



**Passaic County Mental Health Board  
May 6, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

**Members present:**

1. Nanette A. Armenta
2. Robert Nolan
3. Ramon Pagan
4. Jeannette Pimentel
5. Julie Rikon
6. Paula Tedesco

**Members absent:**

1. Arnell Perez
2. Jennie Vega

Meeting was called to order at 6:04pm by Mr. Nolan, Chairman of the Mental Health Board. Meeting was held via videoconference.

Also present was Brenda Browne, Director of the Passaic County Mental Health and Addiction Services, Cynthia Gatica, Hudson and Passaic County Program Analyst for the New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (NJDMHAS).

Mr. Nolan made the announcement of the Open Public Meetings Act. No public was present.

Ms. Rikon moved to approve the March 11, 2020 meeting minutes, second by Ms. Pimentel. Motion passed with one abstention.

**Reports**

County Division of Mental Health & Addiction Staff Report (See Attachment 1)

Ms. Browne informed the Board of RFP's that were publicized but received no bids totaling \$82,608. Board members provided the following recommendations for the funding:

- a. Mini-grants to assist agencies negatively affected by COVID-19 or allow more access by service recipients
- b. Contacting Atlantic Behavioral Healthcare to determine if they can provide outpatient mental health services in a satellite office in Upper Passaic County (possibly Ringwood).

Ms. Browne to further explore these recommendations and report back to the board.

Ms. Rikon suggested the Innovation Grant Award "Mobile Recovery Unit" also be utilized to share mental health

information widely in the community.

Ms. Tedesco recommended the statewide NJ Mental Health hotline information be sent to Passaic County municipalities' town nurses/health officers or mayors for posting on their websites. Ms. Browne to send that information to those municipalities' health officers.

Ms. Pimentel informed the board that Paterson Police Department is putting together a unit of police officers who can lend themselves to respond to calls related to children and families in the community. Ms. Browne to inform St. Joseph's Mobile Outreach of this information.

New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Program Analyst Report (See Attachment 2).

Professional Advisory Committee Report (No official committee meetings held for March or April 2020, as per County Executive Order). Ms. Browne participated in Mental Health and Addiction Provider Check-in calls for those months. No report.

Old Business: Mr. Nolan discussed the recommended letter to DMHAS and Medicaid regarding children's outpatient mental health rates but was awaiting further feedback from the board members. Mr. Nolan agreed to work on the letter but suggested a motion from the board to send the letter. Ms. Rikon moved to approve a letter be sent to DMHAS and Medicaid regarding Children's outpatient rates. Second by Mr. Pagan. Motion passed. Mr. Nolan to send to Ms. Browne to forward to the appropriate persons.

New Business:

Ms. Rikon moved to ratify electronic votes taken. (The electronic vote was to approve the revised 2020 spending plan). Second by Ms. Tedesco. Motion passed.

Correspondence: None.

Motion to adjourn meeting by Ms. Armenta. Second by Ms. Tedesco. Motion passed.  
Meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.

Attest:

Brenda Browne  
Secretary

County Division of Mental Health & Addiction Staff Report  
Mental Health & Addictions Updates

May 2020

- The Innovation Award RFP has been posted. Bids are due on 5/22/2020.
- Mental Health and Addiction agencies are coping best they can with the immediate change to telehealth with limited access to the technology needed to get this done. FCC released grants to assist with technology and telehealth challenges that this pandemic has created.
- Deployment of Disaster Response Crisis Counselors (DRCC's) telephonically and at William Paterson University's Testing Site for the past several weeks. Division Director has been providing support and resources to the volunteers and provided cards with emotional support number in English and Spanish for the residents being tested.
- Division Director meeting with Paterson's Overdose Response Team & Coalition of Opioid Assessment and Response team to find best ways to tackle the Opioid concerns in Paterson.
- Challenges with mobile outreaches are being addressed.
- RFQ's for providers in Passaic County to identify what MH and Addictions services they could provide in the county.
- FEMA grant funding available for pandemic related disaster crisis counseling.

## Program Analyst Notes

May Notes 2020

- **Mental Health Videophone Support Available to Assist Sign Language Users During COVID-19 Outbreak**
- *Press Release: The ACCESS Program at St. Joseph's Helpline Offers Emotional Support to Sign Language Users During the Coronavirus Pandemic*
- (TRENTON) – A free emotional support helpline is now available to deaf and hard of hearing New Jerseyans feeling the emotional and mental toll of COVID-19.
- With support from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, ACCESS at St. Joseph's Health in Paterson is offering help in American Sign Language to people dealing with anxiety and worry related to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. New Jerseyans can call the videophone helpline at **973-870-0677** for free, confidential support. Direct communication in sign language will be offered from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday by live trained specialists.
- News Letter was sent in Guidance Regarding Telemedicine/Telehealth and Telecommunication Support Services for Behavioral Health Provider Agencies Dealing with COVID-19. In light of Coronavirus (COVID-19) public health concerns, both State and Federal declarations of emergency, and recent actions at the State and Federal level to support the use of telemedicine/telehealth during this public health emergency, the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Division) is recommending that Mental Health (MH) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) provider agencies (PAs) consider providing programming through telemedicine/telehealth to the extent practicable and where appropriate.

- **DEPT. OF HEALTH ANNOUNCES NEW HOSPITAL VISITORS POLICY**

- Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli announced a new policy on April 25th requiring hospitals to allow a designated support person to be with a disabled patient during hospitalization. This designated support person can be a

family member, personal care assistant or another disability service provider knowledgeable about the patient's care and must be allowed to remain with the patient while in the hospital, subject to the restrictions. The patient's disability may be due to altered mental status, intellectual or cognitive disability, communication barriers or behavioral concerns.

- **DISABILITIES RIGHTS NJ TO HOLD VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETING**

- DRNJ the State's Protection and Advocacy will be holding a virtual listening session on Wednesday, April 29, 2020, 7:00 PM 8:00 PM to hear about what is working and what is not in the time of COVID-19. This listening session is an opportunity for individuals with serious mental illness, their advocates, and family members to speak to DRNJ and one another, and to promote the sharing of resources, information, and experiences. You may send questions in advance of the Town Hall to: [PAIMIquestions@drnj.org](mailto:PAIMIquestions@drnj.org)
- Register at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrdOqrrjkvGtE37fIYle76H-mvrrlMiblj>

- The COVID-19 crisis is putting first responders at a dangerously high risk for a variety of mental health problems, psychiatric experts say. CarePlus NJ -- a non-profit organization that provides primary care, mental health care and substance abuse rehabilitation services -- is launching a mental health trauma hotline for first responders on May 4.

- There is a new CSS termination notification form that has been sent to our CSS providers as talked about on CSS conference call in April.
- Final Awards went out for the purchase of telehealth Equipment/techenology to service consumers with opiod use disorders. Hispanic Family Center of southern NJ. (Camden County).

Legacy Treatment Services (Atlantic, Burlington, Middlesex and Cape May Counties). New Hope (Monmouth and Middlesex Counties) Stress Care of NJ (Monmouth County). Vantage HealthCare (Bergen County).

- the process during this COVID19 Pandemic for some of the BOSS have limited office hours, but all BOSS have active phone lines where messages are to be left and someone is to return calls to the community. Please see attached for your individual counties.
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- Medicaid Alert: Effective April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 all Prior authorizations for CSS and Substance use disorder services for Medicaid consumers have been suspended until further notice.
- DMHAS distributed a small supply of N-95 Masks and gloves to priority providers, based on frequent contact with consumers: Opioid Treatment Providers (30) and Non-hospital based Designated Screening Centers (10). As more supplies become available, the next target group of providers to receive supplies is residential providers with COVID-19 positive residents.
- To complement the COVID-19 helpline operated by the Mental Health Association of New Jersey (866-202-HELP), a helpline is now operational for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. That helpline is operational Monday – Friday from 9 to 5 (973-870-0877).
- DMHAS contracted providers have submitted their required attestations asserting they will continue operations and continue to accept admissions, and have received their April contract payment as specified in the DMHAS March 25, 2020 correspondence. DMHAS staff continue to have frequent contact with our contracted providers to ensure the availability of services to our consumers.
- DMHAS has submitted our grant application to FEMA for the Immediate Service Program and to SAMHSA for the Emergency Grant to Address Mental and Substance Use Disorders During COVID-19.
- Additional Guidance Documents have been issued to providers as follows:
- Telehealth for Designated Screening Services issued 3/27/20 by DMHAS
- Partial Care and Partial Hospitalization Telehealth Services issued 4/14/20 by Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services
- Please see the DMHAS website for on-going updates:
- <https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/home/index.html>
- Please be reminded that if you need additional one-time funding for PPE you can request this through DMHAS.

**Passaic County Mental Health and Addiction Professional Advisory Committee  
(PAC/PACADA)**

**No March or April 2020 Meetings as per Executive Order**

10. **Adjourned** – Concetta Schilt motioned to adjourn, Tina Miles second. Meeting adjourned at 3:19.

**Next meeting date: March 18, 2020**