

**COUNTY OF MORRIS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
**DIVISION OF COMMUNITY & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

P.O. Box 900  
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Board of County Commissioners

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**MENTAL HEALTH ADDICTION SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD (MHASAB)**  
**Thursday, February 19, 2026, 5:15 PM – Hybrid**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**I. Call to Order and Attendance**

Ms. Archer called the meeting to order at 5:17 PM. A quorum was established and attendance was as follows:

**Board Members:**

Brenda Budd-Dunn, Rockaway Municipal Alliance Coordinator (virtual)  
Chris Chernick, Citizen Representative – Vice-Chair (virtual)  
Linda Csengeto, Citizen Representative (virtual)  
Victor DeVito, Citizen Representative – Chair  
Julian Hill, Esq, Morris County Prosecutor’s Office  
David Martinak, Citizen Representative  
Justin Sudol, Morris County Sheriff’s Office (virtual)  
Meg Rodriguez, Morris County Prosecutor’s Office (virtual)  
LaJuan Tucker, Esq, Morris County Prosecutor’s Office  
Amy Villano, Acenda Integrated Health (virtual)  
Chelsea Whiting, Morris County Sheriff’s Office (virtual)  
Brian Young, Citizen Representative

**Board Liaisons:**

Rose Brown, MSW, Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris  
Cynthia Gatica, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)  
Leena George, Division of Child Protection & Permanency (DCP&P)

**Morris County Staff:**

Amy Archer, Division of Community & Behavioral Health Services  
Kasey Errico, Department of Human Services (virtual)  
Kensie Fosko, Division of Community & Behavioral Health Services

Anna Marie Hess, Division of Community & Behavioral Health Services  
Louise Lichtenberg, Division of Community & Behavioral Health Services

**Others in Attendance:**

Kevin Malloy, Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services (virtual)  
Naveen Setya, Community Member

**II. Vote – 2026 Chair and Vice-Chair:**

- A. Ms. Archer reminded the Board of the current nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair. She asked if there were any other nominations. Upon hearing none, Ms. Archer requested a motion to approve Mr. DeVito to serve as Chair and Mr. Chernick to serve as Vice-Chair for the 2026 term. Mr. Martinak made a motion and Mr. Young seconded. All were in favor with no opposition and no abstentions. Motion Carried.

Mr. DeVito conducted the rest of the meeting.

**III. Approval of Minutes:**

**A. November 13, 2025, Minutes**

- i. Mr. DeVito, Chair, requested a motion to approve the November 13, 2025, meeting minutes. Mr. Martinak made a motion, and Mr. Young seconded. All were in favor to approve the minutes without modifications. There was no opposition and one abstention. Motion carried.

**B. January 8, 2026, Minutes**

- i. Mr. DeVito, Chair, requested a motion to approve the January 8, 2026, meeting minutes. Mr. Young made a motion, and Mr. Martinak seconded. All were in favor to approve the minutes without modifications. There was no opposition and there were two abstentions. Motion carried.

**IV. Open to Public - No comment.**

**V. Mobile Outreach Presentations:**

**A. Mobile Crisis Outreach Response Teams (MCORTs) – Mr. Malloy**

**i. Introduction:**

- a. The goals of the MCORT program are to provide access to timely crisis intervention services, de-escalate crises, divert callers away from higher-level emergency services or interactions with law enforcement when safe to do so, and deliver equitable services to all New Jersey residents.  
b. MCORT can also provide warm line transfers to 911 when necessary.

**ii. How the MCORTs Work**

- a. The MCORTs are dispatched exclusively through New Jersey's 988 call centers. Outreach teams will respond only when intervention is needed and only to callers who accept their services. The goal is to reach the caller within one hour of accepting the referral. Upon arrival, the team will work to de-escalate and stabilize the individual as well as link them to appropriate care and support in their area.

- b. Teams are composed of two people – a Crisis Intervention Specialist and a Peer Support Specialist. A masters-level clinician also supervises the team and provides support. All team staff members receive training on administering Narcan, as well as on various crisis intervention and de-escalation skills.
- c. Law enforcement are not involved in the MCORT program unless the situation is deemed unsafe.
- d. Bridgeway operates the MCORT program in Morris, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon, and Somerset counties. They began services in March 2025 and began 24/7 coverage in mid-August 2025.

**iii. Statistics**

- a. Since becoming active, the MCORT program has received almost 100 dispatch requests with a completion rate of approximately 78%. Less than 10% of completed requests have required the involvement of emergency services or law enforcement. The percentage of dispatches that were deemed incomplete was due to the caller declining services. Mr. Malloy noted that Morris County has the highest percentage of referral requests.
- b. In Morris County, there have been 40 dispatches so far, with 30 completed. Of the completed dispatches, 2 required the presence of law enforcement, and 4 resulted in the consumer being brought voluntarily to the emergency room. 58% of referrals are made during the 7:00 am – 3:00 pm shift, 38% are made during the 3:00 pm – 11:00 pm shift, and the rest are made during the 11:00 pm – 7:00 am shift.

**iv. Questions**

- a. Ms. Brown asked if the MCORT program operates 24/7. Mr. Malloy stated that they do, but they have experienced difficulty in staffing weekends and the second and third shifts.
- b. Ms. Gatica asked how many teams are available per shift. Mr. Malloy stated that they have 1 team during the first shift, 2 teams for the second shift, and 1 team for the third shift. Each shift team covers all five counties where the MCORT operates.
- c. Mr. Setya asked if Bridgeway’s MCORT program has any partnerships with hospitals for emergency room services. Mr. Malloy clarified that they do not work directly with hospitals. However, Bridgeway is currently conducting a trial program where they receive referrals through Somerset’s Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS).
- d. Ms. Gatica discussed the new designation of the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital as Somerset County’s psychiatric emergency screening center. She asked if the PESS trial program is due to the transition. Mr. Malloy confirmed that Bridgeway is working with the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital as a result of the new designation.
- e. Ms. Gatica asked for information regarding the marketing of the MCORT program. Mr. Malloy stated that Bridgeway staff attend community events and mental health board meetings as a part of an ongoing effort. He noted that the current barrier to increasing referral numbers is

developing a more effective transition from the 988 call centers to the MCORTs.

**B. ARRIVE Together – Ms. Rodriguez**

**i. Introduction**

- a. Ms. Rodriguez shared a video introducing the ARRIVE Together program and describing its collaboration between the Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris (MHA) and the Morris County Prosecutor’s Office.
- b. Since the beginning of operations in December 2021, Morris County has recorded 2,542 interactions through the program. Ms. Rodriguez stated that there is currently an ARRIVE presence in every Morris County municipality with the exception of the Borough of Victory Gardens. She noted that Mount Olive Township has its own program similar to ARRIVE through a federal grant.

**ii. How ARRIVE Works**

- a. Responders, and MHA co-responders, are dispatched through 911 calls to assist individuals experiencing a mental health crisis or provide resources and support for loved ones affected by the aftermath of a crisis, such as death from a suicide. ARRIVE can also provide support to individuals who witnessed a traumatic situation that involved 911 and could benefit from crisis counseling. Responders will link individuals to numerous services and agencies, including those outside of MHA when appropriate.
- b. The ARRIVE program is in service Monday – Friday from 7:00 am – 11:00 pm. When a call is received outside of operating hours, responders will follow up with the individuals who required their services.
- c. Callers can decline services from ARRIVE if they do not want to speak with a mental health professional.
- d. Outreach must be provided for 30 days following the dispatch according to legislation, but services often extend beyond that timeframe.

**iii. Other Programs**

- a. Ms. Rodriguez described two other programs separate from ARRIVE that also involve collaboration between law enforcement and other disciplines.
- b. The Critical Incident Response Program assists individuals experiencing a mental health crisis who have barricaded themselves into a residence and appear to be a danger to themselves or others. Mental health professionals will work with law enforcement and the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) to provide support. This program is available 24/7.
- c. The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training Program is a 40-hour week-long course that gives insight to the participants on how the different disciplines, such as law enforcement or social work, operate and how they can work together. Morris County’s CIT program began in 2021 and they host 4 classes a year open to anyone interested in registering, including the public.

**iv. Questions**

- a. Mr. Young asked about staffing for the program and inquired about the possibility of volunteers. Ms. Rodriguez stated that it would be difficult to implement since the volunteers would be working directly with law enforcement in situations that could be deemed unsafe and would be required to hold a master's degree.

**VI. Chair Report – Mr. DeVito**

- A. The next meeting will be held on March 12, 2026.

**VII. State Liaison Report:**

**A. Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) – Ms. Gatica**

- i. Care Plus NJ was awarded the Designated Screening Services Request for Proposals (RFP) for Bergen County and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital was awarded the RFP for Somerset County.
- ii. The next Early Intervention Support Services (EISS) meeting will be held on March 19 at 11:00 am. Invitations were sent out to the EISS directors via email.
- iii. The next Quarterly Provider meeting will be held on March 10 at 10:00 am.
- iv. An RFP titled Opioid Overdose/Infectious Disease Prevention, Education and Support was announced. Questions were due February 19 at 4:00 pm. An Intent to Apply must be submitted by March 9 at 4:00 pm, and the proposal deadline is March 16 at 4:00 pm.
- v. Both the DMHAS and Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) websites have been revamped to make them more user-friendly and easier to navigate.
- vi. The Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) has been expanded to all 21 counties. It provides services to clinically eligible individuals aged 55+ so they can remain in their homes and community.

**VIII. Staff Reports:**

**A. Municipal Alliance Coordinator – Ms. Fosko**

- i. Ms. Fosko is in the process of reviewing all FY2027 Plans. She and Ms. Archer will be meeting with staff from the Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder (GCSUD) on February 20 to discuss the new guidelines and assess how to best assist municipalities.

**B. Addiction Services Coordinator – Ms. Fosko**

- i. On Tuesday, February 17, the Planning Subcommittee met to discuss how to utilize the FY2026 Innovations Grant. A follow-up meeting will be held in the coming weeks.

**C. Mental Health Administrator – Ms. Archer**

- i. Subcommittee sign-ups will be sent out following the meeting. Members are asked to sign up for at least two subcommittees.
  - o Mr. DeVito stated that sign-ups were sent out in January and asked if they were being circulated again. Ms. Fosko clarified that they received a few responses with no name and would like to resend the link to ensure everyone is accounted for.

- ii. The Continuum of Care (CoC) held a Coordinated Entry (CE) Provider meeting earlier in the month. CE is the point of entry that an individual would enter when experiencing homelessness and requesting services. The Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey (CSPNJ) is the new CE organization that will manage the system. Local providers are encouraged to reach out to CSPNJ if they are participating in CE.
  - o Ms. Gatica asked if providers were linked to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Ms. Archer stated that they were linked to the system and received their IDs on February 18. Once they receive access, Ms. Archer will distribute the flyer informing providers who to call when someone is experiencing homelessness.

**IX. Subcommittee Reports:**

- A. Funding** – No report
- B. Planning** – No report
- C. Legislative/Advocacy** – No report
- D. County Alliance Steering Subcommittee (CASS)** – No report

**X. Joint Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) Report** – Ms. Brown

- A.** The last PAC meeting was held on February 6.
- B.** Morris County reported that mental health subgrant agreements would be sent out shortly in the coming weeks.
- C.** GPPH reported a current hospital census of 384 individuals, with 90 from Morris County and 22 on Conditional Extension Pending Placement (CEPP). There were 13 Morris County admissions and 13 discharges.
- D.** DCP&P were not present but did provide data for January.
- E.** Agency updates included an announcement from Community Hope regarding an upcoming Pickleball Tournament at the Willowbrook Mall, and the Hackensack Carrier Clinic shared that they expanded their children’s services unit.
- F.** Freedom House sent out a flyer via email prior to the meeting regarding current bed availability at both the Brian House and Egan House.

**XI. Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) Report** – Ms. Hess

- A.** At the January meeting, Michelle Roers was voted in as Chair and Joann Bjornson was voted in as Vice-Chair for the 2026 term.
- B.** United Way announced that they are offering Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) for eligible residents. More information can be found on their website.
- C.** Jersey Battered Women’s Services (JBWS) shared that February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. A toolkit is available on their website.
- D.** Recommendations for the 2026 Seeds of Change Award were approved in closed session, and the recipient’s name will be announced in a public release. The award will be presented at the Commissioners Meeting on March 25.

**XII. Old Business**

- A. Ms. Archer shared that the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was originally released last year but has since been pulled back. Due to this, the CoC Executive Committee has voted to renew funded projects from the year prior and not reallocate funding. Ms. Archer added that the Committee is encouraging agencies to evaluate their current programs based on what the anticipated future guidelines will be.

**XIII. New Business** – No comment.

**XIV. Adjourn Meeting**

Mr. DeVito, Chair, requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Martinak made a motion and Mr. Young seconded. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Lichtenberg  
Administrative Professional