

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Strategic Communications Division
LGBTQIA2-S UsCC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Thursday February 4TH, 2-4 pm

Welcome/Introductions

Present: Greg Wilson, Nicole Kristal, Ana Bernal, Ashley Flores, Bill Sive, Bobby Dillard, Claire Kobren, Crystal Bender, Cynthia Ruffin, David Haynik, Diego Echaveste-Avila, Edgar Mariscal, Erwin Gutierrez, Gerald Garth, Isaias Guzman, JavonTae Wilson, Jean Harris, Jeffrey King, Jeri Rochman, Johana Lozano, Merry Meyers, Mikey Fields, Rebecca Gitlin, Renato Lira, Yue Hua Xu (Vicky)
DMH Admin: Kelly Wilkerson, Sandra Chang, Keacha Stewart, Pinki Mehta, Jorge Partida

Getting To Know You

- Diego Avila shared he is the new pride outreach specialist at strength united in San Fernando Valley. Diego was a bartender for 10 years, he is enjoying working in his new field using his degree.
- Bobby Dillard also shared his background and he is a new staff member at In The Meantime, he is one of the new facilitators. Bobby is also a singer, dancer, actor, and a Tina Turner Impersonator.

Membership Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct, as well as LGBTQIA2-S UsCC supplemental information attached to meeting agenda.

Review of January 2021 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes Reviewed and Approved

Competency Training Update

- Nicole shared that she and other advocates met with UCLA about the training, and they have agreed to allow the group to make the revisions, suggestions and add sexual orientation as well and address other disparities. Nicole invited members to join the ad hoc group to have a separate meeting to discuss further.

Cultural Traditions Newsletter

- Dr. Sandra Chang provided information regarding a new project that the CCC is presenting, inviting all of the UsCCs to be included.
- The goal is to provide a space to build connections with the UsCCs and welcome the community to share their voice and address concerns related to the pandemic and social barriers by highlighting each cultural group.
- There will be a page dedicated for each UsCC subcommittee that would like to participate.
- The newsletter will be quarterly; it will inform the community of resources available to them.
- It will also allow everyone to connect their cultures by sharing upbringing experiences, food recipes, photography, poems, etc.

- Dr. Chang shared they will be forming a workgroup to compile information to plan the newsletter content and invited members to join.
- Content is needed by 2/12/21 if possible.

Homelessness During COVID (List of Needs for the LGBTQIA2-S)

- Recommendation to expand the definition of homelessness (i.e. couch surfing, sharing a studio with too many individuals, etc.). Many ways that people are homeless.
- Other barriers – individuals are unemployed and cannot get their unemployment, struggling with addiction and mental health issues.
- Current initiatives are failing because there are many leaders in place that do not understand mental health and addiction.
- Providing housing is not enough – community members need access to mental health services as well as substance abuse services.
- Issues with individuals trying to access substance abuse treatment, in particular with specific time limits.
- Discussion regarding terminology: “unhoused” vs. “homeless”
- Concerns regarding the safety of transgender and gender non-confirming communities in shelters on Skid Row.
 - Religious-based shelters are not always affirming and safe.
 - LAHSA has unused funds and funds are not being used effectively or timely.
 - Pinki shared that LAHSA is opening up their public comment period for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 with regard to how they spend Measure H Funding (Kelly to share link via email).
 - Recommendation to invite housing specific agencies to participate in discussions regarding housing.
 - Question regarding shelters downtown receiving tax payer dollars but still requiring participants to listen to a sermon before receiving services/food.
 - Recommendation to address this concern at a higher level such as the LA County Board of Supervisors.
- Many transitional housing/treatment facilities have protocols in place with regards to COVID safety and are working with DPH.
- Costs for housing and programs are a major barrier. Often income is required and many in need of housing do not have a reliable or any source of income.
- Recommendation to educate housing providers on the needs of LGBTQIA2-S community members.
- Recommendation that LAHSA add gender identity markers on their annual “homeless count”.

Mental Health Promoter Expansion Program

- Dr Partida shared the LGBTQIA2-S community has available positions for the Mental Health Promoters program.
- As of now, no candidates have applied from the LGBTQIA2-S community to fill these open positions.
- Dr. Partida asked for help spreading the word regarding this initiative. Kelly to share Promoter job announcement via email.

Capacity Building Project Update

- Three projects have been sent out for solicitation, the solicitation period is closed, and we are awaiting a response from ISD.
- The fourth project is with ISD, they are clarifying some questions that the buyer has. It has not gone out for solicitation yet.
- Kelly provided a brief overview of the capacity building project process.
- Ana Bernal suggested a webinar or presentation on how to write a proposal and the necessary steps to the bidding process. Kelly to follow up and invite someone from ISD to share regarding the solicitation process.

DMH Accountability Session & General Announcements

- Pinki Mehta provided an update regarding a new board motion regarding sexual orientation gender identity (SOGI) data collection.
- Pinki stated they intend to look at the county expansion on how data is collected, and whether or not it is being collected appropriately.
- Pinki will share the email she received about the board motion with Kelly and the group members
- Rebecca Gitlin shared that after the board approves a motion, each County department has 90 days to respond to the directive.
- Rebecca Gitlin will be a subject matter expert and can provide an update next month if possible.

Next Meetings (first Thursday of the month):

4/1/21, 5/6/21, 6/3/21, all meetings 2-4pm

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#) or

323-776-6996, Conference ID: 542 042 921#

All meeting recordings can be found on the DMH website: <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/lgbtqia2-s-uscc/lgbtqi2-s-uscc-meeting-minutes/>