

October 14, 2026 Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council (BHPOC) Zoom Meeting

Quick recap

The Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council meeting focused on updates regarding the transition of Solnit Children's Center's hospital program to John Dempsey Hospital of UConn Health. Dr. Frank Gregory provided a detailed presentation on the operational changes, staffing challenges, facility improvements, and program enhancements, including the adoption of the ARC trauma-informed care model and the implementation of new crisis intervention training. The meeting also addressed questions about security measures, staff training, and discharge planning. Additionally, the council voted to change its meeting cadence from monthly to every other month starting in 2027. Various agency representatives, including those from DDS, DMHAS, DCF, and CSSD, provided brief updates on their respective activities and upcoming initiatives. Committee reports were shared, and the CFAC highlighted recent community events and upcoming meetings.

Next steps

David Kaplan

- Finalize the 2027 meeting schedule for the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council and distribute it to membership by the 1st of the year.

Frank Gregory

- Follow up with the group regarding the question on concurrent steps being taken to improve throughput and discharge at Solnit, specifically regarding bed and service capacity needs.

Karen Roman (CSSD)

- Release the Adult Behavioral Health RFP, hopefully within the next couple of weeks.

Rob Haswell

- Provide additional information on the military support program to David so it can be included in the meeting minutes.

Summary

Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council

David Kaplan announced that Spanish translation services would be available by Carlos Blanco through a globe icon in the bottom of the screen. Sabrina Trocchi Co-Chaired the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council meeting in place of Janine Sullivan-Wiley, with Representative Demicco as the other Co-Chair. The meeting proceeded with Sabrina announcing they would move some agenda items, including action items, and begin with the Dempsey Solnit presentation.

Solnit Center Transition Update

Dr. Frank Gregory from DCF provided an update on the transition of Solnit Children's Center to John Dempsey Hospital of UConn Health, which occurred six months prior. He outlined key areas of focus including staffing improvements with new nursing and children's services positions, facility upgrades for safety and ligature risk reduction, and program enhancements using the ARC trauma-informed framework. The facility currently serves 24 youth with an

average length of stay of six months, and approximately 60% of patients are discharged to home or PRTF settings.

Solnit Hospital Youth Admissions Discussion

Dr. Gregory discussed Solnit ability to admit youth with IDD and autism spectrum disorders, explaining that while the hospital accepts such patients, admissions are rare and typically occur when specialized needs cannot be met in the current setting. He described the facility's integration with UConn Health, noting that UConn Health staffs, runs, and operates the hospital, with daily morning meetings between leadership teams to discuss operations, safety concerns, and personnel matters. When asked about the dual reporting structure, Frank explained that DCF staff work under UConn's direction and implement their care guidelines and standards.

Crisis Intervention Model Implementation

Frank explained that security staff at the facility function as support staff rather than law enforcement, wearing polo shirts and taking direction from nursing staff to help maintain safety. He discussed the implementation of a restraint chair as part of a new crisis intervention model, noting that it will be used as a tool only when necessary and as part of ongoing restraint reduction efforts. Frank also mentioned that the facility is adopting CPI's crisis intervention model, with about 15 staff members trained as trainers who will teach the rest of the staff over the coming months.

Solnit-UConn Health Merger Update

Rodney Alexander, a councilman from Willimantic, Connecticut, asked about the timeline for the merger between Solnit and UConn Health. Frank clarified that the merger had already occurred, with UConn Health granted a license to operate the hospital by DPH, though full integration details including employment and benefits are still being worked out. Kelly Phenix raised concerns about high workers' compensation rates affecting staffing and potential burnout, to which Frank responded that they are implementing a multifaceted approach including hiring additional staff and enhancing community relationships to create a better environment of care. Maureen Oneill Davis inquired about additional training models for support staff around child welfare competency, particularly for youth with disrupted attachment histories.

ARC Model Partnership Implementation Plan

Frank explained the partnership with ARC model developers to address staff and youth issues, emphasizing the model's focus on attachment-based regulation and competency development. The implementation will include a two-year plan involving site assessment, staff training, and ongoing coaching across all units, including security and overnight staff. When asked about improving throughput and discharge at Solnit, Sarah Eagan highlighted concerns about youth getting stuck there and requested information on barriers to discharge and needed service/bed capacity, but Frank did not provide a complete answer due to time constraints.

Out-of-Home Care Reduction Discussions

Frank discussed ongoing discussions about the reduction in out-of-home care availability and the challenges in serving vulnerable children, particularly those with intellectual disabilities or on the autism spectrum. He acknowledged that some children at Solnit stay longer than necessary because the system has not adapted to meet their needs elsewhere. Sarah noted that these conversations need to crystallize into concrete recommendations for budget writers during the upcoming policy and budget year, particularly regarding therapeutic foster care and wraparound supports. Frank also mentioned that CPI training process is underway and will be completed within 90 days.

UConn Hospital Partnership Oversight

Frank discussed UConn's involvement in the hospital, including their on-site presence and plans for a UConn employee to serve as the next director. He mentioned that transitioning to an electronic health record system would likely take about a year due to infrastructure limitations. The group then considered changing the meeting cadence of the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council Executive Committee from monthly to every other month, with Kelly Phenix suggesting maintaining monthly meetings for the Medicaid Assistance Partnership Oversight Council to ensure consistent oversight of the HUSKY population.

Meeting Schedule and Updates

The meeting focused on establishing a meeting schedule. The group agreed to meet every other month starting in 2027, with David Kaplan confirming the executive committee would finalize and distribute the 2027 calendar by early next year. Agency representatives provided updates, with Tammy Venenga from DDS reporting no new updates, Fatmata Williams from DSS discussing ongoing community engagement work and upcoming HR-1 implementation, and Rob Haswell from DMHAS announcing the DEA's national prescription take-back event and updates on SUD facility certifications.

SCD Provider Quarterly Collaborative Meeting

Rob Haswell announced that Advanced Behavioral Health will provide an overview of a process at the upcoming SCD Provider Quarterly Collaborative Meeting on October 22nd. He also reminded the group about the military support program, which provides free behavioral health services to Connecticut's veterans and their families through partnerships with the Connecticut National Guard and Department of Veteran Affairs. Sabrina Trocchi provided updates from the Adult QAP Committee and Hector Glynn, Co-Chair of the Child Adolescent Quality Access and Policy Committee provided an update of the last meeting featuring presentations on school-based initiatives and EPSDT lawsuit outcomes. Neva Caldwell, BHP CFAC gave an update on their annual conference and upcoming community meetings.

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We are pleased to announce a series of **complimentary professional learning opportunities** designed to equip teachers, student support staff, mental health providers, school leaders, and district administrators with systemic, evidence-based strategies. These sessions focus on advancing **Positive School Discipline** and strengthening the **Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral (MTSS-SEB)**.

In today's educational landscape, fostering a supportive, inclusive, and predictable learning environment is critical. This comprehensive professional development series offers actionable frameworks to reduce exclusionary discipline, promote prosocial behaviors, and optimize student well-being.

Fall Session

To register for these and other CSDE/SERC events, please reference the appropriate activity code and visit: <https://ctserc.org/events>

INTRODUCTION TO RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

- These overview sessions offer participants the opportunity to understand Restorative Practices as key components of building a class-wide and school-wide sense of community.
- Participants will explore core principles, examine an overview of the continuum of approaches, and review the practical skills necessary to introduce proactive and preventative strategies in their classrooms.

MTSS FOR BEHAVIOR

- **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)** is a comprehensive framework that provides a continuum of academic, social-emotional, and behavioral supports to improve student outcomes and reduce exclusionary discipline practices.
- In this school-based team training series, cross-functional teams will explore the essential **Tier 1 features** needed to build an effective, efficient, and sustainable system for school-wide positive behavioral support.

DEVELOPING SECONDARY SYSTEMS OF SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

- This training is designed to support a cohort of districts and schools in strengthening school-wide and classroom systems of support.
- Participants will develop the essential steps for Tier 2 implementation, including the use of implementation tools and resources; team composition and operating procedures; screening, data-based decision-making, and intervention selection; professional development; progress monitoring; evaluation; and fidelity data.

MTSS LEADERSHIP SESSIONS

- These sessions are designed to build the capacity of school and district leaders to strengthen and expand systems of support through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.

- Participants will learn how to align MTSS implementation with leadership standards while selecting, integrating, and sustaining evidence-based academic, behavioral, and social-emotional practices that improve outcomes for all students.

October 23 (next Thursday) from 9:00 - 10:30 we have our next Student Support Series webinar

Partnering with Families to Support Student Mental Health

Families and schools both play a critical role in supporting the mental health of children and adolescents. School mental health professionals are well positioned to strengthen this partnership by engaging families in ways that promote youth mental health and respond to the individual needs of students. In this interactive session, Dr. Barbara Boone and Dr. Hadley Bachman from the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center will share what research shows us about the importance of positive childhood experiences in buffering the effects of trauma. Together, participants will then explore a range of research-based ideas that educators can use to foster these experiences and engage families in support of student mental health.

[Student Support Series Tickets, Thursday, September 17, 2026-Wednesday, June 30, 2027 • 9 AM-10:30...](#)

There is still room available for anyone who wants to join, but I recommend doing so soon. Last month we reached capacity with 1,000 registrants and I expect we'll reach that again this month