

**Adult Behavioral Health Planning Council
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Day/Date:	Thursday, May 8th, 2025 2:00 – 4:00 PM	
Location:	Teams	
Members Present:	Peter Tolisano, Laura Watson, Jennifer Abbatemarco, Herb Boyd, Rita Natale, Kathy Flaherty, Will Erdman, Katherine Gallo, Heidi Pettersen, Pamela Mautte	
Staff Present:	Kyle Barrette, Dana Begin, Julianne Giard, Sara Moriarty, Liz Feder, Elsa Ward, Denique Weidema-Lewis	
AGENDA ITEM:		ACTION
Local Mental Health Authority system overview: Julienne Giard, Section Chief, Community Services Division, DMHAS	Julienne provided an overview of the Local Mental Health Authority system in CT. Julienne described the regions covered by each Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) as well as the services they provide.	Julienne to share presentation slides
NORA Saves overview: Sara Moriarty, Health Program Associate, Department of Public Health	Sara provided background and overview of the NORA Saves website and app. NORA Saves is a website application developed by the Department of Public Health aimed at helping to prevent overdose deaths in Connecticut (https://egov.ct.gov/norasaves/#/HomePage). The website provides information on how to recognize the symptoms of an overdose and how to apply Naloxone to someone experiencing an overdose. Additional information provided includes where to obtain Naloxone and training. The NORA Saves website was originally created for mostly state employee audiences but will be undergoing a wider public relaunch in June. During the discussion, members asked for information on where they could obtain Naloxone directly. One of the members identified that Naloxone and Naloxone training can be accessed through the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations.	Sara to share presentation slides
Block Grant updates: Kyle Barrette, DMHAS	Kyle provided updates on the FFY 2026 projected budget for the Mental Health and Substance Use Block Grants. The president’s budget has yet to be fully completed but there may be the potential for cuts to the block grants in FFY 2026. The FFY 2026 spending plans for each block grant (allocation plans) are currently being drafted based on the assumption of flat funding. Kyle provided an overview of the projected spending plan based on flat funding, including the specific programs and services that will receive funding.	Kyle to share presentation slides Kyle to send out survey link and survey information

	Kyle discussed that the FFY 2026-2027 Combined Block Grant application is currently being drafted and will be open for public comment by mid-August. Lastly, Kyle discussed a survey that has been developed to gather the input and feedback from Planning Council members regarding gaps and needs within the CT Behavioral Health system. The survey will be sent out to all Planning Council members and the results will be utilized to inform the final block grant spending plans and will be included within the block grant application.	
DMHAS Updates: Dana Begin, Director, Evidence Based Practices, DMHAS Denique Weidema-Lewis, Program Manager, Prevention and Health Promotion, DMHAS Elsa Ward, Director, Office of Recovery Community Affairs, DMHAS	Dana provided brief updates about the Crisis Services system. Dana noted that Mobile Crisis Teams continue to work towards 24/7 coverage. The state's new Peer Respite in New Britain, and 23-hour Crisis Respite in New Haven continue to operate successfully. Each of these programs offer a different type of service but both offer an alternative to the emergency department for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. These programs offer assessment, rapid stabilization, and support within a home-like environment. Denique provided brief updates regarding the Regional Priority Report process. The priority reports, developed by the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations, have recently been completed and UCONN is currently working to aggregate the results of these reports. Elsa provided an overview of Peer Support training cohorts currently taking place. These cohorts are running for six months and include recovery coaches and recovery support specialists, together. The training sessions focus on skill development, reflective learning, and integrated care. Elsa also discussed developments related to the state's new Peer Support exam which will be used as part of the state's new Peer Support credential. The Office of Recovery Community Affairs (ORCA) is holding listening sessions to gather input and feedback regarding the exam and credential requirements. The next sessions will take place in July and further details are posted on the ORCA webpage (https://portal.ct.gov/dmhas/divisions/divisions/recovery-community-affairs)	
Planning Council business: Heidi Pettersen, Vice Chair	Heidi provided an overview of proposed agenda items for the next meeting and requested additional ideas from members. No additional ideas were proposed by members.	
Next Meeting:	August 14th, 2025, 2:00-4:00pm via Microsoft Teams	