

Board of Trustees  
Mental Health Advocacy Service  
April 2, 2022

Loyola Law School, Room 118

10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Staff and Board Present: Rob Garda, Jack Harrison, David Katner, and Steve Scheckman, Rebecca May-Ricks (Director, non-voting), Kellie Johnson (Deputy General Counsel, non-voting) and Kathy Lynn Cook (by Zoom) (Deputy General Counsel, non-voting)

- 1. Approval of minutes from meeting of December 4, 2021:** Steve Scheckman moved to approve the minutes from December 4, 2021. David Katner seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.
- 2. Proposed FY23 Budget updates; and FY22 Budget updates:** Rebecca May-Ricks reported on her meetings with Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne regarding the requested budget position for MHAS. The budget position will not be included in 2022-23 budget. The Board discussed this development. No vote was taken by the Board.
- 3. Multidisciplinary Program updates:** Rebecca May-Ricks reported on the status of Civil Service approving a job description for the MHAS social worker positions and there is an ongoing issue of the job description and assigned level (3, 4 or 5). Interviews have already occurred for the social worker position in the New Orleans office and once Civil Service approves the job description a qualified applicant will be offered the position. No vote was taken by the Board.
- 4. Lake Charles lease update:** Rebecca May-Ricks advised the Board that the lease negotiations for office space in Lake Charles was unsuccessful. She further advised about the current difficulties concerning renting office space in Lake Charles. Rebecca May-Ricks further advised the Board that MHAS will continue to search for an office to rent and simultaneously explore the possibility of MHAS through the State purchasing a building for use as the MHAS office in Lake Charles. The Board discussed the Lake Charles lease status. No vote was taken by the Board.
- 5. Pineville Office update:** Rebecca May-Ricks advised the Board that the current Central Hospital facility will be closing, and MHAS must vacate its office that has historically been housed at the hospital. New office space has been located and a lease will be presented to the MHAS Board for its review and approval. No vote was taken by the Board.
- 6. PCM/Daily Update MOU proposal:** Rebecca May-Ricks advised the Board that when a child is admitted to a hospital the hospital is required to send to MHAS a copy of the physician's certificate. However, this does not always occur. MHAS is considering

negotiating, and entering into, MOUs with hospitals to produce daily logs so that MHAS will know if MHAS's child welfare clients are in the hospital. The Board discussed this concept. No vote was taken by the Board.

- 7. Proposed Student Employment policy:** Rebecca May-Ricks presented MHAS "Policy #8A: APPOINTMENT AND PAY OF STUDENT EMPLOYEES" and explained MHAS needs to create a written policy so MHAS can set the hourly rate for student workers and pay them. After review and discussion by the Board, Rob Garda moved to adopt as amended the proposed MHAS "Policy #8A: APPOINTMENT AND PAY OF STUDENT EMPLOYEES," as follows: (a) on pp. 1 and 3, change the language that the student employee must 16 years of age or older to 18 years of age or older; and (b) add a proviso to the policy explaining confidentiality and the consequences for violating confidentiality mandates. Jack Harrison seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.
- 8. MHAS involvement under R.S. 17:409.1, *et seq.*:** Rebecca May-Ricks and Kathy Lynn Cook reported to the Board on R.S. 17:409.1, *et seq.* and the right of students to have counsel. Because of the mental health issues involved with students who are the subject of this legislation, Rebecca May-Ricks and Kathy Lynn Cook advised that they thought it appropriate for MHAS to be identified in R.S. 17:409.5 as appointed counsel. The Board discussed this concept and there was no objection by the Board.
- 9. Board vacancies:** Currently there are two (2) vacancies on the MHAS Board of Trustees representing appointments from the Mental Health Association of Louisiana (which no longer is in existence) and the Louisiana Medical Society (which has not appointed a Board member). Rebecca May-Ricks agreed to determine if there are other appropriate organizations, including at the suggestion of David Katner, university M.S.W. programs, to possibly substitute in the MHAS enabling legislation and appoint members to serve. Ms. Ricks will report back to the Board.
- 10. New Business:** Rebecca May-Ricks advised that Louisiana State Representative Royse Duplessis has authored pending House Bill No. 335 which broadens and expands the definition of "gravely disabled" and expressed why this legislation was of concerns for MHAS and its clients.
- 11. Next Meeting: June 25, 2022.**

**The meeting was then adjourned.**