

State Mental Health Planning Council

October 9, 2025

42 Attendees

1. Anna Cady Clouse welcomed attendees and provided Announcements.

- Danna Mauch, former SMHPC Adult chair, acknowledged and thanked the subcommittee as her term has ended; and is also looking forward to continuing work with the Council
- David Tringali shared that update that the Block Grant application was submitted to SAMHSA on August 28th. As of September 30th, DMH is awaiting SAMHSA to receive checklist to review as of September 30th.
- Bobbi Spofford shared that survey will be sent after the meeting to gauge for potential topics for future SMHPC meetings. Please share with those who are interested. Here is the link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SMHPCSurvey2025>

2. Dr. Jeanie Tietjen presented to subcommittee members on the Impact of Trauma and Adversity on Learning in Higher Education.

- Highlighted comments from the presentation:
 - Trauma-informed education: Students with mental health struggles are twice as likely to drop out due to unaddressed trauma.
 - The role of trauma, adversity, and violence in affecting academic resilience
 - The importance of understanding trauma beyond the clinical definitions
 - Trauma is not only stress, but rather overwhelms a person's ability to cope
 - Trauma is a social and political phenomena
 - Systemic issues such as poverty and racism can intensify trauma
 - Students entering community colleges have a higher adverse life experience than those in four-year institutions.
 - 51.5% of community college students reported household mental illness
 - 32.8% experienced household substance misuse
 - About 20% experienced some form of sexual abuse
 - 48% reported housing insecurity
 - 14% experienced homelessness
 - Emphasizing a pedagogical shift in approach: college ready to student ready model environments

- Creating predictable, safe classroom environments to meet students where they are
- Addressing trauma through collaborative policies
- Focusing on building academic resilience in said environments
- Recommendations include developing trauma informed campus practices, creating supportive environments that encourage academic rigor, Resilience as lifelong skill and practice, and implementing neurobiological findings in higher education
- Highlighted challenge: underpaid faculty especially in non-white communities, and continuing spreading awareness of the transformative value of community college.

3. Subcommittee members received report on SYAC activities.

- Colby Mills, Micah Webster, and Anna Cady Clouse shared the following items:
 - SYAC's mission is to advocate for youth perspective (ages 16-30) in mental health services
 - Discussed key advocacy priorities such as: Service awareness and accessibility, Reducing mental health stigma, and Supporting peer support workforce.
 - Discussed key focus areas such as: Increasing awareness of available mental health resources, Reducing stigma around mental health, advocating for better integration of mental health supports in schools, and Creating safe, non-stigmatizing places for young adults.
 - Provided an overview of advocacy efforts:
 - Monthly listening sessions
 - In-Person Youth Advocacy Day
 - Targeted outreach to department-wide (DPH BSAS, DMH), and community partners
 - Workgroups that focus on subtopics such as transportation & resource collection
 - Presented urgent issue regarding the DMH Rental Subsidy Program voucher cuts that is in limbo as July 2025
 - Shared personal narratives from young adults at risk of housing instability and who would benefit from this program
 - Called for transparency and alternative housing solutions

4. Subcommittee members received the Commissioner's Report.

- Crystal Collier, Chief of Staff, provided the following updates:
 - Updated DMH total budget for FY26: ~1.312 billion
 - This is over \$37 million over initial gov't budget

- Initial plans of reductions in force and programs have been restored. This would include the following: IRTP (Intensive Residential Treatment Program), CRT (Clinically Intensive Residential Treatment), Flexible supports, and Funding for PACT-Y, and Cape & Island plus Pocasset programs
- Discussed new case management model with three new components:
 - 1) Open Access, 2) Critical Needs Assessment, and 3) Extended Enrollment
- Anticipated tighter budget in FY27: Process of assessing details of what that might look like are occurring now

5. Subcommittee members reviewed Behavioral Health Helpline Metrics.

- Highlights from the update from Mio Tamanaha from Year 3 January-June 2025 were the following:
- Total completed calls : 17,533 calls
- Text to chat interactions: 4,648
- Average call time this year: 28.5 minutes versus 30.2 minutes in 2024
- 87% of all reported Calls were answered within 15 seconds vs 70% in 2024
- Shared more robust gender data
- New Operational update that includes provider-focused workflow, follow-up texts, and IVR notifications (helps with determine caller's queue in phoneline)
- Increased use of interpretation services for BHHL with Spanish (810 calls) , Haitian Creole (185 calls) , and Portuguese (200 calls)
- Please note that The BHHL offers interpretation services in 200+ languages
- There is an ongoing partnership with 911 in the continued success of transferring non-emergency behavioral health calls to the BHHL.
- Raising public awareness campaigns with a focus on healthcare providers
- Improved BHHL resource directory with over 7.5k listing with accuracy checks.

6. Other Items

- SMHPC chairs were not able to report on the respective committee. Subcommittees will report out during the January 2026 meeting.

Please note there was survey that was sent via email post call to complete. Please be on the lookout on that email from Bobbi. Alternatively, here is the link to complete:

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The meeting was adjourned. Next meeting: early January 2026