the new Netsmart Electronic Health Records (EHR). The new system will increase interoperability across the state.

Ms. Blalock provided an update on Crisis Stabilization Units. There is currently one in the state, but a second is being developed at Morris Village and is on track to open late-Spring 2024.

Governor Henry McMaster's budget recommendation for DMH is as follows: \$10 million for the city of Columbia Project Hope, \$5 million to repairs at Stone Nursing Home, and \$100,000 to establish a clinician on the Capitol Complex.

There was time for questions and discussion amongst the Council.

Inpatient Services Update

Dr. Versie Bellamy shared that G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital and Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital received Zero Harm Awards from the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA).

Dr. Bellamy reported that the Division of Inpatient Services' (DIS) current focus is on forensic services and helping those in need. Their forensic wait list has gone down from 109 to 95 people; the demand has increased, but DIS has been meeting these increased needs. DIS is also seeing 40% restoration of patients in their jail-based program and 58% in their Columbia-based program. 150 patients have been served by the jail-based pilot program. Their goal is to increase their services across the state, including educating community members and attorneys.

Dr. Bellamy reported on capacity at the in-patient hospitals across the state. Many are full, but all are continuing to accept referrals.

There was time for questions and discussion amongst the Council.

Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth of South Carolina, Inc. (SAFY)

Alicia Coleman, trainer with SAFY, gave a presentation on the program's existing services and goals going forward. They receive \$41.5 thousand per year for three years from a Request for Proposal (RFP) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) Block Grant to provide training and one-on-one coaching for parents, primarily foster parents, with children whose needs they feel they are struggling to meet. They also provide child-care for parents during the training. Currently, they provide training for guardians of children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). They serve approximately 10-30 parents per month, primarily from South Carolina, with 2-3 children each.

There was time for questions and discussion from the Council.

Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) Update

Ms. Michele Murff shared that the annual Homeless Count is on January 24, 2024 with the goal of accounting for all homeless people in South Carolina. The current unduplicated count is 1,700 people.

PATH is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), receiving approximately \$700,000 per year. The program prioritizes street outreach for housing and services. Currently, PATH works with Greater Greenville Mental Health Center, Waccamaw Mental Health Center, the Mental Illness Recovery Center (MIRC) in the Midlands, and 180 Place in Charleston.

Ms. Murff reported that 1 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) PATH employee at Greenville County Mental Health Center is retiring, and the position will be open.

There was time for questions and discussion amongst the Council.

Announcements

Ms. Beth Franco shared that Disability Rights South Carolina is collaborating with the University of North Carolina (UNC) on a 5-year grant to provide training cohorts for individuals providing care. Disability Rights will be presenting on legal protection and advocacy for those with disabilities and mental illness.

Mr. Tray Stone reported that the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Mid-Carolina hosts a book club on the third Wednesday of every month from 6pm-7pm at the Richland Library. Their current books are *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury and *Wager* by David Grann.

Old Business/New Business

There was no additional business to be discussed.

Public Comment

There was time for public comment from all attendees.

Chief Michelle Mitchum requested a change to the minutes for the previous meeting. The Pine Hill Tribe is working with SC SHARE on the SAMHSA grant to provide training on peer support.

Adjournment

On the motion of Dr. Chris Kunkle, and seconded by Bonita Shropshire, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55am.

The next meeting of the South Carolina Mental Health State Planning Council will be held March 20, 2024, from 10:00AM – 12:00PM at the Department of Mental Health, 2414 Bull Street, Suite 323, Columbia, SC 29201.