

Board Update

Mental Health & Recovery Services (MHRS) Board
Serving Coshocton, Guemsey, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble & Perry Counties
1500 Coal Run Road – Zanesville, OH 43701
Phone: 740-454-8557

Regular Board Meeting
Highlights
June 10, 2021



MHRS Board Director Misty Cromwell recognized retiring board member **Kelly Lynch** (Guernsey County Representative), who served on the Board of Directors from July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2021. Given Kelly’s long-term career and community volunteerism, she brought a much-needed perspective to the Board’s table — the importance of meeting the behavioral health needs of neglected and abused children and their families. Director Cromwell presented Kelly with a special gift with the inscription: **“It is a beautiful thing when a career and passion come together.”**

Ms. Cromwell also recognized outgoing Board President **Jeff LeCocq** for his outstanding leadership over the last two fiscal years, one of which was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its catastrophic impacts.

ALL BOARD MEMBERS were thanked for the extra efforts they made in FY 2021 to ensure contract service providers remained strong and viable. Director Cromwell’s remarks:

Usually, at the fiscal year-end meeting we talk about specific accomplishments of the previous 12 months – of which there were many. However, to my way of thinking, striving to survive a pandemic was the primary accomplishment. Considering what we faced last year, it would be wise to not measure progress by the things you could have done; measure it in the things you had to do within the unbearable trauma of a worldwide crisis.

Of course, the main concern within our network of care was keeping our contract service providers whole, so that they could continue to offer telehealth treatment, support and guidance to those struggling with mental illness and/or addictions. MHRS Board members rapidly switched to meeting virtually and were focused on helping our contract providers to continue providing treatment and support during the lockdown.

During the pandemic, human kindness, courage, and sacrifice expressed themselves in so many ways. Hopefully, we can continue to ‘love our neighbors as ourselves.’ Let’s have that as the new rule in the post-pandemic reset.

All board members were given bundt cakes from the Sweet Life Baking Company that provides women from Muskingum Behavioral Health’s Naomi Recovery House some training and experience in helping to operate a community business.

Executive Director
Misty Cromwell

Board of Directors
Sherile Beardmore
Rev. Dr. Michael Bullock
Jennifer Hanson
Sue Hoover
William Johnson
Pamela Kirst
Jeff LeCocq
Mindy Lowe
Kelly Lynch
Dan Scheerer, M.D.
Danielle Scott
Bev Steinbrecher

Board President
Jeff LeCocq

Board Vice President
William Johnson

The mission of the MHRS Board is to facilitate a Recovery-Oriented System of Care that promotes mental health and supports the recovery of each person who needs services for mental illness and/or addiction.

FinancialMatters

Under the guidance of Finance/Audit Committee Chair Dr. Dan Scheerer, board members reviewed and approved the May 2021 Reconciliation Report that showed deposits, checks written for MHRS Board operations, payments to in-network service providers and out-of-network community partners, and journal entries. Below is a breakdown of payments for the provision of mental health and addiction treatment and support services.

<i>Accounts Payable</i>	<i>In-Network Providers</i>	<i>Out-of-Network Partners</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
May 11, 2021	\$199,497.16	\$12,137.03	\$211,634.19
May 25, 2021	\$522,054.90	\$43,702.63	\$565,757.53
TOTAL	\$721,552.06	\$55,839.66	\$777,391.72

Other financial reports reviewed included: Contract Services Expenses; Balance Sheet as of May 31, 2021; and a Dashboard Report that provides a high-level overview of key fiscal indicators.

Need for Racial Trauma Therapy

On May 19, 2021, the MHRS Board’s Care Management Council heard a local mother’s personal story about the painful struggles her family has undergone amid the trauma her two transracial children have experienced in their school and community. She noted her children have faced considerable bias in school — i.e., being treated more harshly, less likely to be identified as gifted, and mistreatment from classmates. The mother pointed out there is a gaping hole in local child-serving systems, where there is no therapy available to help traumatized children of color. She encouraged the MHRS Board’s network of care to — at minimum — include questions about racial trauma on their assessment surveys.

Council members agreed to explore revising their assessment tools and to also look into some special trainings about trauma in schools and the provision of racial trauma therapy.

It was also decided to make arrangements for an ‘in-person’ training for Care Management Council members on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) — with plans to then provide the training for all employees in the network of care.

Guernsey Health Choices Moves to New Location



MHRS Board contract provider—Guernsey Health Choices (GHC)—has moved into their renovated office located at 1009 Steubenville Avenue in Cambridge. The new site is strategically located in the downtown area and is more easily accessible. Congratulations to GHC!

GHC also recently announced they are now offering Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR). Research has shown that EMDR is an effective therapy with most mental health struggles—including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and addictions. Contact #: 740-439-4532.

Annual Board Member Training

Prior to regular board meeting, board members underwent their annual training presented by Liz Henrich and Fonda Freeman, Associate CEOs with the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA).

- ◆ ***Recovery-Oriented System of Care:*** It was noted the MHRS Board is a ‘Culture of Quality’ certified Board that follows the priorities of a Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC). Those priorities are person-centered and build on the strengths and resiliencies of individuals, families, and communities to achieve improved health, wellness and quality of life for those with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

The ROSC Blueprint is incorporated into the structure of the MHRS Board’s Strategic Plan. ROSC’s five principles are:

- Focusing on Clients and Families
- Ensuring Timely Access to Care
- Promoting Healthy, Safe, and Drug-Free Communities
- Prioritizing Accountable and Outcome-Driven Financing
- Local Management of Systems of Care

- ◆ ***Health Equity, Inclusion and Diversity:***

Last year, OACBHA formed a Health Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Council, whose initial focus has been on offering trainings (CLAS and Groundwater Approach) to a broad spectrum of MHRS Boards in Ohio—with the hope that those trainings will soon be trickling down to service providers in the state.

OACBHA also approved a resolution declaring that “Racism is a Public Health Crisis,” where a commitment was expressed to engage all communities in working with state and local behavioral health leaders to develop and promote prevention and awareness efforts designed to reduce stigma, address trauma, and eliminate barriers to care.

Some health equity and diversity resource materials are available at OACBHA’s website: www.oacbha.org.

- ◆ ***State-of-the-State:***

OACBHA has been looking at several priority issues for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic that saw increased drug and alcohol consumption and increased suicides, ideation and attempts. It was also noted that families who lost loved ones to COVID-19 are in need of some grief support; however, grief also is a normal reaction to other losses—like jobs and isolation.

Board Member Input: It was pointed out there is a need for ramping up local grief and bereavement support initiatives, and it was noted it would be helpful if network resource information could be delivered to service area funeral homes.

OACBHA’s priority issues to address these impacts are: enhancing access to crisis services, addressing racism and health equity, working with the General Assembly on bills impacting the behavioral healthcare system, working through the SFY 2022-2023 Biennial Budget Process, and partnering with federal and state leaders to ensure increased federal investments are used to support community services.

It was noted that Ohio will be seeing a significant infusion of additional funds through the December Coronavirus Relief Package and the American Rescue Plan. The allocations to MHRS Boards and contract service providers are unknown at this time.

Board Member Input: The hope was expressed that some of the anticipated additional federal and state funds could possibly be used to support the formation of strategic and thoughtful partnerships between mental health providers and law enforcement to respond to calls involving people apparently suffering from a mental disturbance. It is believed that such a system would have the potential of enhancing public safety and improved outcomes over the long-term — particularly for those most at risk.

The Ohio Senate has passed their version of the state budget bill. It is anticipated that a Conference Committee will now be working to finalize the legislation—with the budget bill being signed hopefully before June 30, 2021. The Senate’s version of the bill includes: ▪ Flat-funding of community line items over the next biennium. ▪ The establishment of Overdose and Suicide Fatality Review Boards. ▪ Expansion of the Student Wellness and Success Initiative. ▪ Some expected changes in the management of Medicaid expenditures and the procurement of managed care companies.

Recovery Ohio Drug Trends

MHRS Board Director Misty Cromwell participates in monthly calls with various key stakeholders to discuss drug trends in Ohio. The latest discussion points:

- ◆ **THC-Infused Edibles:** Ohio’s poison call centers have seen a significant surge in consults in 2020 about kids eating THC-infused edibles, prompting a new warning to parents and other adults to keep the products out of sight and reach of children. Candy with wrappers that look a lot like those of popular candies are among the edibles containing THC, the ingredient in marijuana that produces a high, and are sold in some states that have legalized medical marijuana. Legislation is being considered that would prohibit making such products attractive to children.
- ◆ **Some Local Stats:** Perry County is second in the state for the number of opiate prescriptions per month; Muskingum County is second in the state for the number of Benzo prescriptions per month, and Guernsey County is third. Guernsey County has also experienced a significant increase in cocaine and fentanyl positivity.

Allwell Behavioral Health’s Youth Resiliency Capital Project

Board members approved a resolution in support of Allwell Behavioral Health’s Youth Resiliency Capital Project that has already received initial approval by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

Misty Cromwell noted that the capital application would fund the purchase of a building for Allwell’s Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) Support Center. The MRSS Support Center will be a place where families may temporarily separate from each other in order to move forward with de-escalation efforts. The Center will be a safe place where families can take advantage of education, support, and a pathway to other needed services.

MHRS Board Leadership in Fiscal Year 2022

Board members elected officers for the period July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. On the left below, is William Johnson, Board President; and on the right is Rev. Dr. Michael Bullock, Board Vice-President.



*The Board of Directors will next meet on
Thursday, August 12, 2021, at the
MHRS Board Office - 1500 Coal Run Road, Zanesville
Committee Meetings at 6:00 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m.*

