

Cuyahoga County Diversion Center Board Meeting
August 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes



1. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chairperson Donna Weinberger called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted: Dr. Julia Bruner, Brandy Carney, Judge Donna Congeni Fitzsimmons, and Donna Weinberger were present.

A quorum was not established.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Heller signed in for public comment and provided remarks on his support for the Diversion Center. Larry submitted his final report of the Community Input Committee to the Board. He thanked the Board and Diversion Center staff for their work. Since announcing new crisis center, he has been receiving questions from community about differences and need for new facility. Larry referred to the results from a prior survey his group produced and hopes community stakeholders are involved in planning efforts of new crisis center. He suggested inviting Cleveland EMS to future meetings.

4. VOTING ITEMS

No quorum, unable to approve minutes

5. OLD BUSINESS

- A. *Diversion Center Performance Metrics*- Clare Rosser from the Cuyahoga County ADAMHS Board presented mid-year data (January-June). The Diversion Center had 466 intakes between January-June. Of those:

- a. 49% patients left against medical advice
- b. 44% successfully completed the program
- c. 5% transferred for health reasons
- d. 2% involuntarily discharged for rules violations

Brandy Carney asked if the 2% of patients removed involuntarily is typical year over year, or if the facility is seeing an uptick in incidents. Allyse Hawkins from Orianna House responded saying they are seeing typical numbers for removal, and it is rare. They see a lot of the same difficult individuals and remove them as needed.

- B. *Evaluation Update*- Michelle Riske-Morris of Case Western Reserve's Begun Center for Violence Education, Prevention and Research presented information on their efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the Diversion Center. Her team used focus groups and interviews to gather information. They reached out to 50 affiliated agencies/organizations to request interviews or focus groups (depending on audience size). More than 40 have participated, including judges, co-responder teams, police chiefs, ADAMHS Board staff, FrontLine staff, advocates, and more. They are engaging focus groups with similar facilities across the country.

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They continue to work with Diversion Center staff to conduct patient surveys. They have collected 52 so far and will continue collecting through the next few months. Vast majority of responses are positive feedback. A survey for law enforcement is still being developed and will go out in near future. They continue surveying CIT classes as they are held. Michelle stresses this is an evaluation of the Diversion Center program, not research into its effectiveness. Evaluation expected to be completed in December '25 and presentation will be given at first Board meeting in 2026.

- C. *Bylaws Update*- John O'Donnell from PSJS provided an update on Bylaws and annual reporting requirement. Per County Council original resolution establishing the Diversion Board, the Board is supposed to produce an annual report. Using ADAMHS Board's monthly reports, PSJS will compile an annual report. A draft version was shared in the meeting and members had discussions on info to include.
- D. *Crisis Center Update*- Eric Morse provided an update on the Crisis Center. They finally received construction permit from the city after a lengthy delay. Capital funding requested from County Council of \$7m was approved by Committee and has been held (not passed along to full Council). It is expected to go before full Council in September.

Transition planning between Diversion Center and opening of Crisis Center continues with PSJS, Orianna House, and The Centers. The Centers would like to continue working with Diversion Board members once new facility is operating and discussions continue to sort out those details.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- A. *Incident at Diversion Center on Aug 5, 2025*- Diversion Center received a self-referral for a client who was admitted and began to process. The client was on probation GPS and notified his probation officer that he was at Diversion Center seeking treatment. Later that day the Sheriff's Department came to the building looking for the client with a warrant for his arrest. Deputies entered the Diversion Center intake area and arrested the client without any approval from staff or consent from the client. PSJS is working with Sheriff Dept to understand what happened and ensure this doesn't happen in the future.
- B. Larry Heller from NORA proposed ideas for housing pilot projects in Cuyahoga County.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on November 20, 2025. *This meeting would eventually be changed to December 4, 2025.*

8. ADJOURNMENT