



**Executive Director's Staff Report**  
**October 15, 2026**  
**(September 18 –October 15, 2026)**

**BOARD / STAFF**

- **Executive Committee** – The committee met virtually at 2:00 PM, October 13, to review the October board agenda, receive a briefing on a new ACH practice to be implemented, discuss administration of the Gill Board Performance Survey, discuss the November 14 board retreat agenda, and receive a personnel update in closed session.
- **Dr. Julia López receives award** – Congratulations to Washington University Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity (CRE<sup>2</sup>) faculty lead for the School of Medicine Engagement Dr. Julia López, PhD, MPH, LCSW, who was selected as the recipient of the 2026 Department of Medicine Community Builder Award. The award honors faculty who have made significant efforts to improve the quality of life for members within their community within their role in the Department of Medicine at WashU Medicine.
- **Missouri Youth Mental Health Corps (ServMO)** – Clinical Partnership Director Poli Rijos, LCSW, was accepted to the Missouri Youth Mental Health Corps Taskforce. ServMO is bringing the nationally recognized [Youth Mental Health Corps](#) (YMHC) to Missouri. The YMHC initiative represents a new approach to mental health that combines service, workforce development, and community impact. YMHC leverages national service through AmeriCorps to expand support for youth while creating meaningful career pathways for young adults. The Missouri Youth Mental Health Taskforce will create a framework to reduce youth mental health challenges while addressing the national shortage of behavioral health professionals.

ServMO is a nonpartisan State Commission, approved by AmeriCorps, consisting of 15-25 members appointed by the Governor of Missouri. Established in 1994 as a direct response to the National and Community Service Trust Act, ServMO is responsible for developing a comprehensive service plan for the state of Missouri, assembling applications for funding and national service positions, and administering AmeriCorps' grants in the state.

- **Gill Board Effectiveness Evaluation** – At the request of Board Chair Rob Poirier, trustees are being asked to complete the Gill Self-Assessment Checklist, a research-based tool tested for reliability, validity and usefulness in distinguishing stronger from weaker governance practices. **Trustees will receive an email from Executive Assistant Alicia Lee following the board meeting with a Survey Monkey link to complete the self-assessment tool.** The majority of questions use a Likert Scale with a few open-ended responses. The findings will be compiled and presented at the November 14 board retreat and serve as the basis for an open discussion on board, staff, and MHB organizational performance led by Rob. Trustees will also receive a 2-page handout in the email with the

survey link that provides more detail on how the Gill Board Performance Assessment works and what types of information it will identify.

### COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS / ALLOCATIONS (CCSF, CMHF, Funding Partnerships & Initiatives)

- **FY27 – 29 Application Feedback** – Data and Performance Analyst Xinyue Zhang facilitated meetings and one-on-one interviews with MHB trustees to gather feedback on the recently completed FY27-29 competitive application cycle. Key themes from those discussions will be shared with the board during the upcoming board retreat.
- **Grassroots Reinvestment for Optimal Wellbeing (GROW)** – Deputy Director Serena Muhammad participated in the selection process to identify a new Program Director for GROW. GROW is a DMH-funded initiative focused on reducing opioid overdoses and deaths among Black men in St. Louis City. MHB serves as the fiscal sponsor for the GROW partnership with the Behavioral Health Network and several grassroots organizations.

### FEDERAL PROGRAMS / STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- **St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission** – VPC reopened grant opportunities for St. Louis City youth events starting October 1, 2026.
- **City of St. Louis Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)** – VPC met with the acting commissioner of OVP to discuss a potential partnership to support the Gun Violence Response Network (GVRN). As OVP reorganizes its work and VPC restructures its response network, there are opportunities to streamline the partnership to support key services that help interrupt retaliatory gun violence in St. Louis City.

### ADMINISTRATION

- **Assistant Controller Search** – MHB engaged CBIZ Consulting Services to assist with the candidate screening and selection process for the MHB Assistant Controller position. On October 9, Secretary/Treasurer Vander Corliss, Controller Susan Kabat, and Prevention Partnership Director Jessica Meyers participated in Round 1 in-person interviews for the Assistant Controller. Additional candidates have been identified for Round 1 interviews which will take place this week and next. It is anticipated that Round 2 interviews will begin the week of October 26. We hope to have the position filled before the end of the calendar year.

### OTHER

- **Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS)** – Serena met with CEO Les Johnson to learn about ARCHS' current programs and priorities. ARCHS served as the intermediary for the Afterschool for All Partnership (ASAP) for several years as a funder and program manager of afterschool programs in St. Louis Public Schools with CCSF funding.
- **Children's Funding Project Community of Practice (COP)** – Executive Director Cassandra Kaufman participated in the COP meeting October 30 focused on developing and

working with youth advisory councils for children's services funds. The St. Louis County Children's Service Fund (CSF) has recently launched a Youth Advisory Council with high school representatives from four St. Louis County School Districts. The CSF Board has allocated \$150,000 from their children's service fund for the youth advisory council to determine areas to invest the funding and to recommend funding awards following an RFP process which the group designed and is implementing with support from CSF staff.

- **City of St. Louis Tornado Recovery** – Serena met with Jennifer Brinkmann iTeam (Bloomberg Innovation Team) Director to discuss the mental health needs of tornado survivors. The City of St. Louis Recovery Office is interested in exploring a partnership to increase access to mental health supports for neighborhoods directly impacted by the May 2025 tornado.
- **Community Children's Services Fund Executive Directors** – Cassandra attended the bi-monthly CSF ED meeting in Columbia, MO with the other nine executive directors October 9.
- **Community Health Commission of Missouri** – Deputy Director Serena Muhammad attended a convening of Cover Missouri and the Community Health Commission of Missouri to learn how organizations are working together to develop a public education campaign to better prepare the community for upcoming changes to Medicaid eligibility and enrollment practices.
- **Federal Single Audit Update October 8** – Cassandra participated in a webinar sponsored by CBIZ to better understand 2024 and 2026 changes to OMB's Uniform Guidance. These changes will impact MHB's federal single audits.
- **H.R. 1: Impact, Timelines, and Missouri's Implementation Efforts webinar October 1** – Cassandra participated in a webinar featuring MHB Policy Consultant David Winton and sponsored by the Missouri Foundation for Health. Commonly referred to as the "One Big Beautiful Bill," H.R. 1 will significantly impact states' Medicaid and other safety net programs. Missouri must implement provisions requiring substantial system changes, new programmatic and eligibility requirements, and altered state responsibilities. MHB staff will continue to monitor these changes, as well as the impact for city residents. The webinar provided a high-level overview of H.R.1's major provisions impacting Missouri and the implementation timeline. Also discussed was how H.R. 1's execution intersects with other policy changes in Missouri, such as a leaner budget environment and efforts to modernize IT systems that have the potential to link participants to state programs and improve the interconnectedness of services.
- **Neighborhood Safety Initiative (NSI)** – Serena, Clinical Partnership Director David Haasis, and Data and Performance Analyst Xinyue Zhang, met with MHB trustee Brian Phillips to learn more about the outreach program supported by the Neighborhood Safety Initiative. The meeting focused on opportunities to share information between the NSI team and MHB funded partners that provide homeless services.
- **Prevention Partnership Director Jessica Meyers** attended the following:
  - Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition open house for their new building at 1220 N. Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132 on September 17.

- Forward Through Ferguson and Urban Institute's launch of the "[Conditions for Change in the Decade Since the Ferguson Commission](#)" report on October 7.
- **St. Louis City Emergency Management Forum** September 30 – Poli, Early Childhood Program Director Denise Carter and Prevention Partnership Director Lisa Potts attended the Direct Service Provider Symposium hosted by the City Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) and the City's Office of Financial Empowerment. The symposium centered on how to help families prepare for and recover from the financial impact of disasters, and how service providers can work better together.
- **Webster University's Center for Clinical Scholarship Community Convening October 3** – Cassandra and Serena attended the Convening featuring keynote speaker Dr. Bruce Perry. The event included a conversation with funders to learn more about how public and private dollars can support trauma informed systems of care for children's mental health.