

Behavioral Health Sub-Committee

Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission
Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division
Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

September 11, 2025

9:30 am – 11:00 am

(Russell Hall, CVH, Room 217-A; and TEAMS)

Minutes

1. Introductions/Roll call – Jessica Waggoner, Richard Sparaco, Reena Kapoor, William O’Connor, Kirk Lowry, Thomas Burr, Christine Musgrave
2. Approval of minutes; May 6, 2025 – Minutes were approved and motion to move forward approved.
3. Agency updates –
 - a. CSSD updates – CSSD was not present, however Jessica provided two brief updates on recent changes.
 - TPP is no longer being implemented in Litchfield, but has been introduced in two new courts, both Hartford and Middletown, on September 1. William O’Connor asked about this program. It is the Treatment Pathways Program run by CSSD, and is a substance use treatment and diversion for individuals with low level charges.
 - Redistricting of some towns/court due to legislative orders. Avon, Granby, Simsbury and Farmington have moved from Hartford to Litchfield and Burlington will be moving from New Britain to Litchfield Court.
 - b. DOC/CSSD/DMHAS – no definitive answer on the waiver application. Preliminary meetings lead us to believe this will be approved sometime in the fall. July 1 2026 is believed to be the implementation date.
 - c. DMHAS- Assistant director position for forensics is currently posted. Other updates to be provided later in the agenda.
 - d. William O’Connor –
 - Public defenders are celebrating 50 years of the legislature creating the agency.
 - PSRB appellate court decision that reversed a person’s recommitment to the PSRB. The state attorney has filed an appeal for reconsideration. This is unprecedented. Reena asked to pass the decision be distributed and Bill agreed.
 - e. CLRP Kirk Lowry – no real updates. Probate appeals have been in progress. Spoke about an appeal for a competency case in which the probate court ordered a SLC, which was stayed following a motion by CLRP. A healthcare guardian was then approved in Superior Court, but this was also stayed following a motion by the public defender. This case probably won’t be decided until next year.
 - f. Thomas Burr – public policy coalition meeting this evening to discuss what will be focused on the next legislative session, including DOC reform. The annual conference is 10/24 and registration is open. Information is on their website., including sessions that might be of

interest to the group. Website <https://namict.org/get-involved/annual-events/annual-education-conference/>

Thomas also spoke about Governor Lamont's response to the president's EO criminalizing homelessness.

Thomas also discussed the State's Correction Advisory Committee. They oversee complaints about mental health care in DOC and there is now an ombudsman named DeVaughn Ward. He is reporting that it is a challenge to staff that office. It's just him and there are hundreds of complaints. The positions are going through the normal state approval process.

- g. Reena Kapoor – spoke about a case where the court ordered the appointment of a healthcare guardian for an outpatient restoration client, concern that the court may attempt to order outpatient involuntary medication. Thomas Burr mentioned he has a call scheduled with an individual about why CT is one of only two states that does not do assisted medication.
- h. Richard Sparaco – no updates from the sentencing commission. There are four active reports in the works dealing with the mental health community.

4. Legislative matters

- a. Pretrial Intervention Program (DMHAS) – the changes put forward were approved. This program consistently runs in a deficit mostly due to fee waivers. Treatment providers will be able to bill health insurance, and DMHAS will become the payer of last resort.

5. Competency to stand trial updates

- a. Trends over the last 9 months – trends have leveled out a bit. The first couple of months were steady, but OPR numbers have doubled in the last nine months. Case numbers have been low but are rising. There is an increase in referrals of people who are actively using, not engaged in treatment nor interested in treatment, and can be homeless. We are having good success rates with people who are showing up for appointments.
- b. There is an increase in the number of cases with low level charges being nolledd rather than ordered to Whiting for inpatient restoration. DMHAS is working with DOC to coordinate treatment efforts for these cases before they leave court. There has been a correlation of Whiting admissions dropping as these restoration cases move to outpatient.

6. PSRB updates – the trend has continued since the last report. Dockets for PSRB are continually full. There is a rise in hearings for people on CR who are requesting changes to their CR. State's attorneys are objecting and requesting hearings on changes.

- a. Dr. Benetti resigned from the board, so there is a new member. The victim's advocate also resigned, and that position is not yet filled.

7. Meeting Schedule

Does the group want to leave these meetings from bi-monthly to quarterly? Currently the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 13. November 13 was approved with the caveat that if a meeting is scheduled near this one, this meeting can be moved.

Meeting concluded at 10:25.