

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING
SCDMH Administration
2414 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201
October 4, 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, October 4, 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

Vice Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Chairman Levy was absent, excused. A moment of silence was observed to remember the victims of Hurricane Helene.

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 6, 2024, the minutes were approved as presented.

2025 Commission Meetings at Centers/Facilities

At the September 6, 2024 Commission meeting, Dr. Jones requested consideration be given to holding one or two Commission meetings onsite at one of the centers or facilities. There was discussion. Slight modifications may be considered to the schedule for onsite visits in the future.

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 one pending investigation for the month of September 2024 for the Office of Public Safety.

Ms. Hutto reported that as of yesterday there were 19 pending SLED investigations. Five cases were assigned to SLED, of which the oldest case is from April 2023; ten cases were assigned to Long-term Care Ombudsman Office, of which the oldest case is from May 2024; and three cases were assigned to local law enforcement. One case originated out of SVP is with the DMH advocate.

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

- 79 calls to patient advocacy in August 2024; a total of 1,369 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 and two patients repeatedly called the toll-free line in excess of 100 times during the months of June and July. Therefore, data for calls in 2024 will be skewed.
- 74 complaints were resolved in August 2024; a total of 744 year to date.
- The number of complaints by category resolved in August 2024 is 98 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*).

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Dr. Bank noted for comparison that the Department treats about 100,000 patients a year.

Ms. Hutto announced a voter registration drive was held in September 2024 to assist patients with registering to vote in the November election. A total of 120 patients were assisted in getting absentee ballots.

UPDATE TO DAILY INPATIENT RATE

Ms. Hutto presented an Issue Action Paper (IAP) for discussion concerning an increase in the daily patient charge rates for inpatient adult facilities operated by DMH. A copy of the IAP was included in the Commission packet in preparation for today's meeting.

Ms. Hutto reported that effective July 1, 2024, the State's Medicaid agency, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) updated its rate methodology from a diagnosis-related group (DRG) to a per diem rate of \$800. This increased rate will cover Medicaid beneficiaries aged 18-21 and 65 and over at G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital and Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital.

In 2012 the Commission authorized the Department to increase daily patient charge rates for its psychiatric hospitals by amounts corresponding to future changes in DHHS reimbursement rates. This authorization allowed for no lag-time between future DHHS reimbursement rate changes and SCDMH daily patient charge rates for its psychiatric hospitals. As a result of this authority and the DHHS rate change effective July 1, 2024, the daily rate at all DMH adult-serving hospitals has increased to \$800 per day. Patients may still elect to enter into payment agreements or seek a write-off. The Department's longstanding practice of considering requests to waive charges should help to mitigate the financial hardship increases in the daily patient charge rates might present to patients.

This was received as information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Bank reported the following:

- A draft of the FY26 budget request was submitted to the Executive Budget Office (EBO) on September 25, 2024 for preliminary review in preparation for the budget presentation to the EBO and Governor's Office, which is scheduled at the end of October. A final draft will be provided to the Commission for review and feedback prior to the budget presentation.
 - Dr. Bank said additional funding for forensic services will be top priority. The demand for statutorily mandated forensic services continues to increase, resulting in a growing delay in admissions. Additional funding is being requested to increase bed capacity and jail-based competency restoration programing.
 - Over the past several years, DMH has utilized non-recurring cash reserves to fund the current operations of G Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital (Bryan) and Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital (Harris) resulting in a \$19 million deficit for inpatient services. These deficits are not sustainable. FY26 budget request details the forecasted cost associated with maintaining the services provided at Bryan and Harris. If the request is not funded, the Agency will continue to operate but will be required to review non-statutorily mandated programs and the funding associated with the programs.
 - In response to the US Department of Justice's (DOJ) report concerning their investigation of South Carolina's use of community residential care facilities to serve adults with serious mental illness (issued on July 6, 2023), \$2 million in funding is being requested to increase services for patients to assist in increased independent living within the community.
- A groundbreaking ceremony for the new Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) was held on September 16, 2024. The new facility is named for the late William R. Byars, Jr. Judge Byars was appointed director of the Department of Juvenile Justice in 2003. His eight-year tenure is remembered for an emphasis on

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early intervention, collaboration with DMH on youth needing mental health intervention, and reducing the number of long-term residents at DJJ. He was a recipient of the Order of the Palmetto during his time as a family court judge. DMH leadership suggested naming the facility in honor of him because of his successes and long-term connection with DMH; other multiple state agency leadership involved with developing the PRTF all agreed. Dr. Bank gave remarks during the ceremony. Other speakers were: The Honorable Katrina Shealy, SC Senate; Jeremy Barr, President, Recovery Solutions; Amanda Whittle, State Child Advocate and State Director, Department of Children's Advocacy; Eden Hendrick, Executive Director, DJJ; Robert M. Kerr, Director, Department of Health and Human Services; and the Honorable Henry McMaster, Governor. The PRTF will be located near the Hall Institute across from the Bryan campus.

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

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. The August 31, 2024 budget report reflects a projected deficit balance of approximately \$13.9 million. Ms. Calcote noted the report does not include the revenue and expenditures for the FY25 general increase. This information will be reflected on the September 2024 report.

Ms. Calcote announced that due to the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, the go-live of the community Netsmart Electronic Health Record (EHR) scheduled October 8-11, 2024 in Aiken, Orangeburg, Lexington, and Columbia Area Mental Health Centers is postponed. DMH will coordinate with Netsmart to reschedule.

Ms. Calcote expressed appreciation to Physical Plant Services employees involved with preparations before and responses following Hurricane Helene.

Long-Term Care

Dr. Bank talked about the recent renovations at Fewell Pavilion. The renovations created 18 isolation beds and 27 quarantine beds for residents of existing veterans nursing homes. Stone Veterans Pavilion (Stone) will transfer to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) on July 1, 2025. Stone is a very old building and is in need of a lot of repairs. The DVA is pursuing a request to the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs to repurpose Fewell as an operating facility for Stone residents during the renovation work at Stone and while the new veterans' home is being developed in Lexington County that will be a replacement for Stone. There was discussion.

Inpatient Services

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

- The August 2024 overall average daily census (ADC) for Bryan and Harris was 224; 122 at Bryan and 102 at Harris. The overall ADC reflects that these facilities continue to make optimal use of functional beds. Bryan and Harris consistently operate at near maximum capacity.
- As of September 20, 2024, there were 136 individuals on the Forensic Ready for Admission Waitlist.
- The August 2024 ADC for William S. Hall Psychiatric Institute was 23.
- The renovations on the patient bathrooms at Bryan are progressing well.
- Dr. Bank recognized Mr. Keith Jackson, Director, Bryan. Mr. Jackson talked about efforts to reduce seclusion and restraints at Bryan. He said the staff at Bryan Civil were challenged to reduce seclusion and restraints having observed an increase in utilization of that over a period of time. Staff are refocusing efforts more towards de-escalation and bringing the patient under control without hands on the individual and transferring a sense of calm and genuine interest in the patient's needs. This refocus has essentially reduced the seclusion and restraint hours at Bryan Civil to 0.

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- Mr. Jackson announced Dr. Kimberly Rudd is transitioning from her role as Medical Director to Director of Clinical Services effective November 2, 2024. The Clinical Services Department will focus on increasing active treatment by expanding evidenced based treatment services. Additionally, the Nursing Department will be restructured to better streamline services by reducing upper level management and refocusing efforts on direct patient care staff and encouraging them to be a part of the group process in the education of patients. Nursing groups will become a part of the treatment schedule.

Report of Governing Body Committee Meeting of July 9, 2024

Dr. Bank presented the July 9, 2024 quarterly Governing Body Committee minutes, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Dr. Bank explained that the Governing Body Committee meets quarterly and conducts governing body responsibilities for Bryan, Harris, and the agency's nursing care facilities. The Committee is responsible for the implementation of the commitment of the Department to set the framework for supporting safety and quality of patient care, treatment, and services as well as promotes performance improvement and provides for organizational management and planning.

Medical Affairs Update

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

- Dr. Pollock reported the following update on the Olmstead Funds:
 - A total of 46 patients have received assistance from the Olmstead Funds since its inception in May 2023.
 - Two patients were assisted in August 2024, totaling \$3,452 in expenses.
 - A total of \$25,637.27 has been reimbursed in the current quarter from Community Residential Care Facilities.
- During the month of September 2024, five patients were discharged from Harris to an enhanced nursing home. One patient was discharged from Harris to a private nursing home.
- Dr. Pollock reported that per the Social Security Administration (SSA) guidelines, all SSA approvals will now be good for 12 months. This decision is retroactive and will reflect all patients that have been approved previously as well. The approval timeframe for SSA benefits has decreased significantly. The average wait time for patients to become approved for benefits is 27 days.
- Total Transitions assisted discharge for August 2024 is 20: 40% went home to family; 50% to CRCF; 5% to sober living; and 5% to independent living. The average length of stay (LOS) for 20 patients is 6 months, 7 days. FY25 total charges is 47 patients with an average LOS of 7 months, 23 days.
- Dr. Pollock announced DMH has been selected to receive the 2024 Live Healthy South Carolina State Impact Award for the Transitions Program. The Live Healthy South Carolina Awards program recognizes those individuals and organizations that exemplify the highest levels of commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of communities they serve. The award will be presented at the 7th Annual Live Healthy SC Conference on Monday, November 4, 2024, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

Community Mental Health Services

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

- Ms. Blalock talked about how the mental health centers have responded to the impact of Hurricane Helene.
 - 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.
 - On September 26, 2024 three counties government offices were delaying operations and 43 counties were retaining normal operations; on September 27, 2024 at approximately 1 p.m., five county government

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offices were closed, three government offices were delaying operations, and 38 government offices had normal operations. At 5 p.m. that day, 28 government offices were closed, 12 government offices were delaying operations, and six had normal operations. All mental health centers, which include a total of 53 main and satellite clinics, remained open. Five clinics in the hardest hit areas were without power and functioning with essential staff only and not fully operational, meaning they are providing crisis intervention services, injections, and making sure patients have their needed oral medications. Those centers with power remained fully functional. The initial days after the storm, 20 centers did not have power, however retained operations. As of today, one mental health clinic in Aiken and one mental health clinic in Newberry are still without power.

- The Greenville County Mental Health America 988 call center was without power and consequently non-functional since Friday, September 27. The state's second call center, operated by the Charleston-Dorchester Mental Health Center, remained operational and was able to accept the majority of calls originating in South Carolina, with those that could not be answered within 30 seconds being routed to another state's call center.
 - DMH's First Responder Support Team (FRST) has provided resources and staff to the Saluda Fire Department in response to its tragic line of duty death of two firefighters. DMH has operated in partnership with the South Carolina Firefighter's Association and its FAST (Firefighter Assistance and Support) Team.
 - Because DMH is a unified system, unaffected DMH mental health centers have been supporting those affected centers by sending over supplies, staff, and even their RVs to use as mobile clinics where needed.
 - DMH's 24/7 Mobile Crisis Team, including its call center, remained fully operational during the storm.
 - Ms. Blalock stated South Carolina and North Carolina are members of the Interstate Compact and SCDMH stands ready to help North Carolina with the response efforts from Hurricane Helen when the call is received.
- Dr. Ebony Gaffney continues to serve as the Acting Executive Director, Spartanburg Area Mental Health Center. Applications are being reviewed.
 - Ms. Blalock announced that Matt Dorman, Executive Director, Berkeley Community Mental Health Center, has announced his retirement effective October 25, 2024. Mr. Lamar Butler, Administrator, will serve as the Acting Director.
 - Work continues on integrating and strengthening the deaf services program into the mental health centers to improve patient access to services.
 - On Monday, September 30, 2024, Ms. Blalock attended a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center for the opening of a restoration unit in that Center. This will be the second jail-based restoration program in South Carolina.
 - Ms. Blalock presented the CMHS Trends and Transparency Monthly Indicators (TMI) spreadsheets, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:40 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.

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ATTENDANCE

Commission Members

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

Mr. Bobby Mann, virtually via Zoom
Dr. Crystal Maxwell

Visitors/Staff

Dr. Robert Bank
Deborah Blalock
Debbie Calcote
Elizabeth Hutto
Keith Jackson
Dr. Chad Pollock
Gwen Watson

present virtually via Zoom

Lee Bodie
Dr. Robert Breen
Pat Bresnan
Jackie Brown
Leigh Ann Chmura
Gail Cordial
Robin Crawford
Matt Dorman
Dr. Kelly Gothard
Jeffery Ham
Darla Helms

present virtually via Zoom

Dr. Maryjane Hicks
Joy Hodge
Kathy Hugg
Charice Jones
Tracy LaPointe
Bill Lindsey
Sarah Main
Kathy Martin
Stacy Mathis
Wanda McMichael
Margaret Meriwether

present virtually via Zoom

Denise Morgan
Sylvett Porter
Dr. Lynelle Reavis
Jamie Shuster Godfrey
Priscilla Smith
Jessica Suber
Susan von Schenk
Bryant Williams
Kevin Woods

Visitors: Visitors present were: Gail Cordial, Director, Public Policy and Government Relations, Alkermes; Bill Lindsey, Executive Director, NAMI SC; Kathy Martin, Attorney, Disability Rights South Carolina; Wanda McMichael, Program Manager, Liberty Healthcare Corporation; Jamie Shuster Godfrey, Senior Advisor for Healthcare Policy, Governor's Office; and Susan von Schenk, Capital Information Affiliates (CIA).

APPROVALS



Dr. Elliott Levy
Chair



Kim Ballentine
Recording Secretary