

**The Blair County Department of Social Services
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, August 4, 2022 at 11:30 AM
Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg**

Board Members Present: Stephen Martynuska, Matthew Dumm, Bob Smith, James Stratton, Rick Petroski, Donna Gority, Mike Stubler and Commissioner Erb

Board Members Absent: T. Grant Phillips, Chris Cohn, Susanna Tomlinson, Rebecca Aungst and Amber Hatfield

Others Present: Jim Hudack, Theresa Rudy, Missy Gillin, Melissa Gordon, Kelly Popich, Aimee Burns, Lorrie Hetager and Erin Kay

AMENDED MINUTES

Welcome and Call to Order

- Steve Martynuska welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

1. Public Comment

- No public comments were received.

2. Approval of June 2, 2022 Minutes

- *Motion by Mike Stubler to accept the June 2, 2022 minutes. Bob Smith seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

3. Board Operations – Jim Hudack, Executive Director, Department of Social Services (DSS)

- **Nominating Committee** (Jim Hudack and Steve Martynuska)
 - DSS Advisory Board members whose appointments expire are Stephen Martynuska, Christopher Cohn, James Stratton and T. Grant Phillips. Jim Hudack will reach out to those members to see if they wish to continue to serve as board members.
 - A new Board of Officers will need to be selected. Mike Stubler expressed interest in being Chairperson for the DSS Advisory Board.
 - Nominations will be made during the October 6, 2022 DSS Advisory Board meeting.
 - Steve Martynuska stated that he would like to continue to serve as a DSS Advisory Board member. James Stratton announced that he may not be residing in Blair County next year.
- **Executive Director Search Committee**
 - Jim Hudack stated that he will be retiring on January 6, 2022. **Correction: January 6, 2023**
 - The Search Committee will be involved in the hiring process of the new DSS Executive Director and will consist of Commissioner Erb and 1 representative from the Developmental Programs Committee and 1 representative from the Mental Health Committee. Members, who would like to be representatives, can reach out to Jim Hudack.

4. Mental Health Committee Report

- The Mental Health Committee did not meet in July 2022.

5. Developmental Programs Committee Report

- The Developmental Programs Committee did not meet in July 2022.

8. County Reports

Social Services Executive Director – James Hudack

- The Human Service Block Grant (HSBG) FY 22/23 Annual Plan was submitted to the State the end of July 2022.

- DSS fiscal year ended June 30, 2022. Final reports are being reviewed to see if any funds are available to reallocate to other programs. Income & Expense (I&E) report is usually due by the end of September.
- PA 2022/2023 State Budget allowed increases for Early Intervention and Developmental Disabilities. Mental Health (MH) did not have any increase.

MH/COD –Theresa Rudy

- Theresa reported that Social Services' Fiscal Officer position continues to be vacant. Theresa thanked Jean Cupp, Fiscal Specialist, for taking on the additional fiscal responsibilities.
- Theresa announced that Tracy Fitzpatrick has been hired as a MH Program Specialist for the DSS.
- Year 1 was completed on the Mobile Crisis and Student Assistance Program (SAP) grant.
 - SAP Grant: 499 elementary, middle school, junior high students in the Altoona and Hollidaysburg Area School Districts were assessed for services. The total number of youth assessed was 950.
 - Mobile Crisis Grant: Total Served was 1,165. Average response time to a call is 30-35 minutes. There has been a decrease in Law Enforcement involvement in 302's. Trisha Ruggiero is the new supervisor.
- No date given for the opening of the New Crisis building.
- Theresa stated that the Commissioners approved a 2nd Prime Care (Behavioral Health Services) licensed counselor for the Blair County Prison.
- Steve asked if there has been any response to the DSS Advisory Board's letter of support for the proposed EmPATH Center at UPMC Altoona. Commissioner Erb replied that there has been no further communication.

Mental Health – Ken Dean

- Ken was not in attendance.

Intellectual Disabilities – Melissa Gordon

- Melissa reported that the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) updated criteria for children under the age of eight years old. The new criteria states that the child needs a diagnosis of ID, autism or a developmental disability. The child would also need a physical and an adaptive behavior assessment done annually until IQ could be established.
- SASMG is developing a referral form for Early Intervention (EI) Service Coordinators to hand out to those aging out of EI services to see if they would like a referral. The form will contain information pertaining to ID services, eligibility criteria and resources.
- ODP has expanded SASMG's services to include supporting children with medically complex conditions. Criteria states the child would have to be under the age of 22 with or without an ID/autism diagnosis. Also, they must have three system organ disorders that would be chronic and require nursing services.
- Currently, SASMG is starting its Quality Assessment and Improvement. An on-site inspection will be conducted by ODP in October 2022.
- Four students were participating in the Summer Employment Initiative program doing maintenance at the Railroaders Museum and the Horseshoe Curve.

Early Intervention – Kelly Popich

- Kelly stated that provider monitoring was completed as of June 30, 2022. 3 providers needed an improvement plan.
- 1 EI provider decided not to renew its contract.
- EI will continue to receive the 3% rate increase through FY 2022/2023, which was approved last year through the American Rescue Plan.
- Kelly stated that EI referrals are high and that families are following through with those referrals.

Quality Assurance & Housing Coordinator – Missy Gillin

- Missy reported that the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) 1 funding is practically depleted. ERAP 2 funding will run until September 2025, but monies may not last that long. Center for Community Action is distributed ERAP 2 funds.
- The Shelter completion date has been extended until mid-September 2022.
- Missy announced a new Sustainable Housing program launched through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). (3) \$50,000 grants are being made available for development of additional affordable housing. Application packets were made available on August 1, 2022. Deadline for submissions is September 30, 2022.

9. Ex-Officio Reports

CONTACT Altoona – Erin Kay

- A report was included in the packet.
- The “donations only” kids game table at the Duncansville Community Days was a hit.
- Erin has a photo op with Mayor Pacifico on August 11th for their Proclamation, stating September 1st as CONTACT Altoona Day.
- CONTACT Altoona’s Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner is on September 1.
- CONTACT Altoona will be participating in the Out of the Darkness Walk on September 10 and the End Alzheimer’s Walk on October 22.
- CONTACT Altoona will have a table at Hollidayburg Boro’s Pumpkin Fest in October.
- 12 Days of CONTACT Christmas fundraiser will begin in November.
- 10 reassurance call shifts were missed this fiscal year (FY) (down from 14 last FY).
- 7 inbound call shifts were missed this fiscal year (down from 15 last FY).

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Aimee Burns

- A report was included in the agenda packet.
- The Family to Family Course will now begin on September 15th with a new start time of 6:30 pm.
- NAMI Faith Net presentation for Mount Aloysius clergy and students will be October 13.
- Family Support Group Facilitator virtual training is September 10 & 11 and October 8 & 9.
- Peer to Peer Leader virtual training is September 17 & 18.
- Aimee is still in communications with local schools to bring the “In Our Own Voice” and “Ending The Silence” presentations to as many schools as possible for the 2022/2023 school year. “Ending the Silence” is also available in a video version.

The Arc – Maria Brandt

- Maria was not in attendance.

ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager

- Tefoni Mahon, Care Smart Solutions, reports their annual motorcycle run will be held August 13, 2022 at the Claysburg American Legion. Tickets are being sold for \$5.00 each for prizes of 2 guns and \$500 cash. Anyone interested in purchasing tickets can contact Tefoni. One hundred percent of the proceeds will go to veterans in our area.
- Charles Lansberry reports The Learning Community received funds for the summer employment program for kids. He wishes the referral process included more than just names and telephone numbers. Two staff were budgeted for four students. The ratio should have been 1:1.
- UPMC ACEL Agency with Choice services are growing. Lots of positive things happening for families. Kudos to staff supporting a family who has a wedding coming up the end of August. Person supported is in his brother’s wedding. Staff are volunteering their time to help with lifting and personal care because it takes two people to lift and assist with care. A person supported assists her mother with a travel agency and helps to answer customer questions.
- Jan Kinney finished her residency with the ACEL center. We are hoping to take the storytelling on the road and reach out to local nursing homes.

- Providers are gearing up for QA&I (Quality Assessment and Improvement).

Blair HealthChoices/Community Cares – Amy Marten-Shanafelt

- Amy was not in attendance.

Open Forum:

- Donna Gority stated that Maria Brandt was not in attendance today due to being at the ARC golf tournament.
- Donna also relayed that Jan Kinney was quite appreciative of the work that the ACEL Center does.
- Steve stated that Sheetz pilot program to hire individuals with intellectual disabilities has grown to 15 positions in Blair County and 4 in York County. Sheetz is looking to fill 64 more positions in various PA counties.

The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. at Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg, PA (Formerly 120 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg)

The next Mental Health Committee meeting will be held on September 1, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg, PA (Formerly 120 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg)

The next Developmental Programs Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, September 1, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd. or Virtual Meeting