



**Behavioral Health Services Advisory Council**

**April 26, 2023**

**Held at OMH locations in Albany, NYC, and Syracuse**

**BHSAC Minutes**

**Members Attending:**

Glenn Liebman, Chair  
David Woodlock  
Roxanne Lewin  
Joe Turner  
Kathy Gardini  
Sabina Lim  
Chacku Mathai  
Warren Ng

Debra Pantin  
Kerry Whelan-Megley  
Patrick Seche  
John Kastan  
Michael Orth  
Hilda Rosario Escher  
Laura Kelemen

**Received Notification Not Able to Attend:**

Ian Shaffer  
Connie Wille  
Diane Blohm  
Donna Mae DePalo  
Michael Martin  
Robert Russell  
Angelica Paige

**No Notification Received: Not Able to Attend**

Brianna Gower  
Carlee Hulsizer

**Meeting notes:**

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 1, of the Council's bylaws, the Project Review Committee, Treatment Equity Committee and the Regulations Committee acted on behalf of the Full Council at the April 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Agency Updates from OASAS Commissioner Chinazo Cunningham**

OASAS Commissioner provided the members with an update on the Opioid Settlement Funds indicating the Board's recommendations and the funds that have been made available as of 04/01/23 as well as the \$64 million through the Regional Abatement to all counties/localities except NYC and Long Island per the Settlement Agreement. The commissioner provided updates on the harm reduction efforts speaking on outreach and engagement; expanding and reducing

barriers for medication treatment; and expanding supplies of naloxone and fentanyl test strips. Commissioner Cunningham let the members know also the updates with the Office of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI): JEDI has done an agency assessment; sent out a Language Access LSB requiring providers to submit a Language Access Plan; have updated terminology regarding collection of data on sexual orientation and gender identity, also working to update the LGBTQ+LSB; and indicated the BHSAC Committee for Treatment Equity has held four meetings to date. She discussed the Integrated Services the agency has such as the BHSAC; Inter-Office Coordinating Council (IOCC) and the Opioid Settlement Advisory Board (OSFAB) and identified the many integrated services initiatives and funding initiatives. Members were sent the PowerPoint the Commissioner presented.

### **Agency Updates from OMH Commissioner Ann Sullivan**

OMH Commissioner provided the members with an update on transforming the NYC Mental Health System through a comprehensive continuum of care focused on prevention; expanding access for all; and intensive services for those with challenging mental health issues. Commissioner Sullivan provided updates on the Executive Budget as it relates to prevention services; community access, highest need individuals; services for complex needs; and workforce development. She discussed the identified specific goals of OMH and spoke of the 2023 Community Engagement Sessions they have done and the themes: Ongoing voice of stakeholders is critical; workforce with retention and recruitment; community with service awareness, social determinants, peer services, 988, prevention and easy access to services; school-aged children; intensive services; housing/inpatient feedback; diversity and integrated services; peer involvement and insurance. Commissioner Sullivan provided an update on the future directions of children and youth with promoting mental wellbeing of children and families across New York; community-based collaborative care and building systems infrastructure. She then discussed the array of community mental health services and the initiatives in each service system. Members were sent the PowerPoint the Commissioner presented.

### **Treatment Equity Committee**

Connie Burke, Associate Commissioner of the Division of Data Management, Research and Planning provided the Committee Members with a Data presentation responding to their request for information on: Identify the racially and ethnically diverse regions according to the definition in the statute; people receiving services in the OASAS system compared to local demographics; non-unique served by race/ethnicity, county; overlap OTP locations with the overdose prevalence data, and the Administrative discharge by race/ethnicity. The Committee discussed having the providers trained addressing barriers and surveying the field how they are addressing equity, as well as the co-occurring disorders intersection. Carmelita Cruz indicated OMH has done a survey to the field and OASAS has an external consultant surveying the agency staff, as well as growing the JEDI office with staff to engage in more opportunities. Carmelita then provided the Committee with next steps indicating the Committee will be reviewing the Annual Report due in June and finalizing the recommendations.

### **Regulations Committee:**

**OASAS Regulations: None discussed.**

### **OMH Regulations:**

\*There was no quorum for Regulations Committee at the June 28, 2023, BHSAC meeting. Therefore, these meeting minutes could not be voted on and approved. Such will occur at the next scheduled meeting providing a quorum is present.

### **Project Review Committee:**

#### **OASAS Projects:**

**2022.093 – A.R.E.B.A Casriel, Inc. d/b/a Addiction Care Interventions (ACI)** requested OASAS approval for a change in ownership. ACI currently operates three OASAS certified programs which are in good standing with OASAS. Current ownership consists of Aaron Wolcowitz and Joel Zupnick, each holding 45% of the shares, and Hawa Jalloh holding 10% of the shares. Ownership composition will change to Aaron Wolcowitz and Joel Zupnick each holding 40% of the shares and Hawa Jalloh holding 10% of the shares. Yuliya Vaynrub, a LCSW-R, will obtain 10% of the shares. Yuliya Vaynrub is a mental health professional with years of experience in the field. Her addition to the governing body will bring expertise in treating individuals with co-occurring disorders. Hawa Jalloh has the OASAS required substance use disorder (SUD) experience. New York City Brooklyn Community Board #16 and Manhattan Community Board #4 acknowledged notification of the change in ownership. The NYC LGU and OASAS recommended approval of this application. The Project Review Committee unanimously recommended approval and voted and acted on behalf of the Full Committee which did not have a full quorum.

**2022.083- Ocean Recovery East, LLC d/b/a Ascendant New York** requested OASAS approval for a change in ownership. Ascendant currently operates three OASAS certified programs, two of which are in good standing with OASAS. The Providers outpatient services is in conditional status due to low scores in fiscal viability as well as patient case records. Current ownership consists of Paul Schwartz holding 51% of shares, Kathleen Tunney holding 17% of shares, John Crepsac holding 15% of shares and Kevin Cullen holding 17% of shares. New ownership will be 66% Paul Schwartz, 33% Tzvi Heber, and 1% Shari Noonan. Tzvi Heber is the current CEO has demonstrated that he meets the required SUD experience. Shari Noonan is the current Chief Compliance Officer. The NYC community Board #8 acknowledged notification of this change. The NYC LGU and OASAS recommended approval of this application with one contingency: The outpatient program shall come into compliance and in good standing prior to the issuance of approval. The Project Review Committee recommended approval and voted and acted on behalf of the Full Committee which did not have a full quorum. Sabina Lim and Kathy Gardini abstained.

**2022.094– Fusion Recovery Centers, LLC** requested OASAS approval to become a new OASAS Provider of Part 822 Outpatient Treatment services located at 444 Broadway Menands, NY 12204. Services will include group and individual counseling utilizing tools such as motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, and dialectical behavioral therapy. Client education will be focused on linkage with self-help services including Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Smart Recovery. Fusion will also offer the

support of Certified Recovery Peer Advocates to assist clients in their recovery goals. Additional services include psychiatric evaluations with medication management and medication assisted treatment. Fusion's hours of operation will be Monday through Friday 8am to 9pm and Saturday 8am to 12pm. Fusion Recovery Centers was established as a Domestic Limited Liability Company on 12/15/2021 with three members Shlomo Weiss, Adina Garber, and Mitchell Baumann who is the President and a founding partner of Fusion Recovery Centers. Mr. Baumann has demonstrated to have the substance use disorder experience as required by OASAS. Mitchell has worked in the addiction field since 2007 and has established several SUD programs in several states including Florida, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Mr. Baumann also has 10% ownership stake in Windham Falls Recovery, LLC d/b/a BriteLife Recovery at Lexington, another new OASAS provider with an application that received contingent approval in July of 2020. The Albany County LGU and OASAS recommended approval with the following contingencies: Verification of the hiring of sufficient staff to meet regulatory requirements, and Copy of filing receipt from the NYS Department of State indicating that the amended Certificate of Incorporation including the OASAS required language, has been filed. One community member spoke in opposition of this project citing claims of not notifying the community of the proposed action. Committee members had no follow up questions and the Project Review Committee unanimously recommended approval and voted and acted on behalf of the Full Committee which did not have a full quorum.

**2022.075- Success Counseling Services, Inc.** requested (OASAS) approval for a Change in Ownership. Success currently operates one OASAS certified program which is in good standing. This request will remove Larry Fruit from the ownership structure, transferring his ten percent to existing owner, Yehoshua (Josh) Greenfeld. Upon the approval of Success Counseling's request for change of ownership, the ownership structure, with the corresponding shares of company stock in parenthesis, will be: Josh Greenfeld (34%), Marvin Rubin (24%), Joel Landau (24%), & Zvi Klein (18%). No new members are joining the company. Josh is the current CEO and has demonstrated meeting the required experience in SUD services. The NYC community Board #4 acknowledged notification of this change. The NYC LGU and OASAS recommended approval of this application. The Project Review Committee unanimously recommended approval and voted and acted on behalf of the Full Committee which did not have a full quorum.

**2022.084- Urban Recovery House, LLC** requested OASAS approval for a change in ownership. This application is to remove Herman Johan Sorensen from the current ownership structure, add additional owners and redistribute the shares. With this Change of Ownership application, Calvin Nathan will remain and will add eight additional owners; they are Joel Basch, Yosef Rabinowitz, Eliezer Scheiner, David Levitan, Daniel Turkel, Isaac Greenfeld, Teddy Lichtenstein, and Steven Berger. Joel Basch holds the required experience in SUD services. The NYC community Board #6 acknowledged notification of this change. The NYC LGU and OASAS recommended approval of this application. The Project Review Committee unanimously recommended approval and voted and acted on behalf of the Full Committee which did not have a full quorum.

#### **OMH Projects:**

**CPAR #122 – Rising Ground, Inc. – Change of Sponsor**

Rising Ground, Inc. requests approval to assume sponsorship of the CMHRS and MHOTRS programs operated by Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services, Inc. Founded in 1831 as the Leake and Watts Orphan House, Rising Ground has over 190 years of serving the communities throughout New York City and its surrounding suburbs, including early childhood centers and schools in Yonkers, and a Residential Treatment Center for youth in foster care with mental health needs, as well as a learning center in Manhattan for preschoolers with Autism. When Sheltering Arms realized that the agency would need to close its doors, they reached out to Rising Ground to ensure a smooth transition for their service recipients and staff. Rising Ground will assume operations of the CMHRS program, MHOTRS program and its 6 satellites currently operated by Sheltering Arms. The target date for full transition is June 1, 2023, and Rising Ground intends to employ Sheltering Arms staff members who wish to transfer, to maintain continuity of care for recipients.

Reviewers are recommending approval with the following conditions:

- Ensure Articles of Incorporation include OMH operator language, finalize a plan to recruit board members with experience operating mental health services programs.
- Designate staff to complete OMH required pre-employment checks.
- All transition related items including but not limited to ensuring all individuals are connected to care, notification of family, providers of services, schools, etc.

Committee members asked about the change in sponsorship, and the reason for the programs to be transferred. The provider, Sheltering Arms, was present to answer and stated that it was an agency issue, and that Sheltering Arms would cease to operate. Members also inquired about Rising Grounds experience in operating Mental Health programs. The provider explained they had previously operated an Article 31 clinic program in the early 2000s for about five years. They currently operate a CFTSS program through their Article 29i clinic. Additionally, the provider indicated that staff will be transitioning from Sheltering Arms to Rising Ground and they will be using their EMR. They are also working to obtain staff to provide peer support services. The committee chair moved for a vote, this was seconded, and the vote had one abstention, the rest of the membership voted to approve.

**MH-E-2880 – The Safe Center LI, Inc. – Establish New – Mental Health Outpatient Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (MHOTRS)**

The Safe Center LI, Inc. (TSCLI) is requesting approval to establish a MHOTRS program to serve Children, Adolescents, and Adults in Nassau County. TSCLI serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and human trafficking. They are the only organization on Long Island that provides free, comprehensive, trauma-informed care that include, among other services: 24-hour hotline; crisis intervention; forensic interviews; legal advocacy; and safe emergency housing. As the primary, and often sole provider of services for victims and survivors of interpersonal violence, TSCLI has historically relied on partner mental health providers to address the demand for these services. TSLCI's MHOTRS program will help ensure barriers to getting care are removed and services maintained for individuals receiving services.

Reviewers are recommending approval with the following conditions:

- Provide a plan to ensure individuals without the history of interpersonal violence receive timely and appropriate assessment.
- Indicate timeframes for re-engagement efforts prior to discharge.
- Address the administrative expenses which exceeds 15% of total expenses.
- Designate staff to complete the OMH required pre-employment checks.
- Complete a preoccupancy visit.

Committee members asked about how they receive referrals for their services. The agency representatives stated they have relationships with the community's fire and police departments and have established a level of confidence with these entities to establish a positive working relationship. They also asked TSCLI about working with offenders, to which the agency responded that their funding does not allow for them to work with this population, but they do work with local providers that can serve this population. They do work with low-risk minors and are looking to expand these services. Being able to work with insurance companies will better enable them to develop these services. Additionally, the committee noted that the staff salaries appeared low for the area. The agency is also looking to expand their Peer Service initiatives, which would include having a survivor voice in the services they provide. These services are not currently provided, but they are looking to build them in the future and having the license would help in this development. They also discussed the value of the services in the community, and that they add structural support for recipients. They also stated they will work, with OMH's guidance, to integrate their current services with the new MHOTRS program. The committee chair made a motion to vote, this was seconded, the vote had two abstentions, the rest of the membership voted to approve.

**CPAR #97 – Heart and Soul Services, Inc. – Establish New – Children's Mental Health Rehabilitative Service (CMHRS)**

Heart and Soul Services, Inc. requests approval to establish a CMHRS program to serve the communities of Kings County, in particular Borough Park. While the primary target population is members of the Orthodox Jewish community, services will be available to all residents of Kings County. Heart and Soul will employ staff with diverse language backgrounds and will contract with Language Line Solutions, a language service that specializes in behavioral health care. Evidence-based practices will be routinely employed, including but not limited to Motivational Interviewing, Behavioral Parent Training, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Trauma Informed Care. Heart and Soul was established in 2017 to help and support children with disabilities, originally, in the Hasidic/Orthodox Jewish Communities of Kings County. It is currently certified by OPWDD to provide Article 16 services, such as Community Habilitation, Day Habilitation, Family Education and Training, etc. Heart and Soul's internal survey has identified more than 200 children on waitlists at CFTSS programs in Kings County. It will begin providing services up to 80 children and grow its caseload to approximately 200 over time.

Reviewers are recommending approval with the following conditions:

- Confirm understanding of the incident management and reporting system and NIMRS enrollment.
- Designate staff to complete OMH required pre-employment checks.
- Complete a preoccupancy visit.

Committee member asked about the population to be served and whether it included those with a co-occurring diagnosis (developmental disability and mental health), to which the provider responded that they do not provide services to the DD population. The proposed program was developed in a response to family members of those receiving OPWDD services seeking support. This led to asking about the internal survey of the 200 individuals on wait lists, and if it was due to a workforce shortage or programming shortage. The agency representatives explained that the list came from two programs operated by other providers and that they have repeatedly been approached by community members to establish more services, particularly mental health services in schools. They further explained that the schools are not public schools, and their budgets are much smaller. This lack of room in the budget prevents the schools from providing these services. Agency representatives confirmed that the program will be open to the community and that they will monitor activity. They confirmed they support, and plan to make, training available for peer support and peer certification to the program. Also, they are looking to hire bi-lingual staff to better provide culturally appropriate services. The committee chair moved for a vote, this was seconded, and the vote was unanimous to approve.

**MH-C-2884 – Community Awareness Network for a Drugfree Life and Environment, Inc. (CANDLE) – Establish New – Mental Health Outpatient Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (MHOTRS) program**

CANDLE requests approval to establish an Article 31 MHOTRS program in Rockland County to serve children, adolescents and adults ranging from ages 4-21. CANDLE is a non-profit agency established in 1982 with the mission of preventing alcohol and substance use by children and adolescents. Through short-term and group counseling, specialized support for LGBTQ+ youth, substance use awareness campaigns, and school based social emotional learning programs, CANDLE aims to minimize the factors that lead to substance use and misuse. The proposed MHOTRS program will provide support to their currently existing Prevention and Youth Pride departments as well as to the surrounding community. CANDLE will offer services in Spanish and Haitian Creole and provide specialized services to all youth impacted by substance use, enabling them to provide a wholistic approach when serving Rockland County's youth.

Reviewers are recommending approval with the following conditions:

- Provide MOU or linkage agreement with referral sources,
- Provide a plan for safe storage of injectable medications,
- Submit a plan for serving minors without parental consent or unaccompanied minors,
- Provide more detailed after-hours crisis procedure,
- Confirm the agency has authorized person(s) to complete required pre-employment checks, submit a Certificate of Occupancy, and complete a preoccupancy visit.

Committee members inquired about more detail regarding the agency working towards providing integrated services with their existing substance use programs. CANDLE representatives did speak to working on this in the future. They also stated their goal to work with youth to explore what is behind their "need" for substance use since behavioral health issues are generally the root cause for recipients using substances. The committee chair moved for a vote, this was seconded, and the vote was unanimous approve.

**CPAR #116 – One Brooklyn Health System, Inc. – Capital Project – Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP)**

One Brooklyn Health System (OBHS) requests approval for a renovation of Brookdale Hospital Medical Center’s Adult and Pediatric CPEP. The proposed capital project to expand the CPEP to provide better quality of services and meet the growing patient population is being completed through the DOH’s Health Care Facilities Transformation grant.

The project requests relocating and renovating both their Adult and Pediatric CPEPs, while adding 1 Pediatric EOB and thereby increasing their EOB capacity from 6 to 7. The expansion and relocation will result in additional patient space to have a dedicated exam, intake, seclusion, and activity room, secured pantry, secure holding rooms, observation bays, and new toilets and showers.

The proposed completion date for the project is May 2024.

Reviewers are recommending approval with the following conditions:

- Obtain DOH approval of corresponding CON application.
- Complete a successful pre-occupancy visit.
- Submit a Certificate of Occupancy and the Architect’s letter of Substantial Completion.

Committee members asked for more detail on the physical layout of the renovation, including how the children’s and adult CPEPs will be separated. The agency representatives confirmed that there will be two (2) floors separating each program. The committee chair moved for a vote, this was seconded, and the vote was unanimous to recommend approval to the full council.

**CPAR #106 – Rego Park Counseling LLC – Establish New – Mental Health Outpatient Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (MHOTRS)**

Rego Park Counseling, LLC d/b/a Rego Park Mental Health requests approval to establish a MHOTRS program for adults that will provide integrated care in the Rego Park and Forest Hills area of Queens County. Rego Park Counseling has an OASAS outpatient program which was established in 2020. An application for an Article 28 Diagnostic and Treatment Center was submitted to DOH and received contingent approval on June 2, 2022. One of the owners of Rego Park Counseling, Dr. Ulloa, has approximately 20 years of experience in family medicine and mental health, and worked as the supervisor of the psychiatric unit at the Westchester County Jail. Dr. Ulloa will provide oversight and supervision to the proposed MHOTRS program staff. Rego Park Counseling’s experience referring existing recipients with co-occurring mental health and substance use diagnosis indicated there were long wait times or inability to find a provider that will accept Medicaid. Additionally, the individuals seek out physicians to deal with underlying medical issues, such as pain, diabetes, hypertension, and find it difficult to obtain providers who can work around their therapy schedule. Rego Park Counseling Center intends to pursue Integrated Outpatient Services (IOS) license in the future.

Reviewers are recommending approval with the following conditions:

- Describe efforts being made to hire a permanent Medical Director with all necessary experience and qualifications.



- Describe how the proposed program will continue to evaluate the need for additional staff its caseload grows.
- Designate staff to complete OMH required pre-employment checks for staff.
- Complete the required clearances for the owners.
- Complete a pre-occupancy visit.

Committee members requested more information about the plan for integration, to which the agency representatives responded that they have submitted the integrated outpatient services (IOS) application for review by the OMH and OASAS. The provider also indicated that training for staff to provide integrated services will be provided so that each specialty had knowledge of the other to ensure a more holistic approach. The committee asked how they would address equity. The provider indicated they have a diverse staff. The committee chair moved for a vote, this was seconded, and the vote was unanimous to approve.

### **CPAR # 112 – Open Door Family Medical Center – Change of Sponsor**

Open Door Family Medical Center (ODFMC) requests approval for a Change of Sponsor of an Article 31 OMH licensed MHOTRS programs (2 main MHOTRS sites and 11 satellites) currently operated by Family Services of Westchester (FSW). ODFMC has been providing primary care services to the communities of Westchester and Putnam counties since 1972, and mental health services since the mid-1980s. The change of sponsor will offer the primary care and behavioral health integration to the residents of Westchester County and enable access to high quality medical care to individuals currently served in the A31 programs. ODFMC intends to retain the Executive Vice President of Clinical Services of FSW to ensure continuity and quality. FSW, under the new sponsorship, will continue to operate the CR and CMHRS programs.

Reviewers are recommending approval with the following conditions:

- Submit a plan to informed partnered schools of change of sponsor and update any written agreements with the schools accordingly.
- Provide ODFMC’s amended organizational documents.
- Complete required pre-employment clearances.

There was no discussion for this application. The committee chair moved for a vote, this was seconded, and the vote had 2 abstentions and the rest of the committee voted to approve.

### **CPAR # 119 – Rensselaer County Department of Mental Health – Capital Project – Mental Health Outpatient Treatment and Rehabilitative Services**

Rensselaer County Department of Mental Health requests approval for a capital project, for the renovation of the County Office building where the Unified Services MHOTRS program is located. While the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor where the MHOTRS program is located is undergoing renovation starting May 19, 2023, the program will be temporarily relocated to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the building. Renovation plans include complete demolition of the existing interior design, and reconstructing with greater efficiency to available space, rewiring, new phone and internet lines, ADA compliant space, updated HVAC, etc. Under the “Reimagine Rensselaer” plan, when completed,

the County Office building will become a hub for human services and the upgrades will improve efficiency and utilization of the space. The target date for completion is November 2023.

Reviewers are recommending approval with the following conditions:

- Complete a preoccupancy visit.
- Provide a copy of the architect's letter of substantial completion, and the Certificate of Occupancy.

There was no discussion for this application. The committee chair moved for a vote, this was seconded, and the vote was unanimous to approve.

**Closing:**

The Committees adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next meeting will be scheduled for June 28, 2023.