

**Health Commission Special Meeting  
City of Stamford  
DRAFT MINUTES  
November 18, 2021**

Commissioners Attendance November 2021

Present:  
Ms. Lorraine Olson  
Dr. Thomas Getreuer  
Ms. Patricia Parry

Absent:  
Dr. Tabitha Fortt  
Dr. Viviane Trinh

Guest Attendance: Mr. Joe O’Callaghan, District Department Head – School Social Worker, Mr. Mike Meyer, Director of Family & Community Engagement, Ms. Jody Bishop-Pullan, Acting Director of Health, Mr. Ted Jankowski, Director of Public Safety, Health & Welfare, Ms. Brittany Dube, Behavioral Health, Health Promotion, and Emergency Response Specialist, Ms. Moira Bryson, PHN II School Nurse Supervisor, Ms. Laura Jordan, Stamford Health, Mr. Dennis Torres, Family Centers Inc., Ms. Emily Segal, Family Centers Inc., Ms. Stephanie Haen, Family Centers Inc., Ms. Julianne Green, Family Centers Inc., Ms. Amy Taylor, Community Health Centers, Ms. Lia Stewart, Stamford Health, Ms. Mary Laucks, Stamford Health, Ms. Lauren Meyer, Transition Coordinator, Ms. Raquelle Early, Recording Secretary

Meeting called to order	Ms. Olson called the meeting to order at 9:05am.
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<u>Topics</u>	<u>Discussions</u>	<u>Actions</u>
<b>Proposed Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No proposed action.</li> </ul>	
<b>Correspondences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No correspondences.</li> </ul>	
<b>Special Business</b> Mental Health Crisis Information & Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Lorraine Olson introduced the Health Commission, as well as the topic of mental health being at the crisis level.</li> </ul>	

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**Guest Speaker Presentation**

Joe O’Callaghan, District Department Head –  
School Social Worker

- Ms. Lorraine Olson introduced Mental Health experts Mr. Joe O’Callaghan and Mr. Mike Meyer, who are both part of Stamford Public Schools, to speak about the issue of mental health in our schools.
- The Stamford School District thinks about mental health issues through two lens, (1) an attachment based lens, and (2) a trauma informed lens. These affect attachment to and trust of teachers.
- Children in the younger age group often have disrupted attachments, display challenges of being able to manage emotional and body regulation, which cause them to become overwhelmed and act out.
- Children in the older age groups have challenges with anxiety, stress, a level of despair, and fear. This presents as worsening social skills, difficulty in regulating internal issues, and poor coping skills. Often avoidance behaviors (skipping school), suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts are seen.
- The Stamford School District tries to address mental health issues among children through counseling and support. The district continues to educate schools in becoming more trauma informed.
- Mr. Mike Meyers corrected the record by stating he is not an expert.

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<p><b>Open Discussion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 40 social workers in the Stamford School District, 35 School Psychologists, and School Counselors, Ms. Emily Segal who represents Family Centers, and a lot of community partners trying to provide as much wraparound support necessary for children.</li> <li>• Ms. Lorraine asked if there are enough inpatient facilities for kids in crisis.</li> <li>• Mr. Ted Jankowski introduced the Police Mental Health Collaborative initiated in January 2020.</li> <li>• Last year, legislation was proposed in Hartford that failed. The two proposals were (1) Continuum Law to mandate mental health follow-up and (2) have mental health declared as a reportable disease.</li> <li>• The Crisis Intervention training at the SPD helps to deescalate situations and the number of Police responses for mental health have been reduced by 20% by sending EMS first to non-violent situations.</li> <li>• Mr. Ted Jankowski said that an RFP is being developed for an after-hours Drop off center for those in crisis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is not enough of anything; staff, accepted health insurance, availability, acceptance of new patients, there is no pediatric psychiatry in Stamford, etc.</li> <li>• Often social workers are involved in PPT meetings or filling in as teachers.</li> <li>• All facilities are full but trying to help each other. Need outweighs help available.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Getreuer asked what are hospitals are doing to better deal with this issue.</li>   <li>• Ms. Parry asked about contact with parents/caregiver. Such contact was easy during shutdown and now difficult. Ms. Parry suggested that conference calls be offered in the evening.</li>   <li>• Other suggestions were made about mentoring with business', Big Brother/Big Sister, or other grassroot programs with community involvement. Can additional School Based Health Centers be considered? Having urgent care mental health centers staffed with social workers who are accessible to anyone who is in crisis. Reinstating VITA Wellness Collaborative. Increasing the number of school based centers.</li>   <li>• Future meeting to discuss further was recommended and to include VITA Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Mary Laucks from Stamford Health clarified Stamford Hospital has a pediatric emergency room, not a pediatric psych unit. The hospital's behavioral health team or crisis consultants evaluate children that come in. Children are kept until they are placed in another facility.</li> </ul>
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<b>Appeal:</b> There were no appeals		
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<b>Adjournment:</b> Meeting adjourned at 10:22am.	
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Submitted by: Raquelle Early