



Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission
Wednesday, August 30, 2023
12:30 – 2:00 PM
Virtual

Minutes

Attending Commission Members:

Danna Mauch, Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, Co-Chair
Cindy Friedman, Senator – 4th District
Deirdre Calvert, DPH Bureau of Substance Addiction Services
Paula M. Carey, former Chief Justice of the Trial Court
Lydia Conley, Association for Behavioral Healthcare
Audrey Shelto, Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation
Scott Taberner, Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Eliza Williamson, National Alliance for Mental Illness of Massachusetts
Nancy Connolly, Department of Mental Health

Staff:

Michael Kane, ForHealth Consulting at UMass Chan Medical School
Meaghan Dupuis, ForHealth Consulting at UMass Chan Medical School
David Ryan, Middlesex Sheriff's Office
Sarah Ford, National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts
Chelsea Thomson, ForHealth Consulting at UMass Chan Medical School
Jacqueline Richards, ForHealth Consulting at UMass Chan Medical School
Alda Rego, ForHealth Consulting at UMass Chan Medical School

Invited speakers:

Amanda Maynord, Health Management Associates (HMA)
Moirra Muir, HMA
Julie White, HMA
Raisa Alam, HMA
Caitlin Thomas Henkel, HMA

12:30PM – 12:40PM

Open Session

Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Danna Mauch

- Co-Chair Danna Mauch welcomed attendees and opened the meeting. Co-Chair Danna Mauch noted that Sarah Ford of NAMI Massachusetts was in attendance for the first time as Tim Burton took a full-time teaching position. Alda Rego, Managing Director, Healthcare Finance Solutions at ForHealth Consulting provided a staffing update after internal restructuring that resulted in Katharine London departing the organization. Meaghan Dupuis, Executive Director, is now the executive sponsor for the project and Chelsea Thomson and Jacquie Richards will provide support.

Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Co-Chair Danna Mauch

- Co-Chair Danna Mauch accepted a motion made by Scott Taberner and seconded by Chief Carey to approve the meeting minutes from the last meeting held on June 5, 2023. Co-Chair Danna Mauch conducted a vote of the yeas and nays. All those present and voting voted in the affirmative, except Nancy Connolly who abstained as they did not attend the last meeting. The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

12:40PM – 1:00PM

Procurement Updates

Scott Taberner

- Scott Taberner provided an update to the Commission about the status of the Request for Responses (RFR) for a vendor to operate the Restoration Center. The RFR response deadline was July 31, 2023. Upon that deadline, the Evaluation Committee, comprised of Audrey Shelto, Judge Paula Carey, and Scott Taberner with support from Chelsea Thomson, reviewed the responses and conducted an evaluation. Audrey Shelto made note of the comprehensive review that the Committee undertook, and Judge Paula Carey agreed with Scott's comments regarding receipt of a positive response.
- Scott Taberner is working closely with the EOHHS legal team to quickly move the approval and contract negotiation process forward. It is anticipated that a contract will be executed by the end of September 2023.
- Following contract execution, Scott Taberner will notify the Commission of the selected vendor and the communications strategy. The vendor will be invited to attend the next Commission meeting and present its proposal.
- As discussed during previous Commission meetings, EOHHS procured a facility siting and stakeholder engagement consultant to assist with four tasks: facility siting and development, community and stakeholder outreach and engagement, sustainability and funding, and communications and marketing. EOHHS selected Health Management Associates (HMA) as the vendor and executed a contract in July 2023. HMA began work on all four tasks and focused their efforts on preparing for the selected vendor to be announced and providing guidance on next steps.

1:00PM – 1:30PM

Health Management Associates (HMA) Presentation

- Scott Taberner welcomed the HMA team to the Commission meeting and noted that HMA was invited to the meeting to share the work they've undertaken so far. Once EOHHS executes a contract with the selected Restoration Center vendor, HMA will work closely with the vendor to move the four tasks forward and ensure efforts are collaborative and coordinated.
- Moira Muir discussed a high-level overview of HMA's work, including the timeline to complete the work through December 2023. During this period, HMA will work closely with the selected Restoration Center vendor, the Commission, EOHHS, and ForHealth to:
 - Assess and manage the siting of the Restoration Center alongside EOHHS and HMA's real estate partners.
 - Conduct stakeholder outreach and engagement with community organizations, local governments, and residents in the designated location.
 - Establish and undertake a strategic plan to ensure that all roadblocks are clear for the Restoration Center.
 - Research and develop a plan for sustainable funding of the Restoration Center beyond an initial 3-year period.
 - Create a communication plan, presentation materials, website, and logo to use by EOHHS and selected Restoration vendor.
- HMA's work over the first six weeks of the project included:
 - Developing an initial stakeholder engagement plan and mapping out Restoration Center components, identifying potential state regulations and programmatic licensure requirements, and conducting initial engagements with key EOHHS departmental leadership;
 - Discussing initial facility siting and requirements;
 - Supporting the upcoming press release and communication strategy to announce the selected vendor; and
 - Researching sustainable funding opportunities and pathways.
- During this presentation, the Commission discussed the use of the term "harm reduction unit" to reflect the beds available to individuals who are not yet willing to enter treatment and have been determined to not require emergency or urgent medical care. In the unit, they can be cared for as they become sober and receive information about treatment and other supports from peer recovery coaches. Danna Mauch reflected on the terminology and potential misconception of the type of services this unit will provide as currently labelled. The Commission agreed that the name of this unit will be changed but did not decide on a name during the meeting.

1:30PM – 1:55PM

Funding Updates

Co-Chair Danna Mauch and Scott Taberner

- DMH Jail/Arrest Diversion Grant Program Request for Applications
 - Co-Chair Danna Mauch provided an update about a potential funding source from the Department of Mental Health as the opportunity includes police drop-off centers as an eligible project type.
 - Dr. Nancy Connolly provided a brief overview of the funding source and potential uses for the funds. Dr. Connolly indicated that the [Request for Applications](#) accepts responses on a rolling basis.
- Philanthropic organizations
 - The Commission leadership and Scott Taberner continued conversations focused on potential philanthropic support and considerations for sustainability efforts.
 - Dave Ryan and Chelsea Thomson are developing a brief proposal to reengage the Pew Charitable Trusts in a conversation to support the evaluation of the Restoration Center.
- MIEP and jail diversion
 - Scott Taberner shared an update about the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP) request that the Commonwealth is submitting to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The public comment period for the 1115 Demonstration Waiver, [found here](#), is open until September 9, 2023.
 - MassHealth's updated proposal requests up to 90 days of coverage for pre-release healthcare services prior to an individual being released from carceral settings. As a requirement set forth by CMS, the reinvestment plan in the request outlines potential areas of investment, one of which is to "divert individuals from criminal justice involvement" and may include centers similar to the Restoration Center.

Administrative Updates

Scott Taberner

- Scott Taberner provided an update on the congressional directed funding, via a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant, to support the Restoration Center. EOHHS submitted a scope of work request to use funding to assist key behavioral health providers in Middlesex County prepare for and educate stakeholders on the forthcoming Restoration Center. SAMHSA approved this request and two applicants – Advocates and Vinfen – each requested, and received, a \$50,0000 planning grant, managed by the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership. Both organizations have quickly started work and initiated activities to support the Restoration Center.
- In June 2023, SAMHSA notified EOHHS that EOHHS was eligible to receive a 12-month no-cost extension to extend the budget and project period end date from September 29, 2023, to September 29, 2024. EOHHS affirmatively responded to this notification and is awaiting confirmation of the extension.
- Chelsea Thomson provided an update on the Restoration Center's new [mass.gov website](#) that launched in August 2023. The website provides a space to highlight the Commission's comprehensive and extensive work over the past five years. All future meeting notices and minutes will be posted here.

1:55PM – 2:00PM

Next Steps

- EOHHS will keep the Commission apprised of the next steps for the Restoration Center vendor and any forthcoming announcements.
- Co-chairs will be in touch about scheduling the next meetings.

Adjournment

Co-Chair Danna Mauch

- Co-Chair Danna Mauch accepted a motion made by Audrey Shelto and seconded by Eliza Williamson to adjourn the meeting. Danna Mauch conducted a vote of the yeas and nays. All those present and voting voted in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned.