

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, March 24, 2026, Hybrid

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Ms. Roers, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:20 pm. A quorum was established, and the attendance was as follows:

Council Members:

Pam Bennett-Santoro, Citizen Representative
Joann Bjornson, Family Promise – Vice-Chair
Donna Boyce, Citizen Representative
Elaine Muller, Citizen Representative
Kenneth Oexle, Citizen Representative
Joseph Pawelczyk, Citizen Representative
Michelle Roers, United Way of Northern New Jersey – Chair

Council Liaisons:

Tia Falconer, Morris County Division of Child Protection & Permanency
Leena George, Morris County Division of Child Protection & Permanency

Morris County Staff:

Amy Archer, Division Director of Community & Behavioral Health Services, Mental Health Administrator
James Dillon, Division of Aging, Disabilities, and Community Programming
Anna Marie Hess, HSAC Coordinator

Community Members:

Emily Legg, Homeless Solutions (virtual)
Steven Nagel, HomeSharing (virtual)
JoAnn Quattro, Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs (MCOHA) (virtual)
Holly Ramiriz, NJ 2-1-1 (virtual)

Emily Savino, Mental Health Association, NJ4S (virtual)

II. Presentation - Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs (MCOHA) – Ms. JoAnn Quattro, Executive Director

Ms. Quattro, Executive Director of the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs (MCOHA), provided an overview of the agency, noting that she began serving as Interim Executive Director in July and was permanently appointed in September. She explained that MCOHA was founded in 1976 to support the growing Spanish-speaking population in Dover and is currently marking its 50th year. Ms. Quattro stated that the organization's longstanding strength is that many staff members are immigrants themselves and can provide culturally responsive, bilingual assistance to individuals and families navigating unfamiliar systems and services. She further noted that MCOHA has expanded over time to serve low-income residents more broadly, now operates 9 programs, and continues to reevaluate services in response to changing community needs.

MCOHA's home energy programs serve the largest number of residents, assisting approximately 6,000 to 8,000 households annually through Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) and related lead testing and remediation programs for eligible low- and moderate-income renters and homeowners. She noted that these programs are federally funded through the state and have faced uncertainty during the past year. She also reviewed the agency's community outreach services, explaining that MCOHA continues to help residents with interpretation, translation, form completion, school and insurance enrollment, referrals, diapers, and other essential supports. In addition, she highlighted partnerships that help provide backpacks, Thanksgiving meals, and Three Kings Day toys, and noted that prior after-school and nutrition education activities had also been offered.

Ms. Quattro reported that the agency offers citizenship classes for immigrants preparing for the naturalization exam and is currently representing 82 unaccompanied minors, while noting that the statewide waiting list for such legal representation is approximately 1,800 children or young adults. She also stated that MCOHA assists victims of domestic violence and other crimes who may qualify for special visas, and that during the past year the program served 57 clients, including 23 consultations and 12 new applications. She further explained that the legal program is managing approximately 100 older pending cases that are now moving forward, but that staffing is currently strained and the agency is seeking to hire two immigration attorneys, including one supervisory attorney.

Ms. Quattro stated that the Hispanic Women's Resource Center has served more than 1,000 women annually in recent years. She explained that the program helps women build English, computer, and job-readiness skills, but that MCOHA recognized many participants first needed trauma-informed wellness supports before they were ready to pursue education or employment goals. She described adding a wellness component that introduces participants to activities such as yoga, mindfulness, and meditation, while also connecting those with greater needs to bilingual, trauma-informed therapists at little or no cost. She added that art and baking classes also serve both therapeutic and economic

purposes, with some participants beginning to sell their handmade items and creative work.

With regard to transportation and older adult services, Ms. Quattro stated that assisted transportation is one of MCOHA's legacy programs and remains a critical service for older adults and adults with disabilities. She reported that the program receives county support through Grant-in-Aid and Area Plan funding, but demand exceeds capacity by approximately 400 to 600 requests per year. In addition to transportation, she described senior socialization activities, including weekly gatherings, field trips, holiday events, and programs funded by a recent age-friendly grant. She shared that when seniors in residential buildings were unable to attend events, staff brought meals, gifts, and companionship directly to their doors, and that similar door-to-door outreach was used to deliver holiday meals and support to families and seniors unable to travel.

Ms. Quattro also highlighted a new arts initiative, funded through a partnership between the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and Morris Arts, and administered by Morris Arts. She explained that MCOHA is moving and expanding some of its art programming into the renovated Richards/Newberry building in Dover, where classes will be offered not only to women but also to seniors, students, younger children, and the public. Looking ahead, she stated that although the organization has long-term goals for growth and geographic expansion, its immediate focus is on responding to current community needs, particularly those related to immigration crises, food insecurity, and access to services. She added that MCOHA is also working to diversify its funding and prepare for a future relocation, as its current building is expected to be redeveloped within approximately three years.

Following the presentation, Ms. Roers thanked Ms. Quattro for the informative update and noted the importance of MCOHA's services, particularly in light of current immigration-related concerns. Ms. Quattro thanked the County for its partnerships and support, and Ms. Hess noted that it was encouraging to see implementation of some of the programmatic changes discussed during the agency's review.

III. Approval of the February 24, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Pawelczyk motioned to approve the February 24, 2026, meeting minutes, which were seconded by Mr. Oexle. The motion carried unanimously, with no opposition and one abstention.

IV. Closed Session – 2026 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Funding

Ms. Roers asked that all nonvoting members, the members of the public, and those with a conflict of interest recuse themselves from the meeting. Ms. Bjornson, Ms. George, and Ms. Falconer left the conference room. Ms. Legg, Mr. Nagel, Ms. Quattro, Ms. Ramiriz, and Ms. Savino were placed in a virtual breakout room on the Webex Meeting platform.

Mr. Pawelczyk motioned, and Mr. Oexle seconded to begin the closed session of the meeting. There were no abstentions and no opposition. Motion carried.

According to P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, the Open Public Meetings Act, the board closed the open portion of the meeting at 5:53 p.m.

Return to Meeting

The meeting reopened at 5:55 p.m. Ms. Bjornson, Ms. George, Ms. Falconer, Ms. Legg, Mr. Nagel, Ms. Ramiriz, and Ms. Savino returned.

Actions Resulting from Closed Session – ESG Funding

Ms. Roers stated that the Program Review Subcommittee met, reviewed, and provided the ESG Funding recommendations. Let the record reflect that the Council voted to approve the request in closed session. Therefore, we need a motion to approve it in open session.

Mr. Oexle motioned to approve the recommendations as discussed in the closed session. Mr. Pawelczyk seconded the motion. All were in favor, with two abstentions and no opposition. Motion carried.

V. Chair Report

Ms. Roers reminded members that there will be no HSAC meeting in April and asked them to note that on their calendars.

Ms. Roers reported that she and Ms. Hess attended the State HSAC meeting on Friday, March 6, 2026.

- Announcements regarding recent administrative changes, including the confirmation of Dr. Steven Cha as Commissioner of Human Services and the naming of Ms. Jade Bettelli as Chief of Staff. She further reported that Attorney General Jennifer Davenport and Commissioner Sarah Adelman, along with Governor Murphy, announced Executive Order No. 12, which addresses protections related to ICE activity on state property and at residences, as well as information on the related reporting portal and Know Your Rights resources for New Jersey residents.
- The State budget is expected soon, and it is indicated that it may be helpful for the Council to review and discuss it at a future meeting. Ms. Roers also shared that the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute gave a presentation on community outreach initiatives and that a flyer was available for members. In addition, she noted that the next State HSAC meeting is expected to include a presentation from the Office of New Americans.
- Ms. Roers recognized the meeting as Ms. Hess's last HSAC meeting and expressed appreciation for her many years of service, organization, and support to the Council. Ms. Hess thanked the group and shared her appreciation for the relationships and experiences she has had through her work with the HSAC.

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

VII. New Jersey Department of Children & Family – no report

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

Ms. George advised that licensing regulations for relatives and kin have been expedited to 60 days, which will help the Division license family-based homes quickly. She also referenced data from October through December and noted that approximately 50 percent of children were connected to family or kin placements, while efforts to identify additional resource homes remain ongoing. Ms. George further stated that DCPP is available to provide presentations or outreach to agencies interested in learning more about resource family recruitment. In response to a question about whether the Division was seeing any impact from immigration-related issues, Ms. George stated that the office had encountered a small number of unaccompanied minors in need of services and continues to work through those cases within the system.

Ms. George introduced Ms. Falconer as the new Resource Development Specialist for the Morris West office. This is her first time attending, and Ms. Falconer noted that she wanted to observe and participate in the meeting. All members welcomed Ms. Falconer.

A. Morris East

Criteria	February 2026
Children <5-years old, Mother <30 -years old	4
Substance Affected Newborn Cases (aka Safe Care)	1
New	30
Reopens	35
Active	4
CPS	63
CWS	12
Domestic Violence	13
Sex Abuse	3
Unhoused	0
SPRU	16
Spanish Speaking	9
< 90 Day Re-opens	6
Substance abuse	15
Child on Child Sex Abuse	4
Unaccompanied Minors	0

B. Morris West

Criteria	February 2026
Children <5-years old, Mother <30 -years old	4
Substance Affected Newborn Cases (aka Safe Care)	0
New	35
Reopens	7
Active	7
CPS	82
CWS	7
Domestic Violence	27
Sex Abuse	5
Unhoused	0
SPRU	28
Spanish Speaking	8
< 90 Day Re-opens	43
Substance abuse	19
Child on Child Sex Abuse	0
Unaccompanied Minors	0

IX. Staff Reports

A. Human Services

Ms. Hess submitted a written report and advised that March is recognized as Women’s History Month, with International Women’s Day observed annually on March 8th. She noted that, in recognition of Women’s History Month, the Morris County Board of County Commissioners would be issuing a proclamation. Ms. Hess also reminded members that the 2026 Seeds of Change Award Ceremony would take place on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 5:00 pm /Commissioners Meeting in the Knox Room, Room 525, Administration and Records Building, 10 Court Street, Morristown. She reported that this year’s recipient is Theresa Markila of Mutual Morris, and invited all members to attend, and noted that refreshments would be available immediately following the ceremony.

B. Council on Aging, Disabilities & Veterans

Mr. Dillion submitted a written report for the Council on Aging, Disabilities & Veterans. The report noted that Morris County Commissioner Director Shaw, together with Commissioners Mastrangelo and Selen, partnered with Cedar Crest Senior Living Community’s Veterans Club to honor local veterans, with 21 residents receiving Morris County Distinguished Military Service Medals, along

with County certificates and semi-quincentennial baseball caps. The County College of Morris Veterans Resource Center and the Morris County Veterans Service Office, recognition by the Board of County Commissioners of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, and National Nutrition Month activities through the Morris County Nutrition Program, including live cooking demonstrations in partnership with Employment Horizons. The next ACADV meeting was announced for April 7, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the Morris County Library.

X. Old Business

A. Start Strong NJ Blueprint

In follow-up to the February 24, 2026, meeting, during which the Council was advised of the release of the Blueprint for “Affordable Child Care: New Jersey Doesn’t Work Without It” and the importance of affordable, high-quality child care to children, families, workforce participation, and overall community well-being, members revisited the issue and discussed next steps for local advocacy. It was noted that HSAC had previously identified potential advocacy opportunities, and at the March 24, 2026, meeting, members agreed to prepare a draft advocacy letter in support of the Start Strong NJ Blueprint. Additional materials shared by Mr. Valli of NORWESCAP, as well as information from the Start Strong NJ kickoff meeting, were referenced, including the Blueprint’s focus on affordability, worker wages, quality of care, and access to services, to ensure that State leadership remains aware of the ongoing child care needs across New Jersey.

XI. New Business

A. Sidwalks Connecting Human Services

Ms. Roers reported that during a discussion at the ESG Funding Committee, concerns were raised about the number of pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along West Hanover Avenue between County facilities and Morris Plains, where there are no sidewalks. She read a proposed advocacy letter to the Morris County Board of County Commissioners requesting the creation of safe pedestrian pathways, noting that many of the individuals walking in that area are consumers of human services. Members discussed revising the language of the letter, the possible value of adding supporting injury or traffic data, and whether responsibility for any future sidewalk planning would rest with the County or another entity. Although a motion was initially made to send the letter, the vote was ultimately set aside so that the draft could be updated, circulated to members, and voted on at the next meeting.

- i. Ms. Boyce asked whether any data existed regarding injuries or incidents in the area that could be added to the letter. Ms. Roers responded that she did not have that information but believed the police department might have it, and stated that she would look into whether supporting data could be obtained. Another unidentified member raised the question of whether responsibility for the sidewalk would fall to the municipality or the County; discussion followed.

B. Shelter Accommodations for shift workers

Ms. Roers next advised that the ESG Funding Committee had also discussed the issue of shelter accommodations for individuals working nontraditional or overnight shifts, particularly for warming centers that operate overnight but not during daytime hours. Members agreed that the issue warranted further discussion with the appropriate stakeholders to better understand which short-term housing or shelter options exist for people working alternative schedules. It was also suggested that this need be considered as a possible funding priority during the next cycle of planning and applications.

- i. Members asked for clarification regarding the population being discussed, specifically whether the concern was that individuals working different hours do not have access to shelter when needed. Ms. Roers clarified that the concern involved individuals who may be unable to access shelter after evening intake hours and may instead need a safe place during daytime hours. Ms. Legg of Homeless Solutions then asked whether the issue was limited to Code Blue season or extended to year-round shelter services. Ms. Archer responded that, while the concern was prompted by the warming center and Code Blue discussion, it opened a broader conversation about possible service gaps. Ms. Legg further explained that traditional shelter programs generally accommodate unique and overnight work schedules because they operate 24/7, although overnight warming center arrangements may be more limited. Members then discussed the possibility of gathering data over time to better understand the extent of the unmet need.

C. Table of Hope Closure

Ms. Bjornson informed members that Table of Hope had announced a temporary closure. She noted that the program provided evening meals and served a significant Spanish-speaking population that may not routinely access other community food providers. Members discussed the potential gap this closure may create, particularly because few providers offer dinner service at similar times. It was noted that rising food, staffing, and operational costs appeared to be contributing factors. Concern was also expressed regarding the lack of notice to the community and the possibility that a temporary closure could become prolonged. Ms. Archer further noted that discussions regarding related county services were expected the following day.

XII. Subcommittee Reports

All subcommittees will convene in April.

XIII. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Mental Health Addiction Services Advisory Committee

Ms. Archer reported on the March 12, 2026, MHASAB meeting. She advised that the Committee received a presentation from Ms. Palmer, Director of Suicide Prevention at the Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris (MHAEM), who provided information on local suicide prevention programming and outreach. It was reported that from July 2025 through March 2026, the suicide prevention webpage received 580 views, the “You Are Not Alone” webpage received 2,691 views, and the “Stop Teen Suicide” webpage received 460 views, reflecting continued community use of these resources. It was further noted that the suicide prevention program, which had previously been supported through County and COVID-related funding, is expected to lose funding later this year as those funds are exhausted. Additional updates included notice of a recent State request for proposals related to opioid overdose infectious disease prevention, education, and support; an update that Fiscal Year 2027 Municipal Alliance plans are being revised due to changes by the Governor’s Council eliminating one-time assemblies as an allowable activity; and confirmation that Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey (CSPNJ), the County’s coordinated entry entity, is now operational and accepting referrals through its intake line for individuals experiencing homelessness. Lastly, it was reported that Ms. Brown of MHA shared concern regarding a potential reallocation of NJ4S funding as the current program approaches its three-year mark.

B. Youth Services Advisory Committee – Ms. Fosko provided a written report prior to the meeting, which was as follows.

It was reported that the Youth Services Advisory Committee met on March 19, 2026, at 1 Executive Drive with a virtual attendance option available. During the meeting, Ms. Dresser, Youth and Adolescent Services Coordinator at the Center for Evaluation and Counseling, presented information on the new Youth Psychiatric Counseling Initiative (YPCI), which provides free individual therapy and psychiatric care to Morris County youth ages 12 to 17 through funding from the Youth Justice Commission and includes Spanish-speaking clinicians. It was further reported that referrals may be made by probation, school staff, parents, or through self-referral. In addition, the Youth Justice Commission provided an overview of the 2027 Comprehensive Funding Plan Update, noting that the finalized plan is expected in the coming weeks. It was also noted that the YSAC Planning Subcommittee will meet in April to begin the planning process. The report also advised that mandatory Juvenile Automated Management System (JAMS) training for currently funded Youth Justice Commission providers will be held on April 21, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Human Services Conference Room at 82, and that the next YSAC meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

XIV. Partnership Announcements

A. Continuum of Care (Coc)

Ms. Archer reported that the Continuum of Care would be meeting later that week and that additional updates would be provided at the May meeting.

XV. Adjournment

Mr. Pawelczyk motioned to adjourn, and Ms. Bennett-Santoro seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Marie Hess
HSAC Coordinator