

# Meeting Summary for Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council (BPHOC) Zoom Meeting

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## Quick recap

The Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council meeting focused on updates from various departments, including DSS, DMHAS, and DCF, with discussions on funding, RFP processes, and program initiatives. The council also addressed ongoing challenges in the behavioral health sector, such as funding uncertainties and federal cuts, and explored potential solutions like creating a repository to track grant cuts. Updates were provided on upcoming events and resources related to youth suicide prevention, school climate, mental health support grants, and social-emotional learning, as well as the progress of phase 4 and the continuation of monthly webinars.

## Next steps

Yvonne Pallotto (DSS) to report back on whether MTM has had any increases in funding since they took over the NEMT contract.

Yvonne to provide the number of applicants that responded to the NEMT RFP.

Lois Berkowitz (DCF) to check if the DCF RFQ for autism services is for children with autism and IDD combined, or separately for autism and IDD.

Bryan Klimkiewicz to send information and a link about the DESSA assessment tool to David. Executive Committee to discuss in their next meeting how to collect and track information on grant cuts affecting behavioral health services.

## Summary

### Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council Meeting

Co-Chair Terri DiPietro opened the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council meeting, noting there was no public comment scheduled but reminding attendees of the process to submit comments for future meetings. She mentioned there were no action items for the day. Hector Massari, representing DSS in place of Fatmata Williams, reported that there are no updates from DSS at this time.

### Behavioral Health and NEMT Updates

Hector was asked about updates from the Federal administration regarding behavioral health. Hector shared that there were no updates and the process remained the same. Janine Sullivan-Wiley inquired about the status of the RFP for NEMT, to which Yvonne responded that they were still working on the process and had not made any public announcements. Yvonne also mentioned that they had executed an amendment for a 6-month extension with MTM. Kelly Phenix asked about the increase in funding for MTM, to which Yvonne promised to provide more information.

### RFP Process and Substance Use Updates

Terri asked Yvonne to report back on the RFP process. Sabrina Trocchi inquired about the number of applicants, to which Yvonne responded that she would need to check but there were more than one. Janine asked about the RFP closing date, to which Yvonne confirmed it was closed. Rob Haswell (DMHAS) then shared updates on the 1115 substance use disorder demonstration, highlighting the addition of 20 new residential substance use treatment beds and the ongoing interest from providers.

## Phase 4 Progress and Training Updates

Rob discussed the progress of phase 4 and the continuation of monthly webinars. He also announced a two-day in-person training for emergency room and inpatient personnel at Abh's headquarters. Terri asked about the goal of training EDs and the status of bed capacity, to which Rob explained that they are still down 65 beds but trending in the right direction. He also mentioned that they are engaging providers to increase capacity. Lastly, Rob addressed the potential cuts to their block grants, stating that the situation is still fluid and they are working closely with the Governor's office.

Rob reported that hospital providers who are interested in sending personnel to the June in-person ASAM Training at ABH can reach out directly to ABH at [1115Waiver@abhct.com](mailto:1115Waiver@abhct.com) or DMHAS' 1115 Project Lead Shea Mitlehner at [Shea.Mitlehner@ct.gov](mailto:Shea.Mitlehner@ct.gov).

## DCF Autism Initiative Request

Lois Berkowitz from DCF discussed the department's request for qualifications (RFG) to strengthen practices for children with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities. The contractor will help design a statewide framework, identify community partners, establish collaborations, and propose data-informed strategies. The award will be through a personal service agreement and the RFG will close on May 27th. Alice asked for clarification on whether the initiative is for children with both autism and intellectual disabilities, to which Lois responded that she would check. Janine inquired about the integration of this program with other autism initiatives through DSS, to which Lois promised to bring the question back.

## Court Support Services Division Updates and CT Dept Of Education

Brian Delude provided updates from the Court Support Services Division Provider meeting.

Bryan Klimkiewicz announced that Catherine Matz has joined as the new bureau chief overseeing special education programs and supports. Bryan shared information about upcoming events and resources related to youth suicide prevention, school climate, mental health support grants, and social-emotional learning. He also mentions positive feedback on the Devereaux Student Strength Assessment tool being used in schools. Bryan offered to provide more details via email on these topics. (See attachment below).



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## Upcoming Presentations and Medicaid Reimbursement Challenges

In the meeting, Steve Girelli discussed the recent presentations on school-based services and the upcoming presentations on provider perspectives for the Child/Adolescent Quality, Access & Policy Committee. He also mentioned the challenges related to Medicaid reimbursement. For the Adult Quality, Access & Policy Committee, Sabrina and Kelly discussed the upcoming meeting on May 13th, where Carelon will present on Connecticut's adult behavioral health outpatient system of care. They also plan to invite community behavioral health providers to discuss their perspectives on outpatient access and capacity issues.

## Behavioral Health Funding Challenges Discussed

The council discussed ongoing challenges in the behavioral health sector, including funding uncertainties, federal cuts, and their ripple effects on providers and services. Alice Forrester suggested creating a repository to track grant cuts affecting behavioral health services. Members express concern about the interconnected nature of issues like housing insecurity, food scarcity, and mental health needs. The meeting concludes with updates on upcoming community meetings and conferences related to health programs and the 988 Lifeline initiative.