

# Montgomery Cares Advisory Board

## March 27, 202 Meeting Notes

**MCAB Members Present:** Dr. Kisha Davis, Viviana Azar, Dr. Kathryn Kelly, Dr. Yuchi Huang, Peter Lowet, Melanie Bunting, Wayne Swann, Dr. Helaine Resnick, Mark Foraker, Denise Kishel

**MCAB Members Absent:** Sharron Holquin, Susan Emery

**DHHS Staff:** Magda Brown, Rebecca Smith, Ashley Miller, Yvonne Iscandari

**County Council Staff:** Tara Clemons, Linda McMillan

**Primary Care Coalition:** Marisol Ortiz, Aisha Mason (Robinson), Sarah Frazell, Tabitha Gingerich, Dr. Veronica Vela

**Guest:** Kristin Cummings, Beth Barrows, Lynn Arndt

Wayne Swann, called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm. Meeting held via Microsoft Teams video/teleconference

Item		Action Follow-up	Person Assigned	Due Date
1.	<p><b>Approval of Minutes – January 24, 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ashley Miller advised that the guidelines for quorum were updated during last week’s BCC meeting. A quorum used to be based on number of Board seats. Guidelines updated, now it is based on actual Board seats filled. MCAB has 12 members, 10 were in attendance for the March meeting.</li> </ul> <p><i>Moved by Dr. Yuchi Huang</i>  <i>Seconded by Viviana Azar</i>  <i>The motion was passed unanimously.</i></p> <p><b>Approval of Minutes – February 28, 2024</b>  <i>Moved by Denise Kishel</i>  <i>Seconded by Dr. Yuchi Huang</i>  <i>The motion was passed unanimously.</i></p>			
2.	<p><b>Montgomery Cares Advisory Board Chair Report-Wayne Swann</b>  <b>Update on Appointments for new/reappointed Board Members-Ashley Miller</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Executive (CE) recommended for appointment all candidates recommended by the MCAB nominating committee.</li> <li>Appointments tentatively scheduled for confirmation on April 2.</li> </ul>	Email Board with update on appointment confirmation and	Ashley Miller	April 2024

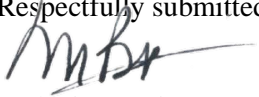
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New members expected to be in attendance at the April meeting. Orientation sessions to soon follow. An invitation for the new member orientation will be extended to all Board members. Attendance for current Board members is not required.</li> <li>• MCAB appointments include 3 reappointments and 5 new members</li> </ul> <p><b>TROIKA meetings with Council members-Wayne Swann</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Troika will be meeting with each Council member to discuss priorities and offer support to achieve budget.</li> <li>• Wayne will let the board know when the meetings are scheduled.</li> </ul> <p><b>Health care for the homeless-behavioral health needs-Wayne Swann</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is interest among some members of the Board to gain greater understanding of behavioral health needs of the homeless population in Montgomery County. As the Board looks forward to FY26 priorities further discussions will take place with interested Board members, Healthcare for the Homeless Committee and Shepherd’s Table among others.</li> </ul>	<p>scheduling of orientation meeting</p> <p>Update on TROIKA meetings with Council member</p>	<p>Wayne Swann</p>	<p>April 2024 MCAB meeting</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Health Officer Update-Dr. Kisha Davis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a new Chief of Public Health, Dr. Nina Ashford. Dr. Ashford will be in attendance at a future MCAB meeting.</li> <li>• CDC has changed COVID-19 guidance to treat COVID-19 the same as other respiratory viruses, emphasizing isolation for those with symptoms.</li> <li>• Additional CDC COVID-19 update includes additional boosters for those &gt;65 years of age.</li> <li>• County Health Rankings (CHR) have changed the rating system from numeration to comparison to other counties in state and nationally.</li> <li>• CHR considers civic engagement as a protective factor for health.</li> <li>• Despite Montgomery County’s high ranking in the CHR, disparities still exist.</li> <li>• April 1-7 is national Public Health Week. As part of Public Health Week, the County’s Zip Code Ranking Project and Health Equity Report will begin. Dr. Davis will share more information on these events.</li> <li>• The Maryland legislature has voted to open the healthcare exchange to undocumented workers as part of the Access to Care Act. If signed by the Governor and the federal waiver approved, undocumented immigrants could buy insurance on the exchange as early as 2026.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions/Comments:</b></p> <p>Dr. Helaine Resnick asked about areas of opportunity for improvement with existing MCAB programs. Dr. Davis offered suggestions including improving access to healthcare, providing wrap around services, and solving logistical and transportation issues.</p> <p>Mark Foraker asked if the disparities report included homeless populations. Dr. Davis will look into this to confirm. Mark also asked about the eligibility conflicts with subsidized plans and MCAB programs and highlighted the unaffordability of many subsidized plans still resulting in poor access. Dr. Davis responded that the eligibility language is being reviewed for updates and more emphasis will be placed on getting more residents insured.</p> <p>Dr. Yuchi Huang sought clarification on the acceptable interval for COVID vaccination for those over 65 and, where to obtain vaccinations post pandemic. Dr. Davis advised vaccination every 4-5 months for individuals over 65 is reasonable.</p>			

	<p>Vaccines post pandemic can be obtained through primary care providers and retail pharmacies. Health Departments and Safety Net Clinics are no longer receiving supplies of vaccines.</p> <p>In regard to the Access to Care Act, Viviana Azar commented on her clients having difficulty accessing behavioral health care with Maryland Exchange products. Dr. Davis stated they were not aware of that issue. Dr. Davis advised that in the past, they had challenges with billing capacity. They have recently seen improvements in administrative teams to better handle Medicaid billing. Next steps may include looking at expanding to the Qualified Health Plans.</p> <p>Peter Lowet commented on the need for cost effective solutions for people who are uninsured and advocating for the insured populations who cannot afford health care services.</p>			
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Health Care for the Uninsured Report-DHHS Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting this month the Healthcare for the Uninsured Report will include a monthly compliance rate from the Office of Eligibility and Support Services (OESS) for Montgomery Cares Specialty Care Applications. The report will detail the number of applications processed each month.</li> <li>• This month’s report includes the MCAB FY25 items included in the policy and advocacy letter that was submitted to the County Executive (CE) in fall 2023 that were included in the CE’s FY25 Budget Recommendations.</li> <li>• Montgomery Cares: 50% Increase in reimbursement rate to 50 percent of the cost of care.</li> <li>• Care for Kids: Improved access to reproductive health services in the Care for Kids Program.</li> <li>• Maternity Partnership Program: Replace ending federal funding to ensure prenatal program engagement with vulnerable populations (Montgomery Perinatal Program).</li> <li>• County Dental Program: Expand dental program to meet increased demand (includes oral maxillofacial surgeon and manager of operations)</li> <li>• At this time, it does not appear any of the Healthcare for the Homeless items were included in the CE’s recommendations.</li> <li>• DHHS reconciliation related to Maternity Partnership Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rebecca Smith explained that there was a difference in the wording in the CE budget and what was stated in the fall MCAB letter with respect to the Maternity Partnership Program. She recommended MCAB wording be changed in the MCAB Letter that will be submitted to County Council to align with the wording of the CE budget and that the budget be increased to align with the CE budget recommendations (\$47,660 to \$48,000).</li> <li>○ The Nurse Family Partnership was not put in the CE’s budget recommendations. Rebecca recommended removal of this item from the MCAB Letter that will be submitted to County Council. We will try again next year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Questions/Comments:</b>  Mark Foraker and Peter Lowet questioned the exact dollar amount increase in reimbursement. Ashley Miller will confirm accuracy and provide an update.</p> <p>Denise Kishel had questions regarding the recommended changes to the Maternity Partnership items. Rebecca will connect with her offline.</p>	<p>FY25 reimbursement rate clarification</p>	<p>Ashley Miller</p>	<p>April 2024</p>

	Attendees discussed various budget items including subsidy for the behavioral health copay, the lactation consultant position, and the possible impacts of the 2024 general election.			
5.	<p><b>Care for Kids Update- Quarter 2 - Marisol Ortiz</b> See Report</p> <p><b>Questions/Comments:</b> Mark Foraker asked for clarification about the 52% male participant data which differs from what he has been seen in the clinics. Marisol stated she was not sure, she offered that it is possibly explained by the largely male adolescent influx of immigrants.</p> <p>Dr. Yuchi Huang asked for an explanation of the 20% non-approval rate. Marisol responded that the non-approvals include applications with missing documentation and applications still in process.</p> <p>Wayne Swann asked if they are still approving for 2 years of eligibility, and presumptive eligibility. Marisol replied, “yes”, 2 years eligibility, and “no”, Care for Kids does not have presumptive eligibility.</p> <p>Peter Lowet asked about looking at outcomes and quality measures; “where would you start with assessing these”? Marisol provided examples of clinical measures that could be measured. Peter asked if data for the aforementioned measures were available. Marisol responded that this information is not available at this time as the Care For Kids program does not have a quality program at this time.</p> <p>Wayne Swann asked if the program was able to keep up with the volume with the current staff? Marisol advised that additional administrative staff is needed and that this need was included as a priority item in the letter sent by TROIKA to the CE for FY25 budget consideration.</p> <p>Dr. Veronica Vela commented that the Care For Kids program lacks the staff to run data analyses; this is currently all done by Marisol. She also explains that the various program providers have different capacities and willingness to provide data.</p>			
6.	<p><b>Committee meetings to reconcile MCAB priorities for letter to County Council-April submission-Committee Chairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wayne noted that the Chair for the dental committee has stepped down from the Board and asked for a volunteer to serve as Chair for the Dental Committee. Those interested can email Wayne.</li> <li>• Wayne asked the Chairs if time was needed to meet to discuss the CE’s FY25 budget in relation to the finalization and submission of the MCAB policy and advocacy letter to County Council, which will be submitted in April. Alternatively, Committees can set up times later to meet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Committee members present opted to meet at a later time. Denise Kishel stated she would rather wait for clarification on the budget; also some of the Chairs were unable to be on the call.</li> <li>○ Mark Foraker made a brief statement regarding ongoing priorities for the Healthcare for the Homeless Subcommittee.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			

7.	<b>Committee Report Out – Committee Chairs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subcommittees opted to not meet during the meeting. Report out was not needed.</li> </ul>			
8.	<b>MCAB Opportunity to Testify: County Council Public Hearings-Wayne Swann</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wayne Swann recommended Peter Lowet testify on behalf of MCAB in the County Council Public Hearings on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Recommend testimony be on MCAB FY25 policy and advocacy priorities that were included in the fall 2023 MCAB FY25 policy and advocacy letter submitted to the CE.</li> <li>Peter Lowet expressed willingness to testify, but reminded attendees that once new members are approved on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, he is no longer a board member and may not be able to testify on MCAB’s behalf. One option is to testify as a community member/former board member.</li> <li>Wayne suggests Mark Foraker as back-up.</li> <li>Mark agreed to act as back-up to testify if needed.</li> <li>Ashley will reach out to the BCC to get clarification on specifics of who will be able to testify.</li> </ul> <p>Formal vote taken for Peter Lowet to testify on behalf on MCAB on FY25 policy and advocacy priorities, and Mark Foraker to serve as backup as back-up.</p> <p><i>Moved by Dr. Yuchi Huang</i>  <i>Seconded by Viviana Azar</i>  <i>The motion was passed unanimously.</i></p>	Clarification on Board member testimony.	Ashley Miller	Ashley will reach out to Peter and Mark with clarification by the end of the week. Ashley will provide an update at the April 2024 MCAB meeting
9.	<b>April 24, 2024, Agenda and Next Steps</b> <p>Next meeting is on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, and will be held virtually.</p> <p><b>Meeting Adjournment</b></p> <p><i>Moved by Dr. Yuchi Huang</i>  <i>Seconded by Peter Lowet</i>  <i>Without objections, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 pm.</i></p>			

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melanie Bunting

Montgomery Cares Advisory Board