

# Board Update

Mental Health & Recovery Services (MHRS) Board  
Serving Coshocton, Guernsey, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble & Perry Counties  
1500 Coal Run Road, Zanesville, Ohio 43701  
Phone: 740-454-8557

## Regular Board Meeting Highlights July 11, 2019

### ***“We Are Recovery” (W.A.R.) Group***

Partners Workgroup Chair Diane Danaher shared information from a presentation by members (*Sara and Tegan*) of Muskingum Behavioral Health’s W.A.R. Group. Members of the group consider themselves soldiers on the frontline of the war on addiction. The group’s objectives are to:

- Enrich the lives of addicts in early recovery with fun activities.
- Be the “face” of recovery.
- Promote stigma reduction.
- Advocate for those in recovery.
- Create a compassionate community for those still suffering.
- Promote unity among different recovery communities (AA, NA, etc.)
- Create a place to exchange resources.

Group member Sara noted, “What is important to me is who I am. I have a new identity, new friends, and want to help increase community awareness about the disease of addiction.”

Tegan noted that, “The opposite of addiction is connection.”

It was stressed that there is a need for more publicity about persons who are making great strides on their recovery journeys, rather than headlines about opiate overdoses.



In April, W.A.R. members visited local first responders (*pictured to the left are Tegan and Assistant Zanesville Fire Chief Doug Hobson*) to personally thank them for not giving up. They shared their stories—as a reminder that people DO recover, and often it’s only after their life has been spared by the use of Narcan to counteract an opioid overdose. Assistant Chief Hobson appreciated the visit by W.A.R. members, noting, “These individuals are a great example of being able to turn their lives around; usually, we only see the bad side of addiction.”

Tegan and Sara also shared their experiences in serving as house mothers for Muskingum Behavioral Health’s 10-room Naomi Recovery House for Women. Thanks to Naomi House, now there is a place for women in recovery to call home—even those with infants and toddlers. Women living there are learning to care for their children, cook, and establish a positive/productive lifestyle.

**Executive Director**  
Vickie Hare

**Board of Directors**  
Sherile Beardmore  
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Diane Danaher  
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William Johnson  
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Thomas Lynch  
Dan Scheerer, M.D.  
Beverly Steinbrecher

**Board President**  
Jeff LeCocq

**Board Vice President**  
William Johnson

*The mission of the  
MHRS Board is to  
facilitate a Recovery-  
Oriented System of Care  
that promotes mental  
health and supports the  
recovery of those who  
need treatment for  
mental illness and/or  
addiction.*

## ***Executive Director's Retirement***



MHRS Board Executive Director Vickie Hare is retiring effective August 1.

On the occasion of her final board meeting, Guernsey County Representative Kelly Lynch expressed appreciation for her many years of service as Care Management Director, Associate Director, and then Executive Director for the MHRS Board.

Kelly called attention to Vickie's obvious compassion for clients and families and listed just a few of her many accomplishments: development of a 'Recovery-Oriented System of Care,' the network's significant growth in grants revenue, and a host of services to help fight the opiate epidemic (Quick Response Teams, Recovery Houses, Withdrawal Management, Residential Treatment, Special Case Management for Addicted Pregnant Women, Medication-Assisted Treatment, etc.).

Vickie also worked to "change the conversation" by reminding everyone that: 1) mental illnesses and addictions are treatable; 2) people DO recover from those illnesses; and 3) recovery should be celebrated!

Director Hare thanked board members for the privilege of helping to ensure our local communities are mentally healthy and addiction-free.

## ***MHRS Board Personnel Update***

Effective August 1, the MHRS Board's new Executive Director will be Misty Cromwell (*pictured to the right*), the organization's current Associate Director and Care Management Director. Misty earned her Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Social Work from the Ohio State University and is a Licensed Independent Social Worker with Supervision designation. Previously, Misty worked at Allwell Behavioral Health Services for 19 years in many leadership positions. Misty is the mother of 9-year-old Autumn Cromwell, whom she proudly adopted in 2012.



Jamie McGrew has been selected to fill the MHRS Board's Care Management Director position. Jamie has worked for Allwell Behavioral Health Services since 2011 and, prior to that, she was a Family Education Advocate at Washington-Morgan Community Action. Jamie has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education and is working on a Master's Degree in Divinity.

VISTA worker Brandon Russell has joined the staff and will be assisting with the management of 'County Hub' initiatives for fighting the opiate epidemic, as well as the 'Stepping Up' initiative focused on reducing the number of individuals with mental illness and/or addiction in local jails. Brandon recently graduated from Ohio University with a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Studies.

Other staff members are Elaine Shuster, Associate Director / Systems Manager; Melanie Smith, Fiscal Operations Director; Roger Birch, Youth & Family Services Coordinator; Janet Hill, Business Operations Manager; Linda Hand, Administrative Coordinator; and Mickey Danison, Accounting Specialist.



Under the guidance of William Johnson, Interim Chair of the Finance/Audit Committee, board members:

- Approved payments to service providers and community partners for the treatment/support of persons with mental illness and/or addictions totaling **\$1,024,278.90**.
- Officially accepted the MHRS Board's State Audit Report for Calendar Year 2018. Once again, the MHRS Board received a "clean opinion," with no matters involving any findings.
- Reviewed the MHRS Board's Calendar Year 2019 Second Quarter Financial Report that showed receipts of \$5,367,368.22 (56.51% of total budgeted) and the expenditure of \$5,316,361.28 (32% of total budgeted).
- Reviewed the FY 2018 audit report from the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). This audit review was primarily related to the subrecipient monitoring of 'pass-through' federal awards. The audit determined that all review objectives had been satisfied 100%, with no costs being questioned. The report also noted there were no irregularities (i.e., fraud, waste, abuse, etc.) that have affected any federal funds passed down from OhioMHAS.

William Johnson commended Fiscal Operations Director Melanie Smith and the MHRS Board's other fiscal employees for achieving 'clean opinions' on two recent audits — the Calendar Year 2018 Audit conducted by the Auditor of State, and the Fiscal Year 2018 Fiscal Audit conducted by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

## *Potential Re-Direction of Mental Health, Addiction Dollars*

According to an audit recently released by Ohio Auditor Keith Faber, the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) could soon be re-shifting \$15 million in Continuum of Care Funds among the state's MHRS Boards.

Instead of using the previous year's allocations to determine how much state funding to provide MHRS Boards, the audit recommends that OhioMHAS use a "data-driven methodology" to redistribute its largest funding pool, sending more money to higher-need counties.

This recommendation could significantly harm our service area (as well as some other Appalachian region MHRS Boards) and would

significantly benefit the larger MHRS Board areas in Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus, as well as some other more populous counties.

Our MHRS Board is listed as one of the regions that would lose the most funding in terms of "Population of Counties Served" and "Opioid Deaths in Counties Served."

The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities has already gone on record that they need to be at the table as OhioMHAS looks at new funding methodologies.



## Capital Assistance Grant Approved

The Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services has approved a capital assistance project for Perry Behavioral Health Choices in the amount of \$40,462.00 to provide facility space for the organization's LAYER (Leading Active Youth 2 Emerge Resilient) Program. This initiative is intended for youth who have been impacted by addiction or are court-involved and features arts, evidence-based/influenced prevention programs, homework assistance, life skills, suicide prevention programming, and youth supportive services. The building at 113 N. Main Street in New Lexington is almost ready for occupancy.



Recently 25 persons were locally trained as facilitators of the "Working Minds" Program that is sponsored by the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation. This program is exclusively dedicated to suicide prevention in the workplace. The toolkit

is based on the evidence-based practice of the U.S. Air Force. The goal of the program is to help workplaces appreciate the critical need for suicide prevention while creating a forum for dialogue and critical thinking about workplace mental health challenges — as well as promoting help-seeking and help-giving. For more information, contact Misty Cromwell at 740-454-8557.

## Ribbon-Cutting – Allwell Transitional Living Apartments

A ribbon-cutting / open house for Allwell Behavioral Health's transitional living apartments (1175 Newark Road, Zanesville) will be held at 4:00 p.m. on August 1, 2019. This service-enhanced housing is for youth ages 18-25 who are transitioning from community-controlled living environments (such as foster care, residential treatment, etc.) to a community-interdependent environment where they will receive community support to become productive, law-abiding citizens.

## Free Training for Faith Leaders

On Saturday, August 3, a workshop — *Pastoral Care Before, During and After a Suicide Crisis* — will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Genesis HealthPlex, 2800 Maple Avenue, Zanesville. The workshop is being sponsored by the Genesis Healthcare System and the Muskingum County Suicide Prevention Coalition. Topics to be covered include: The Scope of the Problem, Understanding the Suicidal Mindset, Postvention Connecting, and A Pastor's Point of View. To register call 740-454-5859 by July 31.