



# COUNTY OF HUNTERDON NEW JERSEY

## HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MENTAL HEALTH BOARD



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**REFERENCE:**

- Council
- Mental Health
- Youth
- Disability Services
- Substance Use Disorder
- Transportation

To be approved October 5, 2023.

### MENTAL HEALTH BOARD

#### Regular Meeting

**Thursday, September 7, 2023 5:30 p.m.**  
**Via Microsoft Teams**

#### MEMBERS

R. Walker  
M. Deo  
W. Dudzinski  
L. Cartwright

#### EX-OFFICIO

T. Wilson

#### STAFF

S. Becker  
M. O'Reilly  
S. Nekola

#### GUESTS

G. Piscitelli  
B. Welsh  
T. Kero  
K. Merson  
A. Villano  
A. Bassetti

#### **I. CONVENE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT:**

“This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobbies of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, the first floor of the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street Building #1, Flemington, NJ; the first floor of the Route 12 County Complex, Building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ and County Clerk’s Office.”

#### **ROLL CALL:**

The regular public meeting was opened at 5:30 p.m. Introductions were made.

S. Becker stated she is the Assistant Mental Health Administrator and Drug and Alcohol Director for Hunterdon County.

L. Cartwright stated he is the president of NAMI Hunterdon.

T. Wilson stated she works with the Division of Mental Health and Addition Services.

W. Dudzinski stated he is the Chair of the Mental Health Board and the Treasurer of NAMI Hunterdon as well as the retiring CFO of Newbridge Services.

G. Piscitelli stated he is with Hunterdon Behavioral Health.

B. Welsh stated he is with Hunterdon Healthcare and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention New Jersey Chapter.

M. O'Reilly stated she is the Administrator for Hunterdon County Department of Human Services.

A. Villano stated she is the Senior Director of Recovery Services for Acenda Integrated Health.

K. Merson stated she is the Clinician Supervisor for the Rutgers EISS in Hunterdon County.

M. Deo stated she is with Center for Family Services NJ4S

S. Nekola stated she is the Division Head of Social Work Services and Seniors, Disabilities and Veteran Services for Hunterdon County.

R. Walker stated she is with Summit Oaks Hospital.

**II. A. \*MINUTES.** R. Walker made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 1, 2023. M. Deo seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

**B. CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**III. REPORTS:**

- a. County Update:** M. The Hunterdon County Housing Waiting list is closed, and we have approximately 500 households on the waiting list. Notification has been sent to applicants regarding placement on the waiting list via the lottery. The Division of Housing is working with the Department of Children and Families regarding Foster Youth Initiative Vouchers and are looking to receive referrals for youth between the ages of 18-24 that are homeless or at risk becoming homeless and have at least 1 day in placement.

We are finalizing the details of our three-year county human services Request for Proposal (RFP) and that will be published soon. We have scheduled a Technical Assistance session for next week on September 21, 2023, in the afternoon.

We recently held a listening session and distributed two surveys regarding Opioid Abatement funds. The taskforce will be meeting soon to review the data collected and will be developing a plan to submit to the County Commissioners for review and approval. This plan will include the funding priorities for the abatement funds.

- B. State Update:** T. Wilson reported the Outpatient Services for Older Adults is under review. This impacts Hunterdon County directly as the county was selected for the potential award. The Division is seeking the Mental Health Boards Letter of Recommendations by September 28, 2023.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Disaster Crisis Counseling Grant, required a letter of interest from the County Mental Health Administrators, will provide Grant opportunities for the Disaster Response Crisis Counseling (DRCC) program. The division is looking to issue up to 21 awards and each county will be awarded up to \$30,000 dollars. The funds will be dispersed in two increments of \$15,000 dollars. The letters of interest must be received by September 15, 2023, at 4:00pm.

The Department of Human Services announced the launch of Stop Overdoses where residents can find pharmacies offering lifesaving Narcan anonymously at no cost. For more information visit [StopOverdoses.nj.gov](http://StopOverdoses.nj.gov).

The New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority is deploying the second-year of funding applications and selecting participants by using a securing system, this is for the Fiscal Year 2024. Those funds will be available beginning October 1, 2023, the purpose of this grant is to assist the severe shortage in Behavioral Healthcare Staffing.

September 20, 2023, is the Opioid Summit all-day virtual conference and October 19, 2023, is the Suicide Prevention virtual conference.

- C. NAMI Hunterdon Update:** W. Dudzinski and L. Cartwright stated their Expressive Arts Contest has had several submissions. There will be an Outdoor Event exhibiting the submissions on September 17, 2023. There has been a continuing follow up on the Tardive Dyskinesia grant that has been received. NAMI Hunterdon was the only county that received the grant from NAMI National. NAMI Hunterdon was awarded, at the NAMI New Jersey National Conference, for the most active and recognized as an exemplary county organization.
- L. Cartwright conveyed that NAMI Hunterdon is taking part in the Chamber of Commerce Business Bash, which is taking place on October 25, 2023, from 4:00pm-7:00pm at the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse.
- W. Dudzinski advised they had met with the Flemington-Raritan School District Superintendent, who covers grades K-8. NAMI Hunterdon will have tables setup for the back-to-school events at the individual schools offering information on Mental Health Awareness.

#### **IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- A. Update on Blue Envelope Letter:** S. Becker reported the Blue Envelope Letter is a work in progress. The committee sent out a letter advocating for the Blue Envelope Letter Project for the Hunterdon County Mental Health Board supporting this law and supporting education. Correspondence was received back from New Jersey State Senators thanking the board and stating they will be moving forward with the letter of support to be included in the legislation. For those not in attendance in June 2023's meeting, Chief Timothy Barlow from the Tewksbury Township Police Department gave this presentation. The Blue Envelope Project is material that has been distributed to several police departments in and around Hunterdon County. It is an Envelope that is designed specifically for licensed drivers with Autism. On one side of the envelope, it states to the officer what Autism looks like and on the other side is information for the individual who has Autism about what a traffic stop would look like. There is an insert for caregiver information and an area to place copies of

the driver's license, registration, and insurance card.

**V. NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. **Gina Maffie DMHAS Outpatient Older Adults RFP:** G. Piscitelli and A. Bassetti are going to present on DMHAS Outpatient Older Adult RFP in place of G. Maffie. G. Piscitelli started off the presentation stating that Hunterdon Behavioral Health runs an Older Adults Program, where staff go out to an individual's residence to provide support, counseling, and transportation to appointments to reduce the impact of isolation. The program has been running for over 20 years. When the Request for Proposal (RFP) was introduced, they saw an opportunity to improve service to older adults. Hunterdon Medical Center has been short staffed with all levels including hiring psychotherapists and psychiatrists, with the RFP there was an opportunity to bring on more staffing to provide improved services to the older adult population as it is increasing in Hunterdon County. They would like to improve access to essential care and know at this time that is not occurring. There is an increase in emotional distress, isolation, hospitalization, suicidal ideation, and severe mental illnesses being seen here at the Hunterdon Medical Center. The goal is to improve access to services, reducing the wait time for that service and reduce admission to the Emergency Department. A. Bassetti reported the departments recidivism rate is around 2 percent. One objective is to link individuals to services on a Friday and be proactive in making sure those services are provided in person via a counselor or virtually to avoid a trip to the Emergency Room. Hunterdon Medical Center would be able to provide early intervention as the Emergency Department is not an opportune place to come for treatment. One critical issue that effects the older population is isolation. The goal is to have a team respond out to the handle the different faucets that older adults are dealing with and get them linked to services, involve them in activities and overall to have them feel supported. A portion of that is being done through County programs however there is a need for expansion to tap into community-based resources to facilitate that process. The Medical Center would like to streamline the current admission process that is in place. The intake department currently has a wait time for services at 63 days, if the grant is obtained, the idea is to reduce the waiting time by having a designated team that would just be dealing with the older adult population, get them into the treatment and assessment process and link them to the services they require. With the grant there would be the ability to hire a Part-Time pharmacologist, Full-Time psychotherapist, and an Individual/Peer Support Specialist (.3.75) that can work with the individuals in their homes and provide them with the services they need. The individual would be assessed by the team, if they need psychological and/or pharmacological assistance, this would be a one step process to assist the individual. With the grant, the Medical Center would be requesting \$168,307.00 dollars in the first-year startup of operation and \$12,000.00 dollars to purchase secure laptops, cell phones and medical equipment. During the second year of operation, they would be requesting \$45,000.00 as they believe there will be significant revenue from the older population. The goal is to provide quality and comprehensive service. A. Bassetti conveyed that Hunterdon County is competing with other counties in the state and with

the submission of this application for the RFP it will help solve the Mental Health needs for the older population.

W. Dudzinski asked in terms of treating older adults, how many are being treated now and how many would be treated with the addition of this program.

G. Piscitelli advised that he does not currently have the information on how many are being treated at this time however they are looking an additional 100 individuals to start.

W. Dudzinski stated to the committee to make a motion to provide a letter of support to Hunterdon Medical Center for this program. W. Dudzinski made the motion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

**Discussion Ensued.**

**B. Chair and Vice Chair Elections:** S. Becker stated that this meeting was the time to elect a Chair and Vice Chair. W. Dudzinski requested that R. Walker and L. Cartwright be considered for those positions. L. Cartwright advised he cannot assist. W. Dudzinski conveyed that he can continue in that Chairpersons capacity. W. Dudzinski made a motion to nominate himself for the position of Chairperson as well as a motion to nominate M. Deo for the Vice-Chair position. The committee was all in favor and the motion passed.

**VI. NEWS / UPDATES:**

W. Dudzinski reported New Bridge Services is waiting on the State and other approvals to become an affiliate with Christian Health.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting of September 7, 2023. All were in favor. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m. The next meeting will be held on October 5, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.