

# Commission to Study Mental & Behavioral Health

Organizational Meeting  
Governor's Reception Room

March 19, 2019

3:00-5:00PM

## Meeting Minutes

### I. Call to order

Lieutenant Governor Rutherford called to order the first organizational meeting of the Commission to Study Mental and Behavioral Health in Annapolis in the Governor's Reception Room at 3:00PM.

### II. Roll Call/Attendees

**Commission Members:** Lt. Governor Rutherford, Delegate Robbyn Lewis, Senator Adelaide Eckardt, Secretary Robert Neall, Deputy Secretary Barbara Bazron, Deputy Secretary Randi Walters, Commissioner Al Redmer, Director Steve Schuh, Patricia Miedusiewski, Serena Eckwood, Christian Miele, Dennis Schrader, Richard Abbott, Barbara Allen, Dr. Bhaskara Tripuraneni, Cari Cho

Designees: Erin Schaefer, DPSCS, Deborah Nelson -MSDE

### III. New business

a) Lt. Governor Presents Background:

i) Executive Order:

- (1) This Commission was announced at The Helping Up Mission Conference January 10, 2019. There is a relationship between mental health and substance use disorder; I had previously looked at them as separate. I am chair because I come with no bias. As we talked with substance abuse disorder, the stigma is far greater with mental health. It is time we take a serious look at how we address mental disorders. We will be engaging families and practitioners to develop feedback. This commission will continue after the report and this will not be easy. President Kennedy once said when spoke about the moon “we do this not because it's easy but because it's hard.’ And it is a challenge is we are willing to accept, not postpone.”

## ii) Reports:

- (1) Interim – July 10
- (2) Final – December 31
  - The goal is to provide policy or regulatory recommendations
  - The Commission will continue past the Year 1 report. We plan to go further than duties/topics outlined in EO.

b) Introductions:

- i) **Senator Adelaide Eckardt** – *Appointee of the President, Maryland Senate*  
30+ Years working in the Eastern Shore Hospital and happy to represent district 37 in Maryland.
- ii) **Delegate Robbyn Lewis** – *Appointee of the Speaker, House of Delegates*  
Delegate from 46<sup>th</sup> District, serves on Health and Government Operations Committee and a public health professional by trade.
- iii) **Richard Abbott** – *Representative by Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals*  
Director of the Department of Juvenile & Family Services, Administrative Office of the Courts. We are looking forward to coordinating with Legislative and Executive Branches as this is an important issue.
- iv) **Secretary Robert Neall** – *Maryland Department of Health*
- v) **Dr. Barbara Bazron** – *Maryland Department of Health*  
Deputy Secretary for MDH. It is very important to this Commission that we get input to build a quality system for Behavioral and Mental Health.
- vi) **Major Roland Butler** – *Maryland State Police*  
Assistant Bureau Chief of Operations, Field Operations Bureau
- vii) **Dr. Erin Schaefer** – *Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services*  
Representative for Dr. Randy Nero; psychologist.
- viii) **Dr. Randy Walters** – *Department of Human Services*  
Deputy Secretary for Programs, oversee Family Investigations & Child Support and this Commission is dear to our hearts.
- ix) **Commissioner Al Redmer** – *Maryland Insurance Administration*

- x) **Director Steve Schuh** – *Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center*  
Thank you for involving me in this Commission. 60% of individuals who use drugs have mental disorders and 40% of individuals with mental disorders use drugs. I look forward to working with the Commission on these statistics.
  
- xi) **Patricia Miedusiewski** – *Public Member*  
Family Advocate first. Her lived personal experience is growing up with and caring for a father with behavioral health needs specifically co-occurring substance use and mental disorders. She is a registered nurse retired from the Maryland Department of Health where she was employed as the State Program Administrator for Co-occurring Disorders working to drive Maryland's efforts to improve the service delivery system to persons with substance abuse, mental health disorders, developmental disabilities and primary care. She currently volunteers on a regular basis supporting and assisting families and individuals with acquiring quality treatment and recovery services throughout all jurisdictions in Maryland.
  
- xii) **Serina Eckwood** – *Public Member*  
Prince George's County resident. I have mental illness in my family and I am a facilitator of a family support group
  
- xiii) **Christian Miele** – *Maryland Department of Disabilities (non-voting member)*  
Former member of the House of Delegates
  
- xiv) **Dennis Shrader** – *Maryland Department of Health (non-voting member)*  
Chief Operating Officer and Medicaid Director - overseeing \$13 billion in funding.
  
- xv) **Deborah Nelson** – *Maryland Department of Education (non-voting member)*  
Representative for Superintendent Karen Salmon
  
- xvi) **Barbara Allen** – *Public Member*  
Executive Director of James Place, a detox treatment facility for recovery housing. It takes everyone at the table to collaborate and that is what we will do together.
  
- xvii) **Dr. Bhaskara Rao Tripuraneni** – *Public Member*  
Child Psychiatrist, Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, Associate Medical Director, Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group, Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic States

xviii) **Cari Cho** – *Public Member*

President and CEO of a behavioral health nonprofit in Montgomery County.

c) Behavioral Health Administration Review ([See PowerPoint on Web Page](#)):

- i) There is a relationship between mental health and substance abuse
- ii) Substance use disorders are treated on a fee-for-service basis
- iii) Age Breakdown & Programs
- iv) Bill mental health and substance use disorders separately
  
- v) Are there any regulatory issues with tele-medicine?
- vi) 1001 beds in state psych hospital system
- vii) Court-ordered placement – centralized in one data system

d) Challenges:

## i) Regulations with Out of State Doctors:

- (1) Dr. Bazron - As of now, we have not done any work with physicians from out of state.
- (2) Senator Eckardt – State regulations say that you have to be state approved by Medicaid.
- (3) Cari Cho – Doctor and Insurance regulations is an issue for us. A facility will hire someone from Pennsylvania that has been practicing for 15 years but they cannot see patients unless someone is with them and they do not get paid what they should be.
- (4) Lt. Governor – We need to look at regulations. If another state’s licensing is comparable, and a doctor is relocated here, they should be able to practice.

## ii) School Systems:

- (1) Lt. Governor – Dr. Nelson, as you work with k-12 environment, are schools seeing a particular challenge with mental or substance abuse?
  - Dr. Nelson – Yes, about 20% of students are being impacted and it is an on-going challenge.
  
- (2) Lt. Governor – As we are seeing more children being born with opioids and now some of those children have made it to grade school, it might appear that these children have learning disabilities.

- Dr. Nelson – We are training out staff and the schools systems. It takes all of us to be committed to address this issue but we are definitely seeing more of that.
- Senator Eckardt – It (symptoms) is not as predictable as we would see in children affected by crack/cocaine and it is something that needs to be assessed so we can plan ahead.
- Dr. Bazron – Babies that are affected could be hypo responsive and there are some things they need to help them develop.
- Older students typically face these challenges but also seeing diagnoses and challenges in younger students
- Children born addicted to substances entering school age – it may be too early to see the correlations

iii) Jails/Detention Facilities:

- (1) Lt. Governor – The Governor’s Capitol Budget includes money for a secure treatment facility in Baltimore where a large percentage of inmates that came into Baltimore City Jail had one or the other or both (substance use or mental disorder) and the average stay in jail is months and if we don’t address the issue on the jail said they’ll circle back through.
  - Dr. Nero – Younger offenders have entirely different needs because they often lack the family and community support.

iv) Limited Funding:

- (1) Programs funded by grants

v) Shortage of therapist/counselors

vi) Homelessness:

- (1) Medication management
- (2) Cari Cho – Individuals with mental disorders are likely to die at a younger age and assisted living homes deny them. Are Behavioral Health Homes working?

vii) Co-occurring medical issues

viii) Stigma & Awareness:

- (1) Language Usage
  - Barbara Allen – I oversee a Facebook page of individuals affected by mental disorders and substance use and language is really important,

especially when we are in a situation like this. Let's avoid language that stigmatizes and watch what we say.

- (i) Use instead of Abuse
- (ii) Died by suicide instead of Committed Suicide.

- (2) Dr. Tripuraneni - The stigma stops the public and youth from understanding mental disorders and therefore there is an increased rate of suicide and drug overdoses.
- (3) Cari Cho – There are a lot of programs out there to help with mental disorders, there is just lack of knowledge of these programs. We need to understand how to get these programs known.
- (4) Barbara Allen – Families don't want to talk about what's going on, they think they don't need help.

e) Suggestions:

- i) Pat Miedusiewski – Everyone has a different definition of Behavioral Health, can we have a definition as a reference point so everyone is on the same page?
  - (1) Action item for the collective group
- ii) Using resources already in place
  - (1) Senator Eckardt – There are a lot of resources already in place that we can build on and learn from.
  - (2) Cari Cho – There are a lot of grant funded resources/programs happening now, how can we use them or move money around?

f) Subcommittee Announcement:

- i) Lt. Governor - We have identified a couple of broad categories that we want to set up subcommittees to address. Please let our office know which subcommittee you will be most interested in. You will have a chance to add members who are not members of this Commission which will add more voices and resources. At this time, I would like to suggest that you read *No One Cares About Crazy People*, by: Ron Powers. The writer focuses on a family and his children affected by Schizophrenia, one of the children died by suicide. The writer talks about the challenges and resources of mental health services.
  - (1) Financing & Funding

- (2) Youth & Families
- (3) Crisis Services
- (4) Criminal Justice
  - 37% on Federal Criminal Justice System has mental/substance abuse issues

#### **IV. Closing Remarks:**

Lt. Governor – thank you for coming out. Look at our website for future meeting notices. We look forward to hosting regional meetings to get local stakeholders perspectives on issues that they see. Please note there is an email to contact the commission: [MBH.Commission@maryland.gov](mailto:MBH.Commission@maryland.gov).

<https://governor.maryland.gov/ltgovernor/commission-to-study-mental-and-behavioral-health-in-maryland/>

#### **V. Next Meeting**

Morgan State University – CBEIS Building, 5201 Perring Pkwy, Baltimore, MD 21214  
Tuesday, April 30, 2019  
4:30PM

#### **VI. Adjournment**

Lieutenant Governor Rutherford adjourned the meeting at 5:00PM.  
Minutes submitted by: Heather Poston  
Minutes approved by: