

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
AD-HOC MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Lynn Gallagher called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM on Thursday, September 18, 2025, in the Jo Daviess County Board Room, Jo Daviess County Administrative Offices in Galena, Illinois.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was answered as follows: Present – Lynn Gallagher, Steve Endress, LaDon Trost, Dianne Allendorf, John Schultz, Stephanie Cocagne. Present: 6. Present electronically – Sandra Schleicher. Present electronically: 1. Absent – Kevin Stewart, Tracy Bauer. Absent: 2.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve minutes of the July 17, 2025 Ad-Hoc Mental Health Committee meeting was made by John Schultz and seconded by Steve Endress. The motion carried by voice vote.

A motion to approve minutes of the August 21, 2025 Ad-Hoc Mental Health Committee meeting was made by John Schultz and seconded by Steve Endress. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

V. Unfinished Business

The members discussed updates on the unfinished business items they have been working on since the creation of the Committee. Gallagher noted that surveys will remain open until October 4th to allow for any last-minute responses. She explained that responses from schools have been consistent, with most area school districts indicating that mental health resources are close to adequate. However, public responses tell a different story, which surprised Gallagher. Cocagne suggested this may reflect a situation where schools recognize the need but do not want the responsibility to fall on their districts, as addressing it can be complex.

Regarding the analysis of existing mental health services and providers, Gallagher noted that The Hope Foundation recently published new materials and described its mission and focus. She expressed uncertainty as to whether agencies applying for 708 Mental Health Board funding are aware they can also apply for funding through The Hope Foundation and stated she will research this further.

Cocagne discussed the assessment of gaps in available services. She reported that there is a lack of crisis services, higher-level care, and inpatient or intensive outpatient services within the County. This rural area does not have access to higher levels of care. She noted that focusing on lower-level service availability would require an emphasis on public education. Gallagher added that any lower-level services would need to be intentional and targeted to specific groups.

Gallagher also revisited the idea of scheduling community events to engage more stakeholders. The Committee discussed holding two community events and one event focused on specifically invited individuals. Gallagher noted that finding locations and times has been challenging. While she would prefer two community events, she sought input from members about whether these events would reach the public effectively. Allendorf expressed concern that turnout might be very low, similar to remote meetings held in surrounding communities over the summer. Trost agreed but emphasized that low turnout should not prevent them from holding the events, only that expectations should remain realistic. Cocagne suggested setting a clear goal or agenda for each event to measure success, such as sharing survey results or holding roundtable discussions. Gallagher has been considering four basic questions patterned after those used in the Community Health Needs Assessment by Midwest Medical. Endress suggested that attendees could complete a short survey after the sessions if it would be productive. Gallagher explained that the third event would be intended for a focused group, including service providers and other stakeholders. Cocagne noted the challenge of providers leaving work to attend meetings and suggested reaching out individually to gather their input. Gallagher agreed and noted she has a list of participants from the last needs assessment. She suggested that each Committee member could visit one or two providers in person to collect feedback. Gallagher reviewed the list of past contributors, which included The Workshop, Riverview Center, Tyler's Justice Center for Children, the Victim-Witness Coordinator and Probation Department, Midwest Medical Center, numerous churches, charities, and more. She noted that several listed organizations have since closed.

The Committee then discussed local, state, and national funding opportunities. Gallagher explained that many state-level grants are available, including those focused on juvenile justice, housing, wellness, reentry after incarceration, and suicide prevention. She estimated that there are 30–40 relevant grants available. Gallagher reported that she contacted Representative LaHood's office and received information on several mental health-specific funding opportunities, most of which are state-funded rather than federal. She suggested prioritizing state-level funding efforts. Gallagher also pointed out that online searches incorrectly list the 708 Mental Health Board as having a 24-hour crisis line, which is not the case. She stated that establishing such a resource would be highly beneficial for the community.

Regarding the assessment of stigma and community perceptions, Gallagher asked how the Committee might address this and work to change perceptions. Cocagne recommended increasing public education efforts by publishing press releases in local newspapers and placing informational flyers in schools, not necessarily directing individuals where to seek care but raising awareness of issues such as suicide prevention.

Gallagher stated that analysis of mental health outcomes will require all survey data to be compiled before it can be completed.

Finally, Gallagher confirmed that the summary report she prepares will consolidate all findings. Cocagne requested a timeline for completion. Gallagher stated that, with surveys closing in early October, she intends to complete the final report by December 31st so that it can be presented to the County Board shortly thereafter.

VI. New Business

There was no new business to discuss.

VII. Reports

Cocagne shared information she received from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Northern Illinois. Danielle from NAMI Rockford provided three informational pages on services that may be appropriate for Jo Daviess County. The three programs presented were the NAMI Family Support Group, NAMI Family-to-Family, and NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group. The Family Support Group is a peer-led support group for adults with a loved one who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition, offering opportunities to gain insight from others facing similar challenges. Family-to-Family is an educational program for family, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is an evidence-based program, meaning research has shown that it significantly improves coping and problem-solving skills for participants. The Connection Recovery Support Group is a peer-led support group for adults who have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition, allowing participants to gain insight from peers and be guided by trained facilitators with lived experience. Cocagne recommended that the Committee consider these programs in the future. Gallagher noted that County facilities are available for use, and villages and townships also have no-cost spaces that could host such meetings. Trost stated that Stockton has an appropriate space at the Methodist church reception area and offered to make arrangements to secure it for use.

VIII. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

IX. Committee Member Concerns

Trost stated that once the Committee's final report is completed, he would like to write an article for *The Flash* to inform the public of the Committee's work. Trost writes monthly articles for *The Flash* and believes this would reach a large audience. Endress suggested inviting Jamie Watson from Probation and Jodi Zeal from the State's Attorney's Office to attend a future meeting if possible.

X. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made at 2:28 PM by John Schultz and seconded by Dianne Allendorf. Motion carried by voice vote.

Next committee meeting is Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.