

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mississippi

239 North Lamar Street
1101 Robert E. Lee Building
Jackson, Mississippi 39201



601-359-1288
FAX 601-359-6295
TDD 601-359-6230

Wendy D. Bailey - Executive Director

October 26, 2021

Attn: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your in-depth public comments regarding the Mississippi Department of Mental Health's Mental Health Block Grant application. I greatly appreciate the time you devoted to providing this feedback. It has been reviewed in detail by the Executive Director and the DMH Leadership Team, shared with the Board of Mental Health at the October 21 meeting, and will also be shared on the DMH website.

Moving forward we want to be transparent and responsive to the public comments we receive. Many of your comments and concerns were in relation to the role and integration of peer support services and Peer Support Specialists within established and developing services and community programs. DMH values and recognizes the importance of recovery-oriented care. Dr. LaTarsha Michael, Division Director of Peer Support Services, and her team are diligently working to enhance established peer support trainings and peer support practices, as well as identify areas of need to promote the invaluable lived-experiences and skills that peer support staff offer to the community.

The Division of Peer Support Services will continue to conduct site visits every 2 years alongside the Division of Certification to address any procedural or administrative needs. Peer Specialists are encouraged to attend the bi-monthly CPSS Network Meeting facilitated by Association of MS Peer Support Specialists (AMPSS). This meeting is partially designed to allow an open and welcoming forum for Peer Support Specialists to share unfavorable work experiences/encounters that may need further review. The Division of Peer Support Services has implemented a monitoring system to track employment of trained peer support staff at DMH- Certified Providers. Monthly status update calls have been implemented to determine employment needs of unemployed peer support staff and offer support.

Continued efforts and trainings will be a focus across community-based programming to incorporate and support recovery-oriented care models. We appreciate your input and are working to continue to develop strategic partnerships and coordination of services to improve access to care with a transparent goal of strengthening a statewide infrastructure. Again, I want to thank you for taking the time to provide the valuable feedback and assure you it has been reviewed and shared. I am hopeful we can continue to strengthen our partnership and open communication as we move forward.

Sincerely,
Mallory L. Malkin, Ph.D.
Mallory L. Malkin, Ph.D.
Chief Clinical Officer
Bureau of Behavioral Health Services