

**THI/SCI TRUST FUND  
ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES  
February 13, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Andrew Kuyoro, the Chair of the Board, called to order the regular meeting of the Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Advisory Board at 10:21 a.m. on February 13, 2020.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Board Members: Beth Arredondo, Michael Chafetz, John Fanning, Sherlyn Sullivan, Dan Claitor, Gary Matherne, Larry Bagley, Melissa Bayham  
Board Members Not in Attendance: Dan Claitor, Thomas Loupe and Hazel Odom  
Agency Staff: Tonia Gedward, Ayanna Wilson, John Korduner  
Contractors: (Not in Attendance) Kimberly Hill  
Public: None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The board reviewed the minutes from the last meeting held on November 14, 2019. Andrew asked if anyone had any comments about the minutes. The meeting minutes were approved as presented.

**BOARD MEETING ATTENDEES INTRODUCTIONS**

Board Members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

Sherlyn asked the board to review the Recover from Traumatic Brain Injury beyond 2-Year Plateau packet received from Bin Yang, the director of The Prince Synergy. Ms. Yang was attempting to market online therapy sessions to Louisiana THSCI Trust Fund program participants at an expensive rate. In addition, there are many participants who are unable to access the internet to receive the sessions. Sherlyn stated that the program could do another webinar, to include the board members, to give Ms. Yang a chance to further explain what she's offering the participants. Based on the information that was provided to the board, the board declined.

**BUDGET/FINANCIAL REPORT – SHERLYN SULLIVAN**

Sherlyn asked everyone to review the financial report. She stated everything has been consistent with prior years. Michael stated deposits are down in January compared to other months. Sherlyn stated that it is normal to see a decrease in January's deposits. Andrew asked if there were any questions about the financial report. There weren't any other questions related to the report. The financial report was approved as presented.

## **PROGRAM STATUS – TONIA GEDWARD**

Currently, the Trust Fund is serving 620 participants, which is ten participants less than the last board meeting. The closed cases included two for funds expended, one deceased participants, eight unable to contact participants, one moved out of state and one failure to cooperate. Between 11/14/19 and 2/12/20, the program closed 13 cases that were previously eligible. See closure reasons below.

As of 2/12/20, there are 194 applicants on the waitlist. The program will hold off on reviewing 2018 applicants until further notice.

The program continues to update forms and policy to align with the program rules and guidelines as well as procedures. Currently, staff are reviewing past applications and eligible participants. So far, several inconsistencies have been discovered. This review will more than likely result in a full-on audit of the program. To be proactive, the program will be working on policy changes to address some of the findings. Some of the changes will include

- 1) Federal 1099s
  - a) Participant receiving reimbursement for all goods and services, including reimbursement for PCA services paid directly to the PCA employee, shall receive a 1099 if the total cost exceeds a certain amount for the plan year, for example \$600.
- 2) PCA Services
  - a) Eliminate reimbursing participants for PCA services paid directly to the PCA employee. All PCA service payments shall go directly to the PCA employee where 1099s are issued at the end of the year. THSCI program staff will be required to research other program data to ensure PCA employees are not on the “banned from employment” registry.
  - b) If the program continues to allow reimbursement for PCA services, then the participant must provide proof that he/she paid the vendor, such as cleared checks.
  - c) If the participant is requesting PCA services from the program and the participant is eligible for LTPCS, the program should require the participant to provide a denial letter to include the denial reason, from the participant.

As of today, the program is continuing to improve of internal processes. Since the last board meeting in November, the program processed 316 payments.

The program is continuing to reach out to all Louisiana municipalities. Approximately 63 municipalities did not respond to the first letter. Of the 63, 41 still has not responded to the second letter that was mailed out.

## **BIALA – KIMBERLY HILL**

The main focus of their organization continues to be running the resource center and educating people around the state about the THSCI trust fund program. BIALA’s hotline receives 35-40 calls per month where individuals are assisted in finding the resources and/or support needed. The website continues to receive good traction especially the resource guide page. The monthly analytics shows the program has an average of 2500 page views per month. Starting mid-February, Adobe Business Catalyst will no longer be hosting website platforms which BIALA is currently on so BIALA will have to migrate the website to another platform. This basically

means BIALA have to rebuild the entire site. While the majority of the new website will remain the same, this will allow BIALA to update many things including the resource guide. We currently have over 800 resources listed in the guide so I am spending time going through each entry to update the resource. The current site will stay “live” until the migration is complete. Outreach continues around the state in the form of in-services at both inpatient and outpatient rehab hospitals, visits and calls with case managers, and participation in different community events. Due to surgery and a lengthy recovery process, the end of January and February will consist of more phone conversations. To date, 30 hospitals (many more rural) have been contacted to share the TH/SCI application and information about the resource center. This will continue through February along with updating the lengthy guide.

In support of those BIALA serve, and in conjunction with operating the resource center, BIALA offer a variety of services and programs. The biggest focus currently is planning the 13th annual conference. Any assistance from the advisory board in sharing the conference brochure would be greatly appreciated. Many of you work in settings with individuals BIALA would love to have join the conference. 12 CEUs have been approved for PT, OT, CRCC, CCMC, and SW. The conference will be held at the Double Tree New Orleans Airport Hotel on March 27-28. On April 4, BIALA is hosting a day at Waddill Nature Center in Baton Rouge specifically for individuals living with brain and/or spinal cord injuries and their caregivers. While BIALA still expect some to attend the medical conference, based on feedback from many of them, they would rather a more social event with some structured offerings but also time allocated for socialization. Therefore, BIALA is listening and trying something new this year.

Thank you, in advance, for helping BIALA promote the conference and for the support you show the organization. I look forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next board meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2020 at 10:00 a.m., held at PACE, 7436 Bishop Ott Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

Remaining 2020 THSCI Advisory Board Meetings:

August 13, 2020

November 12, 2020

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.