



HEARING NOTES

Legislative Oversight: LO25-0007

Behavioral Health

Committee: Public Health and Environment
Chaired by: Councilwoman Phylcia Porter

Hearing Date: March 12, 2025
Time (Beginning): 10:06 AM
Time (Ending): 11:52 AM
Location: Council Chambers
Total Attendance: Approximately 19
Committee Members in Attendance:

Phylcia Porter Mark Conway Ryan Dorsey
Mark Parker James Torrence Odette Ramos

Bill Synopsis in the file?.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attendance sheet in the file?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Agency reports read?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Evidence of notification to property owners?.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Final vote taken at this hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

Adrien Breidenstine, VP, Policy and Communications, BHSB
Dean Ruddick, Policy Director, BHSB
Johnny Fielding, Co-founder, Leading By Example

Major Issues Discussed

1. **Baltimore's Behavioral Health System Capacity & Fragmentation:**
 - Growing behavioral health (BH) challenges including mental health, substance use, and opioid crisis.
 - Fragmented and inconsistent experiences accessing BH services, especially crisis responses.
 - Equity issues in access and service quality.
2. **Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) Roles and Challenges:**
 - Overview of BHSB's function as the local behavioral health authority.
 - Current crisis response system, including 988 hotline and mobile crisis teams.
 - Funding gaps and workforce shortages affecting crisis response.
 - Provider accountability and quality concerns.
 - Data sharing limitations and lack of outcome-based metrics.
3. **Oversight and Regulation of Treatment Providers:**
 - Concerns over "Any Willing Provider" statute enabling potentially harmful providers to operate.
 - Lack of enforcement tools for local authorities to prevent low-quality or fraudulent providers.
 - Discussion of the CARF accreditation process and its inadequacies for ensuring quality.
 - Over-saturation of low-quality behavioral health and substance use providers in specific neighborhoods, particularly West Baltimore.
4. **Behavioral Health System Data and Outcome Needs:**
 - Lack of clear outcomes data (e.g., treatment success rates, recidivism).
 - Request for more transparency on provider quality and system performance.
5. **Partnership and Legislative Advocacy:**
 - Need for enhanced city-council and BHSB collaboration for system improvements.
 - Potential state-level legislative actions to strengthen oversight and accountability.
6. **Community Engagement and Public Education:**
 - Promotion of 988 hotline and public awareness.
 - Establishing community trust through better BH service delivery.
 - Role of "988 Ambassadors" in educating communities about available BH resources.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe.

1. **Outcome Data and Metrics (Requested by Council President Cohen and others):**
 - Request for specific outcome data on BH interventions (e.g., success rates, patient progress).

- Request for data on how people progress through BH systems and post-treatment follow-ups.
2. **"Any Willing Provider" Statute Explanation (Councilwoman Porter):**
 - Requested clarification and explanation of how the "Any Willing Provider" statute affects local control over providers.
 3. **Recommendations for State-Level Policy Changes (Councilwoman Porter, Councilman Torrance):**
 - Request to draft legislative language for strengthening local oversight and preventing low-quality providers from entering the market unchecked.
 4. **Follow-Up on Crisis Stabilization Center Outcomes (Vice Chair Conway):**
 - Requested data on post-discharge outcomes for clients of the stabilization center, including linkage to long-term care.
 5. **Multilingual Staffing and Language Access (Councilman Parker):**
 - Request for data on how often translation services (e.g., Language Line) are used and which languages are most commonly requested.
 - Request for numbers and roles of currently employed bilingual staff, particularly within 988 call centers and mobile crisis teams.
 - Request for cost analysis and feasibility of hiring and training more bilingual employees to ensure language access is a consistent and structured part of crisis response.
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Deontre Hayes

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Date: March 14, 2025

City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Meeting Minutes - Final

Public Health & Environment Committee

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

10:01 AM Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall, Phone:
1-408-418-9388, Access Code: 2337 922 1198 Password:
Public Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?
MTID=m976146a45b8e2d44eaa929e6770b8d78](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?MTID=m976146a45b8e2d44eaa929e6770b8d78)

LO25-0007 - Behavioral Health

CALL TO ORDER

INTRODUCTIONS

ATTENDANCE

Present 6 - Phylicia Porter, Mark Conway, Mark Parker, Ryan Dorsey, James Torrence, and Odette Ramos
Absent 1 - John Bullock

ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

[LO25-0007](#) Behavioral Health

For the purpose of reviewing Baltimore City's capacity to respond to increasing behavioral health challenges, including BCHD staffing, data-based evaluation and reporting, alignment of City-funded non-City entities, and the visibility of pro-behavioral health efforts

Recessed

ADJOURNMENT