COUNTY OF MORRIS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES
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HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HSAC)
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 24, 2025, Hybrid

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Ms. Roers, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm. A quorum was established, and attendance was as follows:

Council Members:
Joann Bjornson, Family Promise – Vice Chair
Ken Oexle, Citizen Representative
Michelle Roers, United Way of Northern New Jersey – Chair
Sydney Ugalde, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Sadia Ullah, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Diane Williams, JBWS

Morris County Commissioner Liaison:
Christine Myers (virtual)

Council Liaison:
Leena George, Morris County Division of Child Protection & Permanency

Morris County Staff:
Amy Archer, Division Director of Community & Behavioral Health Services, Mental Health Administrator
Maria Fodali, Morris County Office of Temporary Assistance
Anna Marie Hess, HSAC Coordinator

Community Members & Presenters:
Shayne Daly, Long Hill Township Community Services (virtual)
Steven Nagel, HomeSharing, Inc. (virtual)
Kelsey Reenstra, NORWESCAP (virtual)

Lanet Rivera, NORWESCAP (virtual)
Sarah Rubinstein, Morristown Medical Center, Atlantic Health (virtual)
Emily Savino, MHA, NJ4S Assistant Director – Presenter

II. Approval of May 27, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Ms. Bjornson motioned to approve the meeting minutes from May 27, 2025, which were seconded by Mr. Oexle. All were in favor, with no opposition and no abstentions. Motion carried.

III. Presentations

A. NJ4S Student Support Services – Ms. Savino

- **i.** The program was launched in September 2023; the Morris/Sussex hub serves 87 public middle and high schools.
- **ii.** Operates a three-tiered model:
  - **a.** Tier 1: Universal prevention & community education
  - **b.** Tier 2: Evidence-based small group interventions in schools
  - **c.** Tier 3: Brief clinical counseling and psychiatric evaluations
- **iii.** For SY 2024-25, the hub recorded 178 clinical referrals (average 12 sessions per case) and 366 community referrals.
- **iv.** Currently, 51 of 60 Morris County schools are engaged; outreach continues to the remaining nine.
- **v.** Collaboration includes a partnership with the NJ Pediatric Psychiatry Collaborative to provide free psychiatric evaluations.
- **vi. Questions & Answers**
  - **a. How do referrals work**? Referrals can be made through the NJ4S portal by school staff, and families may also be referred with the involvement of the school.
  - **b. What about the nine Morris County schools not yet engaged?** Outreach is ongoing to the nine Morris County schools not yet engaged. Barriers include scheduling and resource alignment, meaning that school calendars, staff contacts, and existing contracted services must be coordinated to ensure NJ4S programming complements, rather than duplicates, what is already in place. Follow-up conversations with school leadership are planned.
  - **c. How does NJ4S avoid duplication with existing services?** NJ4S works with schools and community partners (Atlantic Health, NAMI, Family Success Centers) to provide complementary programming, not replacements.
  - **d. Is current clinical capacity sufficient?** Four licensed clinicians cover referrals, responding within 48 hours. While the caseload is heavy, the average wait time has been under one week.
  - **e. How are program outcomes measured?** Outcome tracking includes referral data, service utilization, follow-up with schools, and student/family feedback surveys.

Council members discussed referral processes, school participation, and program evaluation following the presentation.

B. Legal Services of Northwest New Jersey Eviction Prevention – Ms. Yoo

- **i.** 1,835 eviction cases filed from July 2024 to March 2025.
- **ii.** Legal Services provided representation in 565 cases (30%).
- **iii.** Demographic breakdown of clients: 39% had mental/physical disabilities, 26% were African American (compared to 2.99% of the county population), and 27 % Hispanic (compared to 15% of the county population).
- **iv.** Most evictions stemmed from nonpayment of rent, with few viable defenses.
- **v.** Legal Services maintains a weekly presence in the Landlord-Tenant Court with four housing attorneys and support staff.
- **vi. Questions & Answers**
  - **a. What are the most common causes of eviction in Morris County?** The majority stem from non-payment of rent, often tied to loss of income, medical issues, or rising costs.
  - **b. What legal defenses are typically available?** Defenses are limited, but they include challenging improper notice, rent calculation errors, and unsafe housing conditions.
  - **c. What percentage of tenants are currently represented by an attorney?** Approximately 30% of cases are covered, with Legal Services handling 565 cases between July 2024 and March 2025.
  - **d. What demographics are most affected?** 39% of clients served had mental or physical disabilities, and African American and Hispanic households were disproportionately represented compared to countywide population percentages.
  - **e. How does Legal Services partner with community agencies?** Legal services collaborates with Family Promise, Navigating Hope, and housing inspectors to provide wraparound support beyond court representations.

Council members emphasized the importance of expanding access to legal representation for tenants facing eviction, given the high eviction rate in Morris County. The discussion underscored that without legal aid, most tenants face eviction unrepresented, which significantly reduces their ability to remain housed.

IV. Open to the Public – no comment

V. Chair Report – Ms. Roers

- **A.** Thanked the presenters, noting that both the Legal Services and NJ4S presentations highlighted the importance of prevention and early intervention in strengthening Morris County's human service system.
- **B.** Reminded the Council that a quorum will be essential for the September 23, 2025, HSAC meeting, when funding recommendations will be voted on.

C. Confirmed that there will not be HSAC meetings held in July or August. Instead, members are asked to participate in summer site monitoring visits for funded agencies.

VI. New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJ DHS) – no report

VII. New Jersey Department of Children & Families – Mr. Hager

A. At this NJDCF page: DCF | 2025 Federal Policy Changes / Updates, our department is providing periodic updates of proposed federal budget actions and their potential impact on DCF programming. Refer to the links under the "General Information" section, which also track federal executive orders and the legal challenges to those actions. Attached is our "Impact of Congressional Budget Discussions" document from April 2025 (this is in the "DCF White Paper" link).

B. NJDCF Children's System of Care Assistive Technology and Respite Care Services: The Children's System of Care (CSOC) is reopening the Assistive Technology program for youth with intellectual/developmental disabilities up to age 21. **Effective 5/13/2025, CSOC will resume accepting new Family Support Services (FSS) applications for Assistive Technology requests.** Interested families may call Perform Care (1-877-652-7624) to request Assistive Technology services and complete the FSS application over the phone. This includes Respite Care Services for eligible families. For more information about CSOC's Family Support Services programs, please see: https://www.performcarenj.org/pdf/families/family-support-services-facts.pdf.

C. The Children's System of Care (CSOC) Brochures (English and Spanish) are at these links:

- **i.** https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/dcsc/CSOC.brochure.pdf
- **ii.** https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/dcsc/CSOC.brochure_Span.pdf

VIII. Division of Child Protection & Permanency – Ms. George

A. Morris East Local Office

Criteria	May 2025
Children <5-years old, Mother <30 -years old	9
Substance Affected Newborn Cases (aka Safe Care)	1
New	49
Reopens	42
Active	11
CPS	103
CWS	11

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Domestic Violence	36
Sex Abuse	2
Unhoused	9
SPRU	29
Spanish Speaking	17
< 90 Day Re-opens	12
Substance abuse	25
Child on Child Sex Abuse	0
Unaccompanied Minors	0

B. Morris West Local Office

Criteria	May 2025
Children <5-years old, Mother <30 -years old	2
Substance Affected Newborn Cases (aka Safe Care)	2
New	36
Reopens	53
Active	13
CPS	117
CWS	30
Domestic Violence	25
Sex Abuse	2
Unhoused	0
SPRU	22
Spanish Speaking	13
< 90 Day Re-opens	6
Substance abuse	38
Child on Child Sex Abuse	2
Unaccompanied Minors	0

C. Questions/Answers

i. Ms. Archer reported on a recent announcement from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) clarifying what constitutes an appropriate referral to the Division of Child Protection & Permanency (DCPP). The announcement highlighted that poverty and homelessness

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alone do not constitute child neglect, and emphasized the importance of ensuring families are connected with supportive resources rather than being inappropriately referred to the child protection system. Discussion ensued.

- **a.** Ms. George added that this guidance is part of a statewide effort to strengthen consistency across counties. She explained that the hotline screening process has been updated to reflect this standard and that supervisors are monitoring referrals to ensure the guidance is applied consistently throughout the state.

ii. How will frontline staff be trained to apply this clarification consistently?

- **a.** Staff are receiving refresher training, and DCPP will include the guidance in quarterly supervisory meetings to ensure uniform practice statewide.

iii. Will schools, shelters, and other mandated reporters be given this clarification?

- **a.** Yes. DCPP is preparing outreach materials for community partners and will coordinate with county collaboratives to make sure the message is widely understood.

iv. Is there a plan to track whether this policy change reduces unnecessary hotline calls?

- **a.** Data on referrals and outcomes will be reviewed quarterly, with a focus on cases screened out due to economic hardship alone. DCPP will share trends with the HSAC as they become available.

IX. Staff Reports

A. Human Services – Ms. Hess

i. The Division of Community & Behavioral Health Services is finalizing a comprehensive Human Services acronym list, which will be distributed to all advisory committees.

ii. The 2026 GIA, SSH, and CAP Requests for Proposals (RFPs) were released on June 18, 2025. Applications are due by 2:00 PM on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, and can be accessed via the Morris County Human Services webpage. Members were encouraged to carefully review funding priorities when preparing submissions.

iii. There will be no HSAC meetings in July or August. Instead, site monitoring visits for all 16 funded agencies are scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout July. Six site visits remain without HSAC representation; Ms. Hess asked members to sign up for at least two visits using the Doodle poll link distributed by email. Each site visit requires at least one Council member, with two preferred.

iv. In August, Ms. Hess will compile and distribute all GIA, SSH, and CAP funding applications to the Program Review Subcommittee for their review. A program review meeting will be convened to discuss recommendations, which will then be presented for a full Council vote at the September 23, 2025, HSAC meeting.

B. Council on Aging, Disabilities & Veterans – no report

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X. Old Business – no comment

XI. New Business

A. Ms. Archer reported that the Community Development Annual Action Plan has been posted for public comment. The public hearing is scheduled for July 9, 2025, and comments must be submitted by July 20, 2025.

XII. Subcommittee Reports

A. Program Review – Ms. Hess

- **i.** Ms. Hess explained that the Program Review Subcommittee will meet in August for the all-day review session (9:00 am – 4:30 pm) to rank applications, and recommendations will then be brought to the September 23, 2025, HSAC meeting.

B. Planning – no report

C. Bylaws

Ms. Hess explained that the revised bylaws modernized HSAC operations by allowing for electronic voting and the continuation of hybrid meeting formats to improve accessibility and participation. She noted that these updates were developed by the Bylaws Subcommittee to reflect current best practices for the advisory council. Motion to approve the 2025 HSAC Bylaws as presented was made by Ms. Bjornson and was seconded by Mr. Oexle. All were in favor, with no opposition and no abstentions. Motion carried.

D. Legislative – no report

E. Nominating – no report

F. Advisory on Women – no report

XIII. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Morris, Sussex, Warren HIV Advisory – no report

B. Mental Health Addiction Services Advisory – Ms. Archer

- **i.** At the June MHASAB meeting, Atlantic Health presented on the development of a Behavioral Health Center of Excellence, which would serve Morris, Sussex, Warren, and Union counties. The initiative aims to expand access to coordinated mental health and addiction services, increase clinical capacity, and strengthen regional partnerships.
  - **a.** What kinds of services would the new center provide?
    1. Atlantic Health explained that the center will offer a full continuum of behavioral health services, including outpatient mental health, psychiatric evaluation, and crisis stabilization, with integration of medical and behavioral health care.
  - **b.** How would this project be funded and sustained?
    1. Atlantic Health noted that initial development funding will be sought through public and private partnerships, with long-term sustainability tied to reimbursement models and regional collaborations.

c. How will this center coordinate with existing county services and providers?
    1. Atlantic Health emphasized that the goal is not duplication but collaboration, ensuring referrals from county agencies and community partners can be streamlined into the center, and that information-sharing agreements will be developed to support continuity of care.

d. What is the projected timeline for opening?
    1. While still in the planning stages, Atlantic Health indicated that the project is moving forward actively, and community support will be critical in advancing the proposal.

ii. Ms. Archer reported that the MHASAB approved recommendations for a supplemental allocation to support Municipal Alliance programming. These recommendations were subsequently presented to the Morris County Board of Commissioners, who approved $ 50,000 allocation to expand community prevention initiatives and support additional wellness activities throughout the county.

iii. Efforts are underway to integrate the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline with 911 dispatch. The Office of Communication Services is working to create seamless, warm handoffs and necessary support.

C. Youth Services Advisory – Ms. Fosko

i. The meeting was held on Thursday, June 19th, at 9:00 am at 1 Executive Drive with a virtual option provided.

ii. The May meeting minutes were approved.

iii. Current trends show increasing referrals for youth placements with limited to no beds available.

iv. Morris County Probation reported they expect to see an increase in youth cases as summer begins.

v. There will be no YSAC meeting in July; the next YSAC meeting will be held on Thursday, August 21st at 9:00 am.

XIV. Partnership Announcements

A. Continuum of Care (CoC) – no report

XV. Adjournment

Ms. Williams motioned to adjourn, and Mr. Oxele seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anna Marie Hess
HSAC Coordinator

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