



**PAIMI Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Via zoom**  
**January 21, 2025**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Storch at 11:00 am. Introductions were made and it was noted there was a quorum.

**Attendance**

**Present:** Ashley Barber, Katie Curnow, Michelle Derdowski, Sue Franklin, Jennifer Gorman, Joelle Gurnoe-Adams, Sharon Storch, Trina Tocco, Mora Wilkevicz

**Absent:** Christina Agle, Veronica Ibrahim, Fiona Hert, Renee Kimball-Rouse

**Staff:** Michelle Roberts, Michele Brand, Theresa Diebolt, Kyle Williams, Simon Zagata, Kris Keranen

**Guests:** Emily Henderson, McCall Hamilton  
Teddy Dorsette III, DRM Board member  
Helen and Carmen, interpreters

**Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was presented for approval. Vice Chair Storch asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Joelle Gurnoe-Adams MOVED to approve the agenda and Jennifer Gorman seconded it.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

**Approval of the minutes**

Minutes of the November 19, 2024, meeting were presented for approval. Vice Chair Storch asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Jennifer Gorman MOVED to approve the minutes and Joelle Gurnoe-Adams seconded it.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

### **How to Testify at a Hearing**

Emily Henderson gave a presentation on how to be an effective advocate including providing comments or testimony at a hearing as well as how to engage with your legislators. She also shared what the budget cycle for the State of Michigan timeframe is to aid in knowing what takes priority during the year. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was provided to PAC members.

### **Grievance update**

Theresa Diebolt gave a grievance update stating there were five requests for grievance packets since the last meeting on November 19, 2024. The five requests included three PAIR (individual rights) and two PAIMI (mental illness). There were four grievances filed, three PAIR and one PAIMI. One of those has been responded to and closed. The other three have been responded to and are still open. Of those three, two were responded to by Michelle Roberts and were appealed to the Board Compliance Committee for review. The Committee reviewed our processes and the responses and responded to the client. The remaining grievance was responded to and resolved by Simon Zagata, Director of the CAIR Team.

### **PAIMI financial update**

Michele Brand explained the PAC expenses for the first quarter and shared the expenses for PAIMI for the agency through November 2024 reminding everyone the first quarter is usually a little over budget due to paying insurance at the beginning of the year.

### **Public comment**

There were no public comments.

### **Legislative update**

Emily Henderson stated in 2018 Michigan voted to increase the minimum wage and create the Earned Sick Leave Act that would allow employees to accrue paid sick leave time from their employer. The Supreme Court ruled that minimum wage would be applied to tipped wage workers which is not what the legislature

intended, and the Earned Sick Leave Act would also have some different repercussions for small businesses with tipped wage employees. There was a push with the tipped wage community to keep it as is, but the Supreme Court said the legislature must address this before the implementation date of the new law by February 1<sup>st</sup>. It will be a tight timeline for the legislature to pass something and a testament to bipartisanship with the new House Republican majority.

Emily will be watching what happens federally regarding changes to Medicaid and to services for our population with disabilities, serious mental illness (SMI) and severe emotional disturbance (SED). She is also watching for changes to our state Recipient Rights Advisory Council and concerns regarding our state psychiatric institutions. DRM may be added to the Recipient Rights Advisory Council. There was discussion regarding the Department of Education as well as school issues which will also be closely watched.

### **Litigation update**

Kyle Williams began by sharing DRM is joining other advocacy organizations to submit a position statement to MDHHS regarding mental and behavioral health reform. It focuses on three main issues: extremely high administrative costs which impacts money left over for services in the community, the elimination of conflicts of interest which are usually between CMH and the prepaid inpatient health plan, and the lack of accountability from the state. A copy of the position statement was provided with additional details.

Kyle announced DRM won the lawsuit against MDHHS on behalf of children and young adults under the age of 21 who are eligible for and participating in the Medicaid program and have a need for but cannot access or obtain intensive mental health services in their community. A copy of the preliminary approval motion was provided with more information regarding the settlement. Kyle also explained the timeline and how the settlement terms and commitments need to be approved by a judge at a hearing.

### **Education update**

Kris Keranen shared highlights of three cases her team has been working on and wanted to show how they intersect. The first case began in 2016 involving a young student who lived in a very remote area in Michigan and was put out of school and threatened with court action unless he disenrolled in school. The school was found out of compliance however nothing was done, and the Department of Education did not enforce it. DRM ended up filing a due process hearing and suing the Department of Education to which resulted in a settlement award for the student and policy changes. Another case involved a 14-year-old who has a lengthy list of mental health disorders with a history of trauma. He did not have an IEP or a 504 plan in school. He was expelled from school for making a statement of wishing a teacher was dead. He was tested and denied special education eligibility by the district

after complaints were filed before DRM filed a complaint with the Department of Education who then found the student eligible based on the criteria in the law. A third case involved a six-year-old student who was put on a partial day by the school. DRM assisted the parents in filing a complaint which resulted in a positive decision from the Department of Education.

### **CAIR Team update**

Simon Zagata discussed the investigation the Department of Justice is conducting on Michigan's state psychiatric hospitals and the delays in discharging individuals who are ready for treatment in less restrictive environments. The CAIR Team is assisting the department in obtaining information for their investigation.

The team has an ongoing investigation into psychiatric hospitals for essentially falsifying records to keep patients in their hospitals to collect funds from Medicaid and Medicare. The Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) has pulled Pontiac General Hospital's Medicare agreement so they can no longer get reimbursed for services through Medicaid or Medicare. They can continue serving patients and submit claims for reimbursement and are appealing, however if they lose the appeal, they will no longer get reimbursed for claims. The CAIR Team will be visiting the hospital soon for further investigation.

The documentary film project highlighting the importance of community-based services and essentially what inpatient psychiatric hospitalization is like when those services fail is in the initial stages. Releases have been sent to individuals who may fit criteria to potentially be interviewed for the film.

Surveys have been sent to inmates in prisons who have been segregated and/or secluded, and results are coming in and are being recorded. Most of the individuals report having a significant mental illness. The CAIR Team will finalize their findings and determine next steps.

Simon received an update from the office of the Auditor General regarding the audit of the Recipient Rights System and said it should be completed sometime in April of this year.

### **Old Business**

1. Council membership. This is Trina Tocco's last meeting as her 4-year term has ended.
2. Conferences/trainings/initiatives. Members were reminded to let Theresa know when they attend any events where DRM or the PAIMI Council is mentioned.
3. Contact information – members can check the PAIMI portal to ensure their contact information is correct and let Theresa know of any changes.

### **New Business**

1. Outreach ideas – there was nothing to report.
2. Conferences/trainings/initiatives – the annual NDRN conference will be 100% virtual this year and is available to all PAC members at no cost and is scheduled for June 2-5.
3. Topics/interests to be discussed at future meetings. If anyone has any suggestions, please contact Theresa.

### **Adjourn**

Vice Chair Storch asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Joelle Gurnoe-Adams MOVED to adjourn the meeting and Jennifer Gorman seconded it.

A vote was taken.

AYES: all

NAYS: none

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 pm.

\* The next scheduled meeting is April 22, 2025.

\* Meeting minutes prepared by Theresa Diebolt, Executive Assistant.