

# Meeting Summary for BHPOC Zoom Meeting

Nov 12, 2025 01:54 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) ID: 985 7792 0425

## Quick recap

The meeting began with introductions of new council members. Interim Commissioner Susan Hamilton presented an overview of Connecticut's behavioral health system, discussing DCF's role in children's services and the state's service continuum, while emphasizing the importance of collaboration and integration across agencies. The conversation ended with updates on various initiatives including funding, resources, and upcoming events, while highlighting the shared mission of improving behavioral health services for children and adolescents.

## Next steps

- [Co-Chair Terri DiPietro: Set up individual welcome chats with new members to answer questions about the Council and discuss committee participation opportunities](#)
- [Fatmata Williams/DSS: Continue working with fiscal team on allocation of \\$15.4 million among provider types and services, with more information to come](#)
- [Brian Delude/CSDE: Monitor posting of Quality Assurance RFP](#)
- [Bryan Klimkiewicz/CSDE: Finalize next three webinars for winter session of Student Support Series](#)
- [Bryan K./CSDE: Continue developing application process and rubric for competitive grants for students with IEPs and trauma history , with updates to be provided in upcoming months](#)
- [Adult Committee : Hold rescheduled meeting on Tuesday, November 18th from 10:30-12:00 with presentation on Medicaid data highlighting disparities among women and DMIS Women's Services Division programs](#)
- [Operations Committee: Meet on December 3rd](#)
- [DEI Committee : Complete one or two more presentations on community health workers, care coordinators, and peer support workers, then bring recommendations to larger group](#)
- [CFAC: Conduct chair elections in February 2026 to fill 3 seats for 2-year terms](#)

## Summary

### Meeting Attendance and Technical Setup

The meeting began with a discussion about attendance and technical preparations, including language interpretation services. Terri mentioned that Howard Drescher, a Co-Chair, was absent due to illness. The meeting was set to start at 2:01 PM. Vin Russo (DCF) tested the presentation, which was successfully viewed by attendees. The meeting was confirmed to be live on CTN, and participants were reminded to select English or Spanish interpretation through the globe icon on their screens.

### New Council Members Welcome Meeting

The meeting began with Terri introducing three new members to the Council: Allison Matthews-Wilson from the Connecticut Hospital Association, Liz Peralta from New Vance Health, and Alexa from Silver Hill Hospital. Terri mentioned that the new members would receive a welcome package and a chance to discuss committee involvement. The meeting then transitioned to Interim Commissioner Susan Hamilton, who was scheduled to share remarks and answer questions from the group.

## **Connecticut DCF Behavioral Health Overview**

Interim DCF Commissioner Susan Hamilton presented an overview of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families' (DCF) role in children's behavioral health services, highlighting their partnerships with various state agencies and their commitment to improving outcomes. She discussed DCF's mandate to serve children under 18, including those in foster care, and noted their extended support up to age 23 for certain individuals. Susan also mentioned recent organizational changes within DCF, including new leadership positions and reporting structures, while emphasizing the importance of collaboration and integration of services across agencies.

## **Connecticut Behavioral Health Service Overview**

The Commissioner presented an overview of Connecticut's behavioral health service continuum, highlighting key principles including community-based care, family-driven and youth-guided approaches, trauma-informed practices, and racial equity. She discussed the expansion of services including mobile crisis intervention, Urgent Crisis Centers, and residential treatment facilities, while noting that funding sources include state funds, Medicaid, ARPA funding, and HRSA grants. She emphasized the importance of preventing escalation to more intensive care through upstream supports and services and mentioned that Access Mental Health has been enhanced through ARPA funds to increase access.

## **Family Resources and Intervention Overview**

The meeting focused on reviewing resources for families and children, with the Commissioner presenting an overview of available services and tools. Vin Russo shared the presentation, which included information on websites, intervention matching tools, and QR codes for accessing detailed information. The group discussed the importance of early intervention and prevention, as well as the need for adequate step-down services to avoid overutilization of higher-level care. Terri emphasized the balance between prevention and provision, while Lorna Thomas Farquharson highlighted the significance of stability and step-down options for promoting generational impact.

## **Behavioral Health Funding Collaboration**

The meeting focused on behavioral health services and funding in Connecticut. Alice Forrester and Howard Sovronsky discussed the need to "braid and blend" both committee work and funding streams to better serve children with comorbidities, including autism and IDD. Tom King, Chief Operating Officer at Natchaug Hospital, highlighted the importance of preventative care in reducing hospital stays. The Commissioner appreciated the collaboration and mentioned the need to build internal capacity to serve individuals with behavioral health needs. The group agreed on the shared mission of improving services for children and adolescents with behavioral health challenges.

## **SNAP Benefits and Program Updates**

Fatmata Williams announced that DSS loaded full SNAP benefits for 217,000 people and introduced Alexis Muhammad as the new commissioner's designee to attend these meetings, replacing Fatmata who will step back while continuing to support as needed. Brian Delude reported on three live bids: the Advanced Supervision, Intervention, and Support Team (ASSIST) model due December 17th, Reentry Support and Transition Services (RESTs) due December 18th, and the Family Violence Education Program (FEVP) due December 19th. He also teased an upcoming quality assurance RFP expansion that should post by the end of the week.

## **Mental Health and Student Services**

Brian Klimkiewicz provided updates on mental health resource kits and professional learning webinars for school mental health staff. Bryan discussed a competitive grant program for students with IEPs and trauma history, funded by a \$500,000 state allocation. Hector Glynn reported on the Child and adolescent committee meeting, which included a presentation on emergency department trends and updates on DSS funding and rate setting.

## **Medicaid Presentation and Committee Updates**

Co-Chair Sabrina Trocchi of the Adult Quality, Access & Policy Committee meeting discussed rescheduling a presentation on Medicaid data and women's health services to November 18th due to Veterans Day. Alice Forrester provided an update on the DEI committee's work studying community health workers and peer support workers to promote health equity. Neva Caldwell reported on the iCAN conference with 268 attendees and announced upcoming CFAC chair elections for February 2026. The conversation ended with a reminder about the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday and the next meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup> featuring the DDS Commissioner.