

**Maine Health Access Foundation
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2022
(Held via videoconference.)**

Trustees Present: Catherine Ryder (Chair); Barbara Crider, Dennis King, Michael Lambke, Barbara Leonard (*ex-officio*), Kevin Lewis, Samuela Manages, Edward Miller, Grace Odimayo, Susan Roche, Clarissa Sabattis, Toho Soma, Odette Thurston

Trustees Absent: Abdulkerim Said, Ian Yaffe

CAC Members Present: Donna Brown, Noah Negin, Sara Squires

Guest Present: Riley Albair

Staff Present: Margo Beland, Charles Dwyer, Andrea Francis, Jake Grindle, Ruta Kadonoff, Dani Kalian (recorder), Jeb Murphy, Frank Martinez Nocito

Welcome

Chair Catherine Ryder called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and welcomed those present. New Trustees Barbara Crider and Kevin Lewis were welcomed to their first meeting. Introductions were made, a relationship-building exercise was conducted, and the meeting agenda was reviewed.

Consent Agenda

Chair Ryder asked if any items on the consent agenda required discussion. Appreciation for the amount of information found in the President's Report was shared noting that it's helpful and impressive seeing an outline of the work and collaboration that's been done over the past two months. *It was MOVED, SECONDED (Thurston/King), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the following consent agenda items:*

- President's Report
- April 14, 2022, Joint Board & Community Advisory Committee meeting minutes
- April Treasurer's Report
- Financial Dashboard as of April 30, 2022
- Approval for Trustees Ed Miller and Clarissa Sabattis to join the Executive Committee

Learning Session: History of Disability Rights and Current Issues

CEO Barbara Leonard introduced the learning session opportunity about the history of disability rights and current issues. Sara Squires, Public Policy Director of Disability Rights Maine and Community Advisory Committee member, and Riley Albair, Deaf Services Program Director, Disability Rights Maine, were welcomed. Ms. Squires and Ms. Albair provided a presentation to build understanding about the systemic challenges to access health care for people with disabilities, and the health disparities experienced by people with various types of disability.

Highlights of their presentation, *Health Inequity: Health Care Barriers Facing People with Disabilities*, include:

- In 1977 Congress funded the protection and advocacy agency (P&A) system to protect the legal rights of citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- Disability Rights Maine (DRM) is Maine's designated P&A for individuals with disabilities. DRM's mission is to ensure autonomy, inclusion, equality, and access for people with disabilities in Maine.
- In creating the P&A system, Congress identified specific disabilities and issues in which P&As were instructed to focus. Access to quality health care was not included. However, DRM and P&As nationally have increasingly recognized the urgent need for advocacy on healthcare access for people with disabilities. Disability often reduces access to healthcare, while increasing the likelihood of health disparities.
- People with disabilities experience significant health disparities as compared to people without disabilities. Although disability is common, health disparities in this population remain largely unaddressed. People with disabilities are more likely to be denied health care than people without disabilities, and face unique barriers and stigma when accessing health care.
- Systemic barriers to health care include bias and stigma, accessibility, provider training and awareness, other social factors, and data.
- Ways DRM has worked to combat health inequity:
 - Individual and systemic advocacy on access to healthcare issues
 - In 2021, DRM represented individuals in over 100 cases involving access to health care
 - Vaccine outreach and education targeted to people with disabilities, especially Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - DRM Health Equity team and workgroup
 - Involvement and collaboration with the Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment
- With support from MeHAF, DRM issued an RFP in May 2022 for contractual work focused on data collection and drafting a report on the barriers to health access for Maine citizens with disabilities.

Trustees shared the following comments and questions:

- Regarding the challenges related to experiences with care providers, the combination of bias, physical barriers (especially in exam rooms), and appointment time constraints creates a perfect storm resulting in disparities in access to care.
- Are there any promising efforts underway that are introducing interventions that have proven effective in addressing these disparities? Where applicable, has telehealth been a help thus far? Or do those platforms also pose frustrations and barriers?
 - While telehealth represents a lot of opportunities, it is not a silver bullet that will work for everyone's access barriers.
 - It's important to focus on and require provider training and awareness in clinical training programs.
- Regarding the lack of quantitative data about disparities in health and barrier to care, are there plans for developing tools to collect data around health outcomes, health status, and disparities?
 - This is a rich place for learning. Recognition of how reactive the health care system can be to data that may sometimes be incomplete.

Ms. Leonard thanked Ms. Squires and Ms. Albair for this extremely informative and thought-provoking presentation. Ms. Squires noted that the slides will be shared which include many citations to additional resources to explore. Ms. Albair noted that this is a fixable problem with potential avenues for improvement.

Program and Grants Committee – Dennis King (Chair) and Program Staff

Chair Ryder noted that this is Dennis King’s last meeting as Chair of the Program and Grants Committee and thanked him for his work over several years in that role. He will be joining the Strategic Planning Committee. Grace Odimayo will assume the Chair position of the Program and Grants Committee.

Approval of Grant to Maine Council on Aging to Support the *Access to Care Initiative*: Vice President for Programs Ruta Kadonoff introduced the grant application for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) which seeks a three-year grant totaling \$585,839 to lead the development and implementation of an action and advocacy roadmap to increase access to quality direct care professionals by older people, people with physical and/or intellectual disabilities, and those with behavioral health challenges, across all settings.

Meeting packet material was referenced which indicated that the project will engage a broad-based coalition to conduct and publicize research, develop messaging strategies and conduct public awareness campaigns, increase the number and kinds of people engaged in advocating for a robust care workforce, facilitate partnerships to pilot new solutions, promote quality within direct care jobs and the provision of quality, person-centered care, and support, and support other initiatives and efforts involving this workforce.

It was noted that this proposal represents a significant commitment of grant resources that is larger than typical of MeHAF grants in recent years, however, the magnitude and urgency of the problem and the potential this collaboratively designed approach offers to make a significant impact merit this level of investment. The proposal is consistent with a number of MeHAF’s other major investments over our 20-year history that have resulted in lasting statewide impact and is recommended for Board approval by the Program and Grants Committee.

Trustees shared the following comments and questions:

- The policy component of this proposal is key that will include organizations as well as legislative levels, both state and national.
- It is a thoughtful proposal that will support the vital purpose of direct care workers.
- Highly consistent with MeHAF’s mission with suggestion to be careful not to underfund this effort.
- MeHAF’s involvement in this effort can be a catalyst for creative solutions, including discovering what the cost is for not solving this problem.
- The multi-year commitment of this initiative is taken into account when considering budget implications.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest – The following conflicts were declared.

Individual:	Reason:
Kevin Lewis	Board member of Maine Council on Aging
Catherine Ryder	Board member of Maine Council on Aging

Mr. Lewis and Ms. Ryder were placed in a waiting room just prior to the vote.

It was MOVED, SECONDED (Miller/Lambke), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve a grant of \$585,839 to Maine Council on Aging for the Access to Care Initiative, for the grant

period July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025, consistent with standard MeHAF contract obligations.

Mr. Lewis and Ms. Ryder were removed from the waiting room after the vote was completed.

Approval of Grant to Maine Behavioral Health Foundation to Support the *Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC)*: VPP Ruta Kadonoff introduced the grant application for the Maine Behavioral Health Foundation (MBHF) which seeks a two-year grant totaling \$147,000 to fund the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services (Alliance) in developing a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Learning Collaborative to support new and existing CCBHC agencies, as well as those interested in helping to shape the model in Maine. The Alliance is the statewide membership association for community behavioral health organizations affiliated with the MBHF, which works to advance treatment and recovery-oriented systems of care for Mainers experiencing mental health and substance use challenges through advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and professional development.

Meeting packet material was referenced which indicated that the Alliance will also partner with the Co-Occurring Collaborative Serving Maine (CCSME) to meaningfully engage consumers in creating a roadmap for priorities in CCBHCs in Maine. This consumer perspective will provide vital information to support the agencies implementing CCBHCs throughout Maine. Program staff believe this project holds great potential to support the development of the CCBHC model in Maine, thus dramatically increasing access to integrated mental health and SUD treatment services. The project is highly aligned with MeHAF strategy to help build a robust, trauma-informed, integrated behavioral health care system in Maine, with special emphasis on treatment and recovery for substance use disorders.

The grant application is recommended for Board approval by the Program and Grants Committee.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest – The following conflicts were declared.

Individual:	Reason:
Catherine Ryder	Board Member, sitting past president, Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services
Toho Soma	Employee of UNE; works with Sweetser as contract evaluator

Ms. Ryder and Mr. Soma were placed in a waiting room just prior to the vote.

It was MOVED, SECONDED (Lewis/Manages), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve a grant of \$147,000 to the Maine Behavioral Health Foundation for the CCBHC Learning Collaborative project, for the period of June 15, 2022 thru June 14, 2024, consistent with standard MeHAF contract obligations.

Ms. Ryder and Mr. Soma were removed from the waiting room after the vote was completed.

Community Responsive Grants Program: VPP Ruta Kadonoff reported that the Community Responsive Grants Program (CRG) Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on May 9, with applications for the first phase of the process, the Letter of Inquiry, due June 13.

Systems Improvement and Innovation Responsive Grants (SIIRG): VPP Ruta Kadonoff noted that this second year of SIIRG grantmaking began with a pool of 36 applicants who submitted Letters of Inquiry (LOI), from which a staff review team invited 25 applicants to submit full proposals. Full proposals were considered by a panel of thirteen external and six staff reviewers. The panel met to discuss the proposals and arrived, by vote of the external members, at a slate of recommended grantees, which was presented to and approved by the Program and Grants Committee. The approved list of grantees with their project titles was included in the meeting material.

COVID-19 Directed Grants: VPP Ruta Kadonoff reported that staff has continued to identify opportunities for strategic COVID-19 funding, focusing on addressing critical issues not being addressed by government relief funding. Staff proposed and the Program and Grants Committee approved 21 grants to support three such groups of organizations facing challenges in ongoing response to and recovery from the pandemic, and more recently, the financial pressures of subsequent inflation. Like our other COVID directed grants, these are unrestricted grants made through an expedited process to limit grantee burden. The approved list of grantees was included in the meeting material.

Governance Committee – Susan Roche (Chair) and Barbara Leonard (CEO)

Board Recruitment Needs for 2023: Governance Committee Chair Sue Roche noted that the Governance Committee is planning for April 2023 recruitment needs for the Board and Community Advisory Committee. Three Board members will be needed (vacancies left by Miller, Ndayininahaze, and Ryder); and up to five CAC members can be recruited (vacancies left by Bartol, Clark, Hair, Neptune, and Nesin [who will not renew for a second term]). The goal of recruitment is to identify candidates with experiential, demographic and geographic diversity, commitment to MeHAF’s mission and the energy to serve on a nonprofit board, who can provide advice from personal experience, and who support our efforts to advance equity. Current Demographic and Experience Grids were distributed and Trustees were asked to review them and to share ideas regarding the skills, experiences, and expertise that the Governance Committee should look for during this round of recruitment. This feedback will inform the process at the Governance Committee’s June 21 meeting, when it will consider the recommendations from the discussion at this Board meeting and will also review the Board Demographic and Experience Grid to further refine a set of priority skills and attributes for 2023 recruitment. Trustees were asked to review their entry on the grid and to provide any needed updates to staff.

Ms. Roche reviewed draft priorities that the Governance Committee brainstormed at its May meeting. Trustees offered that Cumberland and York counties be included in the list of needed geographic representation.

New Business –Barbara Leonard (CEO)

Update from Trustee Clarissa Sabattis: Trustee Clarissa Sabattis, Chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, provided an update on tribal issues that had been considered in the Maine Legislature this past session. This was a follow-up to the presentation she and Corey Hinton provided in August 2021.

Update from New Trustee and Community Advisory Committee Member Orientation: CEO Leonard reported that the orientation for new Trustees (Barbara Crider, Kevin Lewis) and CAC member (Fenton Jones) was held on June 6. The orientation included sharing information about the work of MeHAF, responsibilities of its Board and CAC, along with our equity work. Trustees

Crider and Lewis noted that the orientation was a good opportunity to become grounded in MeHAF's mission and activities.

August Board Meeting: CEO Leonard noted that the August agenda will include updates to the MeHAF Employee Handbook and Annual Program Report. These materials may be sent prior to the full meeting packet to allow ample time for review. The CEO contract renewal will also be part of the August agenda.

Trustee Membership Status: CEO Leonard shared that Trustee Samuela Manages will be leaving Maine in order to participate in an education opportunity in Massachusetts. While we are currently in the process of updating our bylaws to include a leave of absence policy, it is not now in effect, therefore, Dr. Manages may need to resign from the Board. We will know more after a meeting with the Attorney General next week, at which the proposed bylaws changes will be reviewed and discussed.

**Trustee Check-In and Meeting Evaluation
Catherine Ryder (Chair)**

At 3:59 pm it was MOVED, SECONDED (King/Soma), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to move into Executive Session to gather feedback about the meeting process, solicit suggestions for improvement, or other issues of concern. At 4:02 pm, it was MOVED, SECONDED (Lambke/Sabattis), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to leave Executive Session.

Next Meeting

The Board of Trustees will next meet on August 11, 2022.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm (*Lambke/King*).

Respectfully Submitted,
Barbara A. Leonard, MPH
President & CEO