

**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MENTAL ILLNESS AND
THE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM**

MINUTES

**May 21, 2021
10:00 a.m.**

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS CONFERENCE ROOM
COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
105 PLEASANT STREET
CONCORD, NH
Held remotely by Zoom**

Participants:

Helen E. Hanks, Commissioner New Hampshire Department of Corrections, Chairperson
William Conway, Assistant Commissioner, New Hampshire Department of Corrections,
Lisa Madden, President, Riverbend Community Mental Health (guest public member)
Sara Perry, Masters Intern, University of New Hampshire (guest public member)
Representative Robert Lynn, Retired Chief Justice, NH Supreme Court
Tina Nadeau, Chief Justice, NH Superior Court
Henry Lipman, Director, NH Medicaid, DHHS
Cassy Hoyt, MLDAC, Sullivan County House of Corrections
Ken Norton, Executive Director of NAMI
Jennifer Sargent, Chairman, NH Adult Parole Board
Alex Casale, New Hampshire Statewide Drug Offender Program Coordinator
Sarah Blodgett, Executive Director, New Hampshire Judicial Council
Heather Moquin, Chief Executive Officer, New Hampshire Hospital
Emily Rice, Manchester City Solicitor
Juliann Carbin, Director of Mental Health Services, DHHS
Richelle Angeli, Administrative Assistant, Commissioner's Office

This Commission was formed to examine and make recommendations on issues facing individuals with mental illnesses in the corrections system. Executive Order 2019-02.

Commissioner Helen Hanks called the meeting to order at 10:02am.

- Meeting minutes for approval
 - 4/16/2021 (under review)-Commissioner Hanks is currently reviewing these minutes and they will be forwarded to the Commission members in advance of the next meeting.

1. **Welcome Assistant Commissioner Bill Conway**-The Commissioner introduced Bill Conway who is navigating through his full week four at the Department of Corrections. The Commissioner is very excited to have him and will have Mr. Conway facilitate the conversations here with the Commission in the Commissioner's absence in the future.

2. **American Rescue Plan Dollar Opportunities?**

Commissioner Helen Hanks-These dollars are dedicated to mental illness and the Commissioner discussed this with this creative group knowing that those who work in their independent roles will also work collaboratively on supportive projects that will help people that have mental health disorders that are also intersecting with the criminal justice system. How can the report and initiatives that this Commission has decided as relevant be included in these opportunities as they surface and create structure in the different forms that they are being discussed in? The Commissioner wanted to make the members aware so that all can keep this topic in the forefront as this is manufacturing itself pretty quickly. No comments were brought forth.

3. **Commission Member Updates**

- **Commissioner Helen Hanks**-The Commissioner acknowledged that most members have been prioritizing affirming finances over the last several weeks. She would like to go back to the last report to move the needle forward on the road map on diversion opportunities to see what opportunities exist after firm budgets are in place. The Commissioner asked Justice Nadeau if she could brief the group on the treatment strategies project in the mental health courts.
- **Justice Tina Nadeau**-Regarding the mental health standards, there was a mental health commission that the legislature created to study whether or not mental health courts should be expanded throughout the state. It was concluded that could not be determined until best practice standards are defined for mental health courts. Unfortunately, unlike drug courts, the national folks have not come up with national mental health court standards. There are a couple of states that are being looked at and the recommendation from that commission was that legislation was created to develop national mental health court standards. The legislature defeated the bill because there was a concern about a separation of power should the legislature be ordering the Supreme Court to come up with standards or not. They were assured that no matter what the outcome of the legislation, a group would come together to come up with mental health court standards. Alex Casale has an intern that is collecting information from across the country and meetings are ongoing with a skeleton outline of what these standards ought to look like. They are very similar to drug court. There are always questions surrounding whether this should be Superior Court mental health courts, should they be circuit courts, can they be both? How the state wide office should be organized and Justice Nadeau's view is that like other states, there is a centralized office. Alex Casale is the treatment coordinator and has

others working with him. Some that focus on mental health courts, some that focus on the drug court models and some that focus on veteran's courts. They are in the process of coming up with those standards and also looking at the other 16 mental health courts in the state, which operate a little differently. A standardized practice is needed regarding how the two courts deal with someone differently when someone comes to Superior Court for example and needs to be transferred to circuit court mental health court and vice versa. The emphasis is not to create uniformity for uniformity sake, but to produce better outcomes. Justice Nadeau will keep the group informed and defers to Alex Casale for input.

- **Alex Casale**-Alex informed the group that Shelly Golden from Grafton County oversees two or three mental health courts and is on the committee, Blair Rowlett, pre-trial and mental health coordinator in Strafford County, as well as Judge Ashley, the Deputy Administrative Judge in charge of the circuit courts and Jill O'Neil who works for the mental health center in Nashua. She supervises the coordinator for the mental health court program down in Nashua and she is also a clinician.

- **Ken Norton**-
 - Update on DOC mental health training-Mr. Norton explained that things are moving forward with the block grants and the Bureau of Mental Health Services that were procured and funded thanks to Julianne Carbin. The funds can now be moved over to the Department of Corrections. We are moving ahead with a variety of training over the next five months and that includes suicide prevention training, next week there is a trauma training for court personnel, crisis intervention training coming up that is generally for law enforcement, but it has also been utilized a lot nationally for corrections staff. That is a 40 hour training that is being scheduled now and some of those seats are for county corrections in addition to the Department of Corrections and also offered for a few folks from the National Guard as well.

 - **Tina Nadeau**-There was an offer to do some staff training for judges around trauma informed practices in the courtroom, which was very helpful and at the same time arrangements were made with Dr. Brian Meyer working for the VA out of Virginia. The training will not be the same as offered by NAMI, but the judges will be getting training from this nationally recognized expert on trauma competent courts in an effort to support people who are struggling with trauma.

 - **Sarah Blodgett**-Had a question whether any of the county jails have reached out to try to do some training for their staff or is this all happening at the state level?

 - **Ken Norton**- Ken Norton explained that the 40 hour CIT training is the one for the counties. Grants are covering the cost for the participants. The funding was for Department of Corrections staff, but that NAMI NH would try to open some seats for counties.

- **Cassy Hoyt**-Inquired as to whether the county training is the CIT training previously mentioned. She sought clarification on the trauma informed being for court personnel only.
 - **Ken Norton** explained that the 40 hour CIT training is the one for the counties. Grants are covering the cost for the participants.
- **Cassy Hoyt**-as a new member, Cassy enjoys observing and contributing, and does not have any updates at this time.
- **Robert Lynn**-SB 92-There was an effort that started in the Senate to amend the bail statute. There was a proposal that came out of the Senate that needed substantial work and it got to the House and there were substantial disagreements among the members of the House (they were of different parties). One of the main things that they didn't take into consideration was that the bill got past the Senate without any input or contact with the judiciary. The impacts from the bill could have had resource implications for the judiciary in particular, but also potentially for law enforcement and the Department of Corrections. Fortunately, input was offered and accepted at the last minute and people were willing to listen. It turns out the bill has been retained in the House, which Mr. Lynn feels is good for a number of reasons, including getting more input from various agencies to make it a better bill for next year.
 - **Tina Nadeau** feels as though the best investment that could ever be made for the state would be some sort of unified corrections data collection system because you cannot make informed change unless you know what the actual information is.
- **Lisa Madden**-is new to the group and is still waiting on her official membership status. Ms. Madden feels DHHS has done a great job in opening up some beds and congratulated Heather Moquin and her team for being able to do that. There has been a significant drop in the number of adults waiting and the pendulum has gone the other way whereas there has been an increase in the number of children now waiting for a higher level of care. They are trying to sort through that. The Supreme Court findings and the work that is being done to implement those rulings, as well as housing, is the biggest issue. Also of importance is expanding the ability in getting people back into the community so that acute care options are available to those in acute need. There is significant work in progress and good things are about to come. She is excited to learn more about the standards for mental health court and see what happens and she is impressed with the outcome of drug court and she looks forward to standardization of the mental health court as well.
- **Julianne Carbin**-Provided an update on 988 which is the federal requirement that would establish a uniform, national easy to remember behavioral health crisis and suicide prevention phone number that would be operational 24/7 which would help deploy local crisis teams. The associated coalition is working through subgroups which are digging into operations, finance modeling, strategic communication plans and volume projections so that the state is aware of these initiatives and services. Rural communities are a focus in an effort to identify how to partner with law

- enforcement, EMTs and have them work alongside trained mental health professionals to potentially divert people from entering the criminal justice system.
- **Heather Moquin**-DHHS has put forth incentives for discharging patients that are stable. Child admissions have ceased and the child unit has been converted into a 24 bed adult admission unit. Admissions have been so rapid this week and just yesterday 15 patients were admitted. The flow has been incredible and is faster than ever before. Ms. Moquin thanked their partners at Dartmouth for their ongoing work. NH Hospital is currently in compliance with the ruling. Everyone will be in the hospital within the 72 hours. The impact on corrections will be at the county level and they always have a number of referrals waiting to come that are boarding at the jails instead of the waiting rooms. There is a ton of activity, which will continue over the next weeks. They will continue to convert and add more beds. Merrimack County House of Corrections invited the hospital to join their project, which is a grant through the Department of Justice, in an effort to reduce recidivism for patients who are suffering from mental illness. Sharon O’Neil is currently working with Merrimack County House of Corrections on this project and she is making connections at Strafford County as well. Sharon is passionate about this work and they are trying to make more connections.
 - **Sarah Blodgett**-Referenced a re-entry navigator resource from the DC public defender office, about 900 pages long, which has some incredible tools for folks that have just been released into the community and it is getting rave reviews. Ms. Blodgett wondered if this is something that could be put on the commission’s long list as a helpful tool. Perhaps partnering with other stakeholders in NH that could come up with a strategy whereas people could have with them at all times while navigating through a very different world compared to when they left. Ms. Blodgett brought up a separate topic of the ICJJC meetings in which the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Sarah Blodgett and Judge Nadeau participate in. At their last meeting, issues to focus on in the upcoming year were brought up and one of the issues was mental health. Joint educational programs is something that Ms. Blodgett thinks should be a focus in an attempt for a collaboration between this commission and the ICJJC. It is an interest with the ICJJC as far as criminal justice and mental health. Interesting opportunities are possible in the upcoming 12 months.
 - **Commissioner Hanks** agrees and knows there is another layer of collaborators in the ICJJC and it is a great opportunity and focusing on re-entry tools and navigation can only help everyone be more effective in the transitioning of individuals from county jails and prisons.
 - **Henry Lipman**-Regarding supportive housing, they are getting ready to put that out for public comment next month and will be able to give more specifics at the next meeting. Amendment 6 which will be effective July 1, 2021, involves transitional aspects of the department looking to increase the rates in community residence that are affiliated with the mental health centers. Also, re-structuring the contract so that it is no risk for the mental health centers. They are looking to double the amount of community center beds available by the end of the year. In terms of ark funds, the guidance document from CMS to states touches a bit upon mental health and SUD as

well. Mr. Lipman will speak on that at next month's meeting. He always has his eyes on opportunities to bridge and leverage.

- **Ken Norton**-NAMI has been watching the Senate Budget Finance Committee very closely and it offers a lot of opportunities. They have been very busy with the Jane Doe decision. Regarding 988, and how it may impact on mental health crisis care, the Jane Doe decision, the American Recovery Plan funding, and the fact that we are in the middle of a biennial budget and finalizing that. They are trying to ensure that there is strong funding for mental health coming through the legislature and watching bills coming through and that is keeping NAMI very busy.
- **Emily Rice**-is very interested in diversion and the potential opportunities for funding under the American Recovery Act. She shared that a good thing about the American Recovery Act is that the dollars can be locally focused. It is really important that localities and systems, although the needs can be very different, is that there is coordination amongst local governments among local courts so that everything is moving in the same direction. She is interested in the November 2019 report, specifically the intercept system that was cited in the report, to see how summer assistance may move towards a diversion program in circuit court. Ms. Rice reported her involvement with a panel she is on with the Police Chief of Manchester, Al Aldenberg, who reported that 50% of the police officers have completed the CIT training. That is a huge accomplishment. There are a lot of other initiatives going on currently as well.
- **Alex Casale**-The mental health court standards are being looked at to move towards being statewide or standardized. Unfortunately, there are no best practice standards for mental health courts, so achieving that level will not be possible with this particular project. Researchers, resources and research is not available at this time to get to that point. Cross training of drug and alcohol counselors in the drug court end with EMDR and safety, so that they can do different types of therapy and not refer out. That way one client doesn't have six different therapists and they can have one therapist that can embrace their needs. That has always been a goal over the years with the mental health and drug courts. Sara Perry was introduced as a Master's level intern from UNH with the judicial branch since January and she has been doing a lot of reading and researching on mental health standards and that will be her final project which will wrap up in August 2021.
- **Jennifer Sargent**-will be working with Director Oxley and Deputy Director Cady on resource information for those paroling and returning into the community.

Commissioner Hanks wished the members well and ended the meeting at 11:02am.

Next meeting-*June 18, 2021 (in person)*

Commissioner Hanks wished the members well and ended the meeting promptly at 10:58am.

*The Governor's Advisory Commission on Mental Illness and the Corrections Systems meets the 3rd Friday of each month at 10:00am.

Respectfully submitted by:

Richelle Angeli on 06/01/2021