

**S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING**  
**SCDMH Administration**  
**2414 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201**  
**August 9, 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, August 9, 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. Due to the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency for the State of South Carolina related to the potential effects of Tropical Storm Debby, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Levy called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Along with Chairman Levy, Commissioners Bobby Mann and Dr. Crystal Maxwell were present. Commissioner Dr. Carl Jones joined the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

**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 July 12, 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 July 2024 one pending investigation for the Office of Public Safety.

Ms. Hutto reported that as of Wednesday, August 7, 2024 there were 25 pending SLED investigations. Six cases were assigned to SLED, of which the oldest case is from April 2023; twelve cases were assigned to Long-term Care Ombudsman Office, of which the oldest case is from October 2023; and four cases were assigned to local law enforcement.

Mr. Hutto reported a closure of note concerning an incident on March 28, 2024 at the Bryan Forensic Unit located at Wellpath. A patient was waiting in line for coffee. A Wellpath Officer yelled at and pushed that patient, resulting in an injury to the patient. Public Safety and Sled were immediately notified. The Wellpath Officer was immediately suspended and later arrested and is no longer employed by Wellpath.

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

- 213 calls to patient advocacy in June 2024; a total of 1,104 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.
- 95 complaints were resolved in June 2024; a total of 575 year to date.
- The number of complaints by category resolved in June 2024 is 111 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*).

**SIX-MONTH REPORT OF COLLECTIONS**

Ms. Hutto presented the items from the six-month report of medical care accounts collections for January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. These funds are collected through involuntary



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means from self-pay clients. A total of \$1,137,565.54 was collected from January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024. There was discussion. The report was received as information.

***BULL STREET UPDATE***

Ms. Hutto provided the following as information-only to the Commission. The Department of Administration (DoA) recently contacted DMH about the potential sale of the DMH Administration building and land located at 2414 Bull Street, Columbia, with the impending move to Otarre Parkway in Cayce, S.C. The DoA will meet with the State Fiscal Accountability Authority (SFAA) later this month for other matters that are relevant and will also present for approval the sale of Bull Street properties at that time. Ms. Hutto noted the DMH property is held in trust and provides that sales proceeds must remain in trust for the benefit of DMH for the care and treatment of the mentally ill. Additionally, SFAA approval for the DMH properties impressed with a Charitable Trust is conditional upon final approval by a court of equity.

***APPROVAL OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE SCDMH COMMISSION BYLAWS***

Ms. Hutto presented the following amendments to the Bylaws of the South Carolina Mental Health Commission, copies of which had been provided to the Commission (*underscore indicates new language*):

Article VI, Section 3:

**Section 3.** The Governing Body Committee for Inpatient Facilities shall conduct governing body responsibilities for each inpatient hospital and nursing care center of the Department of Mental Health as directed by a standing committee of the Mental Health Commission. The voting members of the eCommittee shall consist of the SCDMH Director and the SCDMH Senior Leadership team. ~~SCDMH Deputy Director of Inpatient Services, (Chair); the Medical Director of the Department of Mental Health; the General Counsel, the Inpatient Services Administrator, the Inpatient Services Chief Nursing Officer, the Deputy Director of Administrative Services, the Inpatient Services Medical Director, the Inpatient Services Director of Performance Improvement, Risk Management, Regulatory Compliance and the Inpatient Services Financial Controller.~~ The Committee will meet no less than quarterly beginning on the second Tuesday of January. A quorum of the Committee shall be a majority of the individuals occupying the designated positions. Each inpatient hospital and nursing care center ~~of the Inpatient Services Division~~ may have in attendance at the meetings the Director, Medical Director, Chief Nursing Officer and the Performance Improvement Director. A community advocate may be selected by the State Director to also serve on the Committee.

The Committee shall keep minutes of its meetings and forward copies of the minutes to the Commission. At each Commission meeting following the receipt of the Committee's minutes, the Commission will review the minutes for information and comment. ~~The Commission may approve the minutes and thereby approve the actions taken by the Committee, or the Commission may disapprove any item in the minutes and thereby disapprove the itemized action of the Committee.~~

The Committee shall be responsible for implementation of the commitment of the Mental Health Commission and the Department of Mental Health to set the framework for supporting safety and quality of patient care, treatment, and services. The Committee promotes performance improvement and provides for organizational management and planning.

Ms. Hutto explained that the amendment is intended to clarify that the Governing Body is a standing committee of the Mental Health Commission and the composition of its membership. The amendment is also intended to clarify that the State Director and Senior Leadership make up the Governing Body. This language change builds flexibility into the Bylaws to anticipate that various job titles of Governing Body members change over time. The amendment further clarifies that Governing Body minutes will be provided to the Commission for information and comments rather than requiring a vote for approval. A Commissioner with a question or concern regarding the minutes or the actions of the Governing Body retains the authority to make inquiries or raise issues while streamlining the Commission meetings.



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Attachment 1 to the Bylaws (Mental Health Commission Members) shall be updated to include current Commission Members.

*By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved the amendments to the Commission Bylaws as presented.*

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

On behalf of Dr. Robert Bank, Acting State Director, Ms. Deborah Blalock, Deputy Director, Community Mental Health Services, announced the following:

- Dr. Bank is doing well following his recent surgery and sends his regards.
- Mental health centers in the coastal area and Pee Dee region experienced some closures from the effects of Tropical Storm Debby, but thankfully did not sustain any significant damage. Ms. Blalock noted State government offices generally follow the same weather hazard decisions made by the county government officials where the state office is located, however mental health center directors and the Deputy Director of Community Mental Health Services review the need for Center/Clinic closings and delays during inclement weather events and whether it is necessary to follow the county government decisions. Staff identified as essential staff at the facilities are expected to report. Someone is always available 24/7.
- Dr. Bank, Ms. Blalock, and Vicki Redding, Executive Director at Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center, met with Senator Alexander on August 1, 2024 to discuss mental health. Ms. Redding also gave an update on the new location of the Anderson Adult Mental Health Clinic and the Anderson Child and Adolescent Clinic, which they anticipate moving to the new center this fall.

**DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE**

Inpatient Services

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

- Dr. Pollock commended the staff at Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital (PBH) and G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital (Bryan Civil and Bryan Forensics) for their great work in turning beds over more quickly to make room for the forensic patients on the waiting list as well as increase the census at PBH. The goal is to increase the census at PBH to 115. Today's census is at 101.
- The Competency Restoration Pilot Program closed on 7/11/24 as a result of budget shortfalls. The Pilot site was housed within DMH property on the Broad River Road South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) campus and modeled to serve as a jail-based treatment program, to help determine the utility of this approach to competency restoration treatment, with the goal of opening similar programs in local county jails. The program launched in mid-2022 and served a total of 150 defendants, who otherwise would have waited longer in local jails awaiting an inpatient hospital bed to become available for competency restoration treatment. In order to expand competency restoration capacity despite budget shortages, the DMH civil psychiatric hospitals have begun to prioritize and accept an increased number of forensic diversion cases (individuals referred for civil commitment after being found not restorable for low level offenses). The Forensic hospital has identified individuals appropriate for stepdown to available beds at the civil hospital sites, opening up these newly available beds within the forensic hospital to increase competency restoration admissions. Historically, the forensic hospital has had roughly 60 beds dedicated to competency restoration, but through recent staff training and movement of some of the patient population out to the civil sites, there is an expansion underway of this restoration capacity, up to roughly 90 total beds that will be allocated for this purpose. It is anticipated this patient movement and new



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allocation of bed space for restoration to be finalized in September 2024, after all newly available beds become backfilled with individuals awaiting competency restoration treatment.

Medical Affairs Update

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

- DMH's Community Telepsychiatry program provides telepsychiatry services through 60 mental health centers and satellite clinics statewide. In the second quarter of 2024, approximately 17,657 services, which is approximately 41% of overall mental health services provided by MDs and APRNs, are telepsychiatry.
- DMH's Emergency Department (ED) Telepsychiatry program includes 27 hospital partners across the state and is in the process of adding new partners. In the second quarter of 2024, the ED Telepsychiatry program provided approximately 1,846 completed consults for patients in EDs statewide. Psychiatric care is available through the ED program 17 hours per day, 364 days per year. Thirteen EDs are looking at transitioning to EmPath (Emergency Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment and Healing) units.
- DMH's Integrated Care Team developed the state's first child psychiatry access network to support the provision of mental health care by primary care providers. The network was named the Youth Access to Psychiatry Program (YAP-P). The goal is to provide a continuum of supports to South Carolina primary care providers who see children and youth ages 0-21 years. YAP-P provides resources to practices and providers statewide. DMH received funding through the HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) grant in the fall of 2021 for the 5-year grant. YAP-P also received \$300,000 expansion award in the fall of 2022 from HRSA to look at expanding the network to include school-based health centers.
- DMH's partnership continues with the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to provide child telepsychiatry services to minors involved with the juvenile justice system.
- DMH provides an interagency consultation service with the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide telepsychiatry to at-risk children and adolescents.
- Transition Specialists assisted with a total of 37 discharges for the month of July 2024.
- Interviews are in process for a transition specialist with the Medical University of South Carolina Institute of Psychiatry in Charleston.

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. Following are highlights from the report:

- Ms. Calcote reviewed the FY24 end of year budget, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. The Department ended FY24 with a balance of \$8,647,157. She noted the bulk of the deficit is tied to the Forensics program. The program's operating costs are underfunded and has no alternative but to continue to accept patients. As preparations have begun on the FY26 budget requests, the Department will again focus on Forensics. There was discussion.
- The DoA hosted a meeting on July 29, 2024, which included leadership from DMH, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, the Department on Aging, and the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, to begin the planning process for the move to Otarre Parkway in Cayce, S.C. The anticipated occupancy timeline is between the months of March and June 2025, with the goal being no later than June 30, 2025 for the building to be fully occupied.

Long-Term Care

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

- Dr. Bellamy referred to the Long-Term Care dashboard report, which had been provided to the Commission. The report includes the final FY24 data for all of the contracted veteran's homes, which are now under the responsibility of the South Carolina Department of Veteran's Affairs.



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- The average daily census (ADC) over the recent six months:
  - C.M. Tucker-Roddy Pavilion (Roddey): 90 with 95 functional beds;
  - C.M. Tucker-Stone Pavilion (Stone): 44 with 58 functional beds.
- Dr. Bellamy reported that as of June 30, 2024, there were 66 residents at Roddey with length of stay 2-20 years; 8 residents with length of stay of 20+ years; Stone had 28 residents with length of stay 2-20 years.
- LTC is working with the Transition Services Team to move patients; maybe into their home or back with family, or into a community care home in some cases. LTC's length of stay as compared to other nursing homes are much longer. Dr. Bellamy said that is an indication of excellence of care and services to the residents. There are residents who get better and can move to another level of care or service.
- LTC continues their work on restorative care initiatives and expanding rehabilitation services to support residents and patients across the Department.

Community Mental Health Services

Ms. Blalock planned to present a PowerPoint presentation on the services DMH provides but was experiencing some technical difficulties. She will present the presentation at the September Commission business meeting.

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

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Block Grant Site Visit is scheduled next week, August 13-15, 2024. Ms. Blalock commended Dr. Mahri Irvine, Grant Writer/SAMHSA Block Grant Administrator; Ms. Michele Murff, Director of Housing & Homeless Programs; and Ms. Megan Knight, Administrative Coordinator, for their great work in preparing for the visit.
- The state's second Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) is on track to open in the fall. The CSU is an outpatient program and will be located on the Morris Village Campus and will provide 24/7 residential stay in hopes of avoiding a psychiatric hospitalization.
- As mentioned earlier in the meeting, it is anticipated that the new location of the Anderson Adult Mental Health Clinic and the Anderson Child and Adolescent will open this fall.
- The General Assembly appropriated \$4 million in recurring funds for contracted community beds in FY25 to continue to pay for admissions of indigent patients in community hospitals across the state. The Department has an established qualified provider list (QPL). Last year, funding was provided up to 14 days. The average length of stay was 7.83 days. This year, funds will be provided up to eight (8) days. All the hospitals have been made aware of the change, and the mental health centers are reviewing and approving use of those funds for individuals who meet the clinical criteria for admission.
- The Alternative Transportation Program, which was also funded by the General Assembly, has rolled out across the state. Individuals who meet criteria to be transported by alternate transportation can be safely and securely transported without the use of law enforcement resources.
- On Thursday, August 8, 2024, Ms. Blalock gave a presentation to the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA) about DMH and the services DMH provides for the care and treatment of people with mental illnesses. She said the presentation was well-received and those in attendance were surprised over the breadth and depth of the services provided by DMH.
- The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Lowcountry Mental Health Conference was held July 24-26, 2024 in Charleston. Approximately 1,900 individuals attended the conference in person and virtually. Ms. Blalock said the conference was a smashing success and shared briefly highlights from some of the presentations. She commended David Diana, Marketing Director, for his outstanding work on the conference.

***OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENTS***

There were no public comments.

Chairman Levy announced that the September 6, 2024 Commission business meeting will be held virtually.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

*At 11:26 a.m. by motion duly made and seconded, the Commission adjourned the business meeting and entered into Executive Session to discuss a real estate matter. Upon convening in open session at 11:48 a.m., Chairman Levy noted that only information was received; no votes or actions were taken.*

*At 11:48 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**

Present virtually via Zoom

Dr. Elliott Levy, Chair  
Dr. Carl Jones, Vice Chair

Mr. Bobby Mann  
Dr. Crystal Maxwell

**Staff** present virtually via Zoom

Dr. Versie Bellamy  
Deborah Blalock  
Janet Bell  
Lee Bodie  
Dr. Robert Breen  
Jennifer Brush  
Debbie Calcote  
Peter Camelo  
Robin Crawford

**Staff** present virtually via Zoom

Matthew Dorman  
Andrew Fowler  
Dr. Kelly Gothard  
Laurie Gregor  
Dr. Maryjane Hicks  
Kathy Hugg  
Elizabeth Hutto  
Keith Jackson  
Charice Jones

**Staff** present virtually via Zoom

Tracy Lapointe  
Allen McEniry  
Margaret Meriwether  
Denise Morgan  
Valarie Perkins  
Vicki Redding  
Shawnta Reeder-Locks  
Dr. Chad Pollock  
Tracy Richardson

**Staff** present virtually via Zoom

Angie Salley  
Jessica Suber  
Eric Turner  
Lindsay Walker  
Gwen Watson  
Grayson Woodham  
Kevin Woods  
Brett Williams

**Visitors:** Visitors present virtually were: Anna Maria Conner, Senior Attorney, Beth Franco, Executive Director, and Kathy Martin, Attorney, Disability Rights South Carolina; Bill Lindsey, Executive Director, NAMI SC; Wanda McMichael, Program Manager, Liberty Healthcare Corporation; and Susan von Schenk, Capital Information Affiliates (CIA).

**APPROVALS**

*Elliott E. Levy*

**Dr. Elliott Levy**  
Chair

*Kim Ballentine*

**Kim Ballentine**  
Recording Secretary