

**The Blair County Department of Social Services
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, December 5, 2019 at 11:30 a.m.
The Arc, 431 Jackson Avenue, Altoona, PA**

Board Members Present: James Stratton, Rick Petroski, Commissioner Bruce Erb, Robert Smith, John Allender, Steve Martynuska, Chris Cohn, Donna Gority and Amber Hatfield

Board Members Absent: Cassie Grassmyer, Mike Stubler, Cindy Barton and Sue Tomlinson

Others Present: Jim Hudack, Melissa Gillin, Theresa Rudy, Lorrie Hetager, Jennifer Kensinger, Dr. T. Grant Phillips, Melissa Gordon, Kelly Popich, Ken Dean, Jamie Henry, Maria Brandt and Sara McConnell

MINUTES

Welcome and Call to Order

Rick Petroski, Chairperson, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of October 3, 2019 Minutes

- *Motion by Chris Cohn to accept the October 3, 2019 minutes. John Allender seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

2. Board Operations – Jim Hudack, Executive Director Blair County Dept. Social Services

- Jim asked for self-introductions since two new people were in attendance.
- Jim announced that Amber Hatfield was appointed to The Blair County Department of Social Services Advisory Board to fill Dave Hollern's unexpired term.
- Jim stated that the reappointments and the appointment of Dr. Phillips to the Board will not occur until the January 2020 meeting due to the swearing in of the new Blair County Commissioners.
- Jim reported that some Board Members may be changing Committees. The Board will be made aware of the changes prior to the January meetings.
- Jim stated that the April 2, 2020 Advisory Board meeting will be held at Southern Alleghenies Service Management Group (SASMG), 157 Lakemont Park Blvd., Altoona.
- Jim thanked Rick Petroski for serving as Chairman of the Social Services Advisory Board for the past two years. He also thanked all the members of the Board for their service.

3. Mental Health Committee Report – Chris Cohn

- A copy of the MH Committee meeting minutes was attached to the Agenda packet.
- Chris highlighted a few of the items discussed at the MH Committee meeting.

4. Developmental Programs Committee Report – John Allender

- A copy of the Developmental Program Committee meeting minutes was attached to the Agenda packet.
- John discussed highlights of Charles Lansberry's presentation on Skills Employment Services that was given at the Developmental Program Committee meeting.

5. County Reports

Executive Director – Jim Hudack

- Jim reported that Blair County will take part in the Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Campus Suicide Prevention Grant which would help contribute funds toward suicide prevention for adolescents and young adults.
- Jim congratulated Chris Cohn on becoming a certified mental health first aid instructor.

MH/COD –Theresa Rudy

- Theresa discussed the MH section of the Annual Board Report. Theresa further explained the information, graphs and charts for the Board. Theresa asked the attendees to review the MH annual report at their leisure and if they had any questions that they could be addressed at the next MH meeting in January.

Mental Health – Ken Dean

- A report was included in the Agenda packet.
- Ken stated that the Community Support Program (CSP) Committee and the H.O.P.E. Drop-In are scheduled to receive the I'm the Evidence (ITE) Community Award from the PA Mental Health Consumers Association at the January 13, 2020 meeting.
- Ken reported that on December 3, 2019, he and Jim attended the Blair County Countywide Fall Exercise for Emergency Services. The Emergency Behavioral Health Team (EBHT) was fairly well included in the exercise.
- Ken mentioned that EBHT is meeting with the County Chiefs of Police to share more information about their services in hopes that law enforcement will take advantage of EBHT.

Intellectual Disabilities – Melissa Gordon

- A report was included with the Agenda packet.
- Melissa reported that SASMG has been participating in a pilot Risk Mitigation project. Blair is one of 21 counties taking part in this pilot project. SASMG will be meeting with the Office of Development Programs next week to discuss the results thus far.
- Melissa reported that currently in PA there are 1,100 individuals on an *interest list* to receive an autism waiver. Those individuals who are on the interest list will be moved over to a wait list and they will be guaranteed a waiver if the opportunity becomes available. After January 2020, any individual who shows an interest will be referred to the County. Jamie stated that the wait list for autism waivers will be ranked by needs-based rather than by "order individual signed up in" as previously awarded.
- In response to a question, Melissa explained why an individual would want a Community Living Waiver over a Person/Family Directed Support (PFDS) Waiver. The Community Living waiver offers more funds to meet the needs of the individual.

Early Intervention – Kelly Popich

- A report was included with the Agenda packet.
- Kelly discussed her portion of the Annual Report with the Board.

Quality Assurance & Housing Coordinator – Missy Gillin

- Missy included a report in the Annual Board report.
- Missy reported that funding announcements are expected in mid-December for the Homeless Shelter from the Federal Home Loan Bank Grant. The Capital Campaign, to solicit funds from private contributors, will be ramped up. Also, an upcoming meeting is scheduled with some of the committee members to discuss another grant opportunity that may be available for the six apartments.
- Missy reported that the Rural Impact Community Challenge (RICC) group has been participating in monthly webinars. The 1st on-site visit was in Lake Placid in October. The 2nd on-site visit is in January in Missouri. The RICC team has been working on surveys.
- Missy highlighted a new 2019 program through the Family Resource Center called Families in Recovery Strengthening Connections One Day at a Time. It is a seven session class for parents in recovery.

6. Ex-Officio Reports

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Sara McConnell

- Sara reported NAMI is accepting applications through mid-January for "In Our Own Voice" presenters.
- NAMI is working with Juniata College to provide mental health (MH) 1st aid for their Community Health Workers program.
- Sara announced that NAMI's annual MH Conference will be held at the Altoona Grand Hotel on April 16, 2020.

CONTACT Altoona – Nicole Germaux

- A report was included in the Agenda packet.

The Arc – Maria Brandt

- Maria stated that The Arc and participating parents are trying to get a movement going to address the noise level in restaurants. Maria acknowledged that patron noise cannot be controlled, but the volume of music can be. Maria encouraged attendees to talk with restaurant management about any excessive noise levels, such as, loud music because it can be problematic with individuals who have mental health issues and/or intellectual disabilities.

ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager

- Lori reported Shannon Quick and Katie Mullins presented Peer Support Services at the November Providers meeting. The meeting was well attended. Providers learned about a new service that will help people in the ID system who have a mental health diagnosis team up with a peer who can work with them.
- Family Services Day Program, Cares of Central PA, and Keystone Services all had licensing. All went well.
- An artist with the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art worked with the ACEL program and finished a tile shadow box. The artist worked several years 1:1 with folks and finished a beautiful tile piece that will be mounted in the ACEL conference room.

Blair HealthChoices/Community Cares – Amy Marten-Shanafelt

- In Amy's absence, Jim discussed Blair HealthChoices (BHC) section in the Annual Board Report.
- Jim reported that BHC had a decrease in membership FY 18/19.
- BHC served 9,640 members with a total cost at \$35,789,561.
- BHC received the System of Care (SOC) grant and will be moving toward developing high fidelity wrap around for youths.
- Jim reported BHC is looking at a year-end loss of \$500,000 in medical expenses, but through savings and administrator dollars, they were able to reduce that loss to \$100,000.
- Jim reported that effective December 20, 2019 that UPMC Altoona's Inpatient Unit will no longer be accepting adolescents. Any youth under the age of 18, needing inpatient care, will have to go to another facility out of the county. Jim stated that a needs assessment is being done to see if a future adolescent and children inpatient unit could be developed in Blair County, as well as, factoring in sustainability within Blair and Blair's contiguous counties.
- Jim stated that Blair Healthchoices, beginning January 1, 2020, will be changing from a fiscal year to a calendar year.
- Through reinvestment dollars, H.O.P.E. Drop-In Center has identified and purchased a building. The closing on the building is December 20, 2019.

Open Forum:

- Jamie Henry thanked everyone who stopped in at SASMG for the Open House to tour the new building, as well as, view the artwork that was created by SASMG clients.
- Jim mentioned that the Family First Act, which passed into law, will affect how Children, Youth & Families (CYF) will operate and do business.

Rick closed the meeting and wished everyone a happy holiday.

The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 11:30a.m. at the Arc, 431 Jackson Ave, Altoona

The next Mental Health Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 2, 2020 at 9:00a.m. at CONTACT Altoona.

The next Developmental Programs Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 2, 2020 at 11:30a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd.