

MD Behavioral Health Connect Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2026, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Members Present

- Dr. Rachel Talley, Maryland Department of Health - Behavioral Health Administration
- Heather Bagnall, Maryland General Assembly - House Health Committee Chair
- Tanya Schwartz, Behavioral Health Administration
- Jon Kromm, Health Services Cost Review Commission
- Crista Taylor, Behavioral Health System Baltimore
- Carla Thorpe, Kent County Health Department / MACHO
- Shannon Hall, Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland
- Marshall Henson, Sheppard Pratt
- Cara Reynolds, LifeBridge Health
- Dan Martin, Mental Health Association of Maryland
- Renee Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents' Place of MD
- Jennifer Moore, Maryland Health Information Management Systems Society
- Karen Duffy, Maryland Coalition of Families

Members Absent

- Joseline Peña-Melnik, Maryland General Assembly - Speaker of the House
- Dr. Meg Sullivan, Maryland Department of Health - Public Health Services
- Sonia Chessen, Maryland Department of Health - Office of the Secretary
- Michelle Livshin, On Our Own of Maryland, Inc

I. Opening

The second meeting of the Maryland Behavioral Health Connect Advisory Committee was opened by Dr. Rachel Talley, Deputy Secretary of the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA). Kevin Jackson, Project Manager for the Maryland Department of Health, encouraged Advisory Committee members to enter their names and affiliation in the chat.

II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Advisory Committee officially approved the minutes from the previous meeting held on April 21, 2026.

III. Presentation and Discussion: MD Behavioral Health Connect: Engagement Strategy

Tanya Schwartz, Director for Urgent and Acute Care at BHA, provided an overview of the Maryland Behavioral Health Connect engagement strategy. Key discussion points included:

- The platform includes three key elements: a service directory, inpatient psychiatric bed availability tracking, and electronic referral management.
- A no-cost Subscription Agreement/Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with Bamboo Health is required for providers to join the platform to update/add to their service

profile and to support the secure exchange of Protected Health Information (PHI) for electronic referrals.

- Preliminary platform snapshots were shared.
- The benefits to providers of each platform element were highlighted.
- Vehicles for engaging with providers were listed and feedback was sought on them.
- Based on hospital and LBHA input to date, phases were proposed for starting engagement with providers regarding sending and receiving referrals electronically. All providers are invited to join the platform and conduct electronic referrals.

A Committee member asked how community providers with multiple licensed services will be reflected in the platform. Each location and service will be listed to ensure comprehensive service information and to facilitate electronic referrals to specific sites and services.

A Committee member shared that bed management will be a major benefit for providers, particularly for inpatient care, to keep staffed beds filled and improve flow throughout their system. A member asked about sharing the availability of beds specifically for individuals age 65+.

A Committee member expressed the importance of clearly explaining the electronic referrals Capability to providers. Two Committee members suggested further defining and sharing information with community-based providers on what data will be exchanged, how it will appear, functionality and scope, and testing. There was a question about integration with CRISP - MDH has been exploring this.

MDH encouraged Committee members to share [webinar registration](#) information, scheduled for July 22 (hospital staff) and July 23 (behavioral health provider staff). Providers are encouraged to begin the onboarding process by signing a no-cost Agreement with Bamboo Health.

IV. MD Behavioral Health Connect Public Comment

No public comments were received.

V. Future Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2026.

VI. Adjournment

Dr. Talley adjourned the meeting at 12:58 pm.