

**Minutes**  
**Adult Protection Coordinating Council**  
**May 19, 2025**

**Call to Order/Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance**

Beth Franco presided and called the meeting to order.

**Introductions**

The council completed introductions for those present.

**Approval of Minutes**

Beth Franco called for approval of minutes from February 24, 2025. After administrative clarification of a note, a motion was made by Beth Franco to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Theresa Brown.

**Agency Updates**

**Department of Social Services:**

Kelly Cordell reported:

- Tony Catone was confirmed and is now Director
  - He was the Chief General Council for over ten years
- The Agency's funding is in jeopardy. There has been a dismantling of ACL, which does not affect the agency directly but there is a loss of funding
- The major form of funding comes from reconciliation. APS is not state funded
- SNAP funding will directly affect older adults

**Department on Aging:**

Brenda Stalzer Marchant reported:

- The Agency has created a Dementia Toolkit. Printing is currently in progress, but flyers were distributed to attendees with a QR code to access the material on the website
  - Contains resources and is simply written
- There are currently four new Dementia Care Specialists in place. There will be a total of ten across the state located in each area Agency on Aging
- There is an event calendar on the Department on Aging's website, and other agencies are invited to add their events to it via request form
- Additionally, there is a Speaker Request form that can be used to request that someone from the Agency come speak at your event
- Senior prep events are being held across the state to assist older adults with preparing for various natural disasters

**Department of Health and Human Services:**

Margaret Alewine reported:

- The Agency is monitoring legislative actions at the federal level. Current versions appear to affect Medicaid expansion populations and work requirements. Nothing has been finalized.
- Eunice Medina was confirmed as agency Director

**Disability Rights SC:**

Beth Franco reported:

- The Agency is monitoring proposed changes to the budget and how it impacts other Agencies that they work with. They are educating and asking people to call their representatives to show support.
- Expanding monitoring to including CTH-IIs

- There has been an increase in calls from individuals who are being denied Medicaid services or who are being dropped from Medicaid or are waiting for placement in facilities

Ombudsman:

Dale Watson reported:

- From July 2024 to February 2025, the state lost over 600 beds in assisted living facilities. Not all beds were full at the time of closure
  - Request was made to confirm the bed number and source of data
- There has been an increase in small facilities closing, with no others opening. Larger facilities are opening, but they are private and do not accept Medicaid
- More difficult to provide affordable facilities when other facilities close
- Medicaid does not reimburse for assisted living, but the OSS (Optional State Supplement) program pays the cost for room & board with state dollars only
- Knowing the number of OSS facilities that are enrolled could assist with the impact of loss of bed capacity
- The Ombudsman works closely with SC DHHS, SC DPH and other state agencies during facility closures to identify the appropriate alternate location for residents. The teams assess level of care for each resident prior to transfer
- For Patriot Living:
  - There were approximately 70 assessments for level of care completed by SCDHHS at the request of the site, family, and/or resident
  - The relocation team then worked to find the appropriate bed
- Margaret and Dale to coordinate confirmation of the exact number of beds as well as number of OSS facilities
- Kathy Bradley asked what South Carolina can do to promote HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) to providers
  - Facilities often say that they do not want to operate according to those regulations, but many view them as minimum standards of quality
- APCC may want to work with the Long-Term Care Council on these issues
  - The council is currently going through a reorganization

Department of Mental Health:

Jennifer Butler reported:

- There has been a merge of DMH, DAODAS and DDSN
- The new Agency name is South Carolina Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
  - Office of Mental Health, Office of Substance Use Services and Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
  - No agency director has been named
- The Agency has relocated, and official names, contracts, emails, etc are in the process of being changed

Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:

Anne Dalton reported:

- The Office is experiencing similar challenges as the Department of Mental Health and staff have already moved

SC Court Administration:

Maggie Meekins reported:

- Court Administrator started on March 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Formerly Director of Court Services

## **Data Reports**

### **DSS/APS:**

Kelly Cordell reported:

- 6,273 calls came into the hub
- Accepted 1,525 (24%) with 69% not accepted
  - This is due to updates to the tool, with numbers increasing from previous
- Refer to SLED, Ombudsman, and Attorney General
- Neglect is the largest number of incidents, with majority 60 or older in age and mostly female
  - If someone is in the system and under 60, they most likely fall into some sort of disability category. The Agency works with OIDD on these cases
- The Greenville area is struggling to keep staff due to pay and working hours
- Most cases close within six months, with older cases usually being related to legal issues

### **SLED:**

Will Thrasher reported:

- The Department saw a slight increase in intakes in Q1 of 2025
- Fatalities increased, but the number of physical abuse cases decreased
- 5 sexual abuse cases versus 6 in the previous quarter
- Opened 47 cases, closed 43, made 2 arrests for physical abuse in the Midlands area
- 31 fatalities
- 11-12 cases per agent
- 1 current vacancy

### **Ombudsman:**

Dale Watson reported:

- The Department received a total of 75 abuse claims, 13 neglect claims, and 14 exploitation claims for 102 total complaints
- 23 verified claims, with 79 not verified
- The number of complaints has reduced since COVID
- The Department is trying to be more proactive before complaints come in with education

### **Attorney General:**

John Frampton reported:

- The Department reported 41 complaints, with 7 cases opened leading to 11 arrests
- There were 5 convictions, 58 pending cases and 37 cases closed
- \$7,232.58 in restitution
- Current opening for a full time Law Enforcement Coordinator

## **Other Discussion Topics:**

### **Group Discussion**

HCBS Changes

- Currently updates are being made to the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Provider Manual
  - Available online on the SCDHHS website
- July 1<sup>st</sup> updates include:
  - Caregiver Coaching for ID/RD waiver with OIDD
  - Self-directed service modality with MCC waiver
    - Available to MCC waiver participants aged 1 to 21 when medically necessary
    - Self-directed attendant care services are being added

- HCBS settings rule policy updates
  - Previously there was a statewide transition plan that was outlined by the state and approved by CMS to provide a path forward with requirements and monitoring
    - Transition plan is sunseting and currently the Agency is moving HCBS settings requirements into permanent policy
  - Heightened scrutiny activities for certain groups
    - Public or private facility that offers inpatient treatment – Category 1
    - On the grounds of or adjacent to a public institution - Category 2
    - Free from characteristics that discourage integration into broader community – those that have enclosures or fencing around them or multi-unit complex
  - SCDHHS and OIDD to review settings to meet the requirements
  - The update of the policy will be issued in draft form in the next two weeks
- Sign up for SCDHHS notifications to receive the bulletin

#### Scam Letter:

- Attendees received a copy of the letter for review
- These used to be mainly sent via email, but this was a letter that was sent in the mail
- Wanted to bring the issue to the Council since the council works for the older and vulnerable adult population
- Are there ways that the Council can educate others in the community?

#### Bylaws:

- Attendees received a copy of the bylaws for review
- The group discussed changes, and they were captured in a draft form that will be distributed during the next Council meeting for final discussion and adoption
- The group also discussed things that the Council can improve or implement based on the bylaws

#### Reporting:

- There was no legislative report issued last year, but the Council can prepare a two-year report
- A report is due each year according to the bylaws
- Beth would like the report completed by the end of 2025 to share in the next legislative session but also to bring public awareness to the Council
- Those who are chosen to represent their Agency should be able to speak for their Agency
  - Who is not in the Council that needs to be? Beth needs to draft and send a letter to those who need to be represented
  - Kelly and Margaret to assist Beth with this by reaching out to agencies
  - Kelly had a template for a letter. The Council did this previously and gained several members
  - Discussed excused versus unexcused absences
  - Discussed how the Council may handle the Agencies that have merged. Kelly recommends continued representation
  - Agency names need to be updated on the letterhead and in the bylaws

- The Council needs to analyze the data presented throughout the year and present it in the legislative report
- Ann suggested highlighting the root cause of allegations which would bring to light the systemic issues faced such as workforce shortages and pay discrepancies

## **Meeting Attendance**

### **Members Attending:**

**Name**

Kelly Cordell  
Ann Dalton  
Margaret Alewine  
Theresa Brown  
Beth Franco  
Will Thrasher (proxy)  
John Frampton  
Dale Watson  
Kathy Bradley  
Brenda Stalzer Marchant  
Wilson Dillard  
Maggie Meekins  
Jennifer Aplin  
Scott Cooke  
Jennifer Butler  
Angie Smith

**Agency/Organization**

SC Dept. of Social Services/APS  
SC OIDD  
SC DHHS  
SC LLR  
Disability Rights SC  
SLED SVU/Vulnerable Adult Investigation Unit  
Attorney General  
Long Term Care Ombudsman  
Family Member of Consumer of Institutional Services  
SC Department on Aging  
SC Health Care Association  
SC Court Administration  
SC Commission on Prosecution Coordination  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
SC Department of Mental Health  
SC Department of Public Health

**Members Absent:****Name**

Troy Bell  
  
Jarrod Bruder  
Lewis "Jackie" Swindler  
Delores Johnson (proxy)  
Krisdee Clark

**Agency/Organization**

SC Assn of Community Residential Programs  
SC Medical Association  
SC Police Chiefs Association  
SC Sheriffs' Association  
SC Criminal Justice Academy  
SC Assn of Community Residential Programs  
SC Home Care and Hospice Association