

**S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Morris Village Alcohol & Drug Addiction Center**  
**610 Faison Drive, Columbia, SC 29203**

**February 7, 2025**

A Business Meeting of the S.C. Mental Health Commission was held in the Meeting Hall Conference Room at Morris Village Alcohol & Drug Addiction Center on Friday, February 7, 2025, 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 10:30 a.m. Chaplain James Stokes provided the invocation.

**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 Tri-County Community Mental Health Center Presentation of January 3, 2025 and the Commission meeting of January 3, 2025, 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 reminded the Commission that the annual Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) report is due by noon on March 30, 2025. The report must be filed electronically (<https://ethicsfiling.sc.gov/filing/home>).

Ms. Hutto gave an update on the United States Department of Justice's (DOJ) investigation of South Carolina's Use of Community Residential Care Facilities to serve adults with serious mental illness. Extensive negotiations between DOJ, South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS), and DMH have taken place over the last 14 months. There was an agreement for final consideration by the respective parties. However, the State decided that entering into a proposed settlement agreement was not in its best interest. On December 10, 2024, DOJ sued the State of South Carolina for the unnecessary institutionalization of people with mental illness in Community Residential Care Facilities. The State is represented by the South Carolina Attorney General's Office.

Ms. Hutto reported there were no pending investigations for the month of January 2025 for the Office of Public Safety.

Ms. Hutto reported that as of yesterday there were 15 pending SLED investigations. Two cases were assigned to SLED, of which the oldest case is from November 2024; 11 cases were assigned to Long-term Care Ombudsman Office of which the oldest case is from May 2024; and two cases were assigned to local law enforcement.

Mr. Hutto reported a case closure of note concerning an incident in October 2024. A Wellpath Nurse reported that a Wellpath BHA pushed a patient and poured milk on two patients. The Wellpath employee was terminated and the case was referred to SLED, and cleared by SLED due to an arrest in January 2025.



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

- 76 calls to patient advocacy in November 2024 and 201 calls to patient advocacy in December 2024; a total of 1,766 in 2024. Ms. Hutto noted that one patient repeatedly called the toll-free line in excess of 250 times during the month of March 2024 and two patients repeatedly called the toll-free line in excess of 100 times during the months of June and July 2024. Therefore, data for calls in 2024 are skewed.
- 65 complaints were resolved in November 2024 and 58 complaints were resolved in December 2024; a total of 1,009 complaints resolved in 2024.
- The number of complaints by category resolved in November 2024 is 75 and the number of complaints by category resolved in December 2024 is 78 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*); a total of 1,257 complaints by category resolved in 2024.

There was discussion regarding complainants or patients receiving notification of final disposition of any allegation. Ms. Hutto will follow up with patient advocacy and victim advocacy.

**6-MONTH REPORT OF COLLECTIONS**

Ms. Hutto presented the items from the six-month report of medical care accounts collections for July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. These funds are collected through involuntary means from self-pay clients. A total of \$80,303.13 was collected from July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

**ISSUE ACTION PAPER – BULL STREET FUNDS**

Ms. Hutto presented an Issue Action Paper (IAP) requesting Commission approval to move \$5.5 million of remaining Bull Street trust funds to an interest-bearing account as provided for by Proviso 35.6. A copy of the IAP had been provided to the Commission. There are approximately \$6,403,962 unallocated funds remaining in the Bull Street trust as of January 28, 2025. There is the anticipation of an additional \$3,125,000 entering the trust once the pending sale of the Slighs Avenue property is concluded in early 2025. Additional funds will also be realized at the sale of the central office location on Bull Street and the property across Bull Street from the central office. Those properties are in the early stages of a marketing campaign to result in their sale. Since the inception of the Bull Street trust, the funds have been held in a non-interest-bearing account pursuant to SC Code 11-13-30. However, pursuant to Proviso 35.6, DMH may hold funds in interest-bearing accounts.

Ms. Hutto presented a recommendation to move \$5.5 million of the Bull Street trust to an interest-bearing account pursuant to Proviso 35.6. These Bull Street funds will be used for the maintenance and renovation of patient areas. Approximately \$700,000 of the Bull Street funds will remain in the traditional non-interest-bearing account. DMH will provide periodic reports to the Commission and/or the State Director describing how the Bull Street funds being transferred to the account have been utilized.

Breakdown of Bull Street trust proceeds after action recommended:

\$18,353,962.65	Total proceeds from the Bull Street parcel sales
\$4,500,000.00	Housing Program, authorized August 2015
\$2,000,000.00	Housing Program, authorized August 2020
\$3,500,000.00	Nutritional Services equipment, authorized August 2020
\$500,000.00	Olmstead Bridge Funds, authorized April 2023
\$750,000.00	BPH Patient Bathroom Refurbishment, July 2024
\$700,000.00	Proposed purchase for Terry's Field of Dreams Home
\$11,950,000.00	Total proceeds allocated from the Bull Street parcel sales



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\$6,403,962.65 Remaining unallocated funds from the Bull Street parcel sales

\$5,500,000.00 Recommend allocation to Proviso 35.6 account

\$903,962.65 Recommend remain in traditional Bull Street trust account

*By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved moving \$5.5 million of remaining Bull Street trust funds to an interest-bearing account as provided for by Proviso 35.6.*

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

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Ms. Robin Crawford, Director of Governmental Affairs, reporting the following:

- The legislative session began on Tuesday, January 14, 2025. This is the first year of a two-year session, meaning all bills that are introduced this year that do not get passed are still available for consideration through the end of next year's session.
- On Wednesday, January 22, 2025, DMH gave a virtual budget presentation due to the snow affecting the Midlands and the Lowcountry. There is a new chair of the Ways and Means Healthcare Subcommittee, Representative Lee Hewitt, who represents parts of Georgetown and Charleston counties. Other subcommittee members include: Representatives Brandon Newton, Lonnie Hosey, Bill Clyburn, and Todd Rutherford. DMH's total budget request for FY26 is a little over \$51 million, with the highest priorities being funding for forensic programming and inpatient services. Other requests include:
  - Funding for sexually violent predator treatment program,
  - The statewide alternative transportation program,
  - The state's psychiatric residential treatment facility,
  - Expanded community services and community support needs, and
  - Capital needs.

Ms. Crawford announced that Representative Hewitt and Dr. Bank met to preview DMH's budget request before the budget presentation and met again following a legislative breakfast on February 5, 2025 to review details of the budget.

- On Wednesday, February 5, 2025, the Aiken Barnwell Recovery Foundation, Mental Health Heroes, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) South Carolina, and Mental Health America, South Carolina hosted a legislative breakfast at the Blatt Building on the State House grounds. DMH staff, mental health center directors, other mental health representatives, and about 50 legislators attended the event. It provided a great opportunity to talk about mental health initiatives and programs.
- This past week, a Senate Medical Affairs subcommittee heard testimony on, debated, and passed S.2, which is a Senate bill that would create a new agency called the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the functions of which would comprise those currently provided by DMH, DAODAS, and DDSN. The newly created Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability will have the following component offices: The office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; the Office of Mental Health; and the Office of Substance Use Services. Next it will be up for consideration in front of the full Senate Medical Affairs Committee, but a meeting has not been scheduled as of today. If passed, the bill would take effect upon approval of the Governor. There was discussion.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dr. Bank gave an update on the impending move to Otarre Parkway in Cayce, S.C. The SC Department of Administration has the responsibility of planning and executing the move. The anticipated occupancy timeline is between the months of March and June 2025. The Department of Public Health will move first. DMH is scheduled to move in April and May

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2025. Dr. Bank said that it is his understanding that the permit for the additional 300 parking spaces has yet to be approved.

***DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE***

Dr. Bank announced that beginning with next month's Commission meeting, Mr. George McConnell, Director, will report on Morris Village Alcohol and Drug Addiction Treatment Center.

Psychiatric Inpatient Services & Medical Affairs Update

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.

- Collaborative meetings are being held every other week with leadership from DMH and DDSN to identify and share mental health and behavioral management training resources.
- Construction is underway for the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility, located at 255 Faison Drive, Columbia, SC, near the William S. Hall Institute across from the Bryan Campus. Meetings are being held on a regular basis between DMH staff, the contract monitor, and the Recovery Solutions team to determine how to utilize the beds effectively and discuss appropriate patient types. The facility should be operational by the end of the year.
- Mr. Allen McEniry, has announced that he will retire as CEO of Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital effective April 1, 2025.
- Mr. Charles (Keith) Jackson, has announced that he will retire as CEO of G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital effective April 30, 2025.
- The December 2024 overall average daily census (ADC) for Bryan Civil and Harris was 231, with 123 ADC at Bryan Civil and 108 at Harris. Hall's ADC decreased to 18 over the holidays, but is now back up to 25 as of this morning.

Report of Governing Body Committee Meeting of January 14, 2025

Dr. Pollock presented the January 14, 2025 quarterly Governing Body Committee minutes, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. This was received as information.

Long-Term Care

Dr. Versie Bellamy, Deputy Director, Division of Long-Term Care (LTC), presented the LTC report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Following are highlights from the report.

- Comparison of Roddey and Stone LTC patient admissions by age in December 2024

	Roddey	Stone
Ages 50-64	5	0
Ages 65-79	0	6
Ages 80+	27%	9

- Roddey and Tucker LTC Patients Census by Age on January 28, 2025

	Roddey	Tucker
Under 60	13	1
Ages 60-69	35	9
Ages 70-79	20	17
Ages 80-89	6	16
Ages 90 and over	1	9
Total	75	52

- Dr. Rushiraj Laiwala, Geriatric Psychiatrist, and Dr. Shilpy Kadian, Medical Director, Tucker, are working with Dr. Kimberly Rudd, Medical Director, Bryan, screening patients for possible transfers to the nursing home. The ADC goal at Roddey is 84 by the end of March 2025. The current ADC is 76.



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- Dr. Levy asked about the zero admissions at Roddey from February to August 2024 and a fairly steady decline in ADC during that time. Dr. Bellamy stated there were some admissions of patients from Bryan. She will follow up.
- Roddey has partnered with the City of Columbia and Parks & Recreation to assist with community reintegration programs. Residents participate in activities off campus bi-weekly. The first outing was held on February 5, 2025.
- A townhall meeting, facilitated by Ms. Gwen Watson, Human Resources Director, Dr. Bank and other DMH leadership was held on January 21, 2025 in the Stone Dining Hall for staff to receive important information regarding the transition of Stone Pavilion to the DVA. DMH will give Stone staff priority through reassignment to other comparable positions at Roddey and other departments. Ms. Watson and her team are meeting individually with staff to discuss their particular situation and address questions.

Community Mental Health Services

Ms. Deborah Blalock, Deputy Director, Community Mental Health Services (CMHS), presented the CMHS report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Following are highlights from the report:

- Stacey Rowell, Director of Mobile Crisis, has created a uniform screening tool to assess individuals when responding to a crisis. The Mobile Crisis program will implement the use of this tool across all mental health centers when providing crisis intervention services. This will allow for more consistent responses ensuring that individuals in crisis receive timely and effective support.
- Three mental health centers were visited by CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) over the last month. Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center had no recommendations and has received accreditation. Coastal Empire Mental Health Center and Aiken-Barnwell Mental Health Center are awaiting notice of accreditation.
- Effective February 2, 2025, Erin Laughter, MSW, assumed the role of DMH Director of Child, Adolescent, and Family Services.
- Effective January 2, 2025, Jeffrey A Gage, LMSW, CPSS, assumed the role of DMH Patient Affairs Coordinator.
- The Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) model is designed to provide comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated behavioral healthcare, including services for individuals experiencing first-episode psychosis. Ms. Blalock said she would like to see implementation of this model at all the mental health centers.
- Three mental health centers have ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) Teams in active operation. Columbia Area Mental Health Center is fully staffed and serving patients 18 years of age and older.
- During the month of January 2025, 89.3% of the 988 Crisis Call Center calls in South Carolina were answered by the 988 call centers in South Carolina. The goal is 90%.
- The Mobile Crisis Call Center in Charleston is going through the accreditation process.
- Dr. Bank has reinstated the Public Relations Committee. The Committee consists of staff members from every segment of the Agency. The Committee meets weekly to develop ideas and initiatives to effectively promote and inform the public about the services and service outcomes provided by the Department.
- Ms. Blalock reported that on January 28, 2025, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) sent notice there was a temporary freezing (pause) of federal disbursements to many federal programs. The Mental Health Community Division receives \$48.2 million in federal grants in this fiscal year. The freeze created some consternation as to what to do. The next day, OMB issued a clarifying memo which stated, "that any program that provides direct benefits to Americans is explicitly excluded from the pause and exempted from the review process."
- Ms. Blalock has reached out to Northwestern University for training on evidence-based single session interventions (SSI). SSI is designed to provide a meaningful, focused intervention in a single visit or encounter.

Administrative Services & Financial Status

On behalf of Ms. Debbie Calcote, Deputy Director, Administrative Services, Dr. Bank presented the Administrative Services and monthly financial report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Dr. Bank recognized Mr. Lee Bodie, Budget Director. Changes from last month's report correlate to vacancies and shifting of personnel. The



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December 31, 2024 budget report reflects a projected deficit balance of approximately \$9.7 million. Chairman Levy asked about the cost of the move to Otarre Parkway. Mr. Bodie explained that the funding for the move was appropriated by the General Assembly

**OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Blalock announced that she just received notice that representatives from the Duke Endowment wants to meet with DMH to discuss the recent Transitional Housing and Therapeutic Farm grant application.

There were no public comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*At 11:43 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

**Visitors/Staff**

Dr. Robert Bank  
Dr. Versie Bellamy  
Debora Blalock  
Dr. Chad Pollock  
Robin Crawford  
Dr. Trey Causey  
Elizabeth Hutto  
George McConnell  
Chaplain James Stokes  
Gwen Watson  
Brett Williams

present virtually via Zoom

Lee Bodie  
Dr. Robert Breen  
Jackie Brown  
Mirtha Brown  
Jennifer Brush  
Jennifer Butler  
Andrew Fowler  
Melanie Gambrell  
Jeffery Ham  
Darla Helms  
Dr. Maryjane Hicks

present virtually via Zoom


Joy Hodge  
Keith Jackson  
Charice Jones  
Tracy LaPointe  
Erin Laughter  
Bill Lindsey  
Kathleen Martin  
Wanda McMichael  
Vincent Patterson  
Sylvett Porter  
Valarie Perkins

present virtually via Zoom

Jay Ragin  
Dr. Lynelle Reavis  
Vicki Redding  
Stacey Rowell  
Robin Rubio  
Angie Salley  
Anne Summer  
Susan von Schenk  
Lindsay Walker  
Bryant Williams  
Kevin Woods

**Visitors:** Visitors present were: Bill 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).

**APPROVALS**

  
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**Dr. Elliott Levy**  
Chair

  
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**Kim Ballentine**  
Recording Secretary