

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

**BLACK & AFRICAN HERITAGE UsCC**

**2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.**

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you so much for coming, everyone. I will start recording.

[meeting begins]

Thank you so much for attending the Black and African Heritage Underserved Cultural Community subcommittee. We are excited, I see a lot of new faces here today so I really appreciate your support and efforts to attend today. I will start with introductions as I am the liaison for the Black and African Heritage committee and I have worked for DMH since 2009. My name is Desiree DeShay and I am a

clinical social worker by trade, but my item in DMH is as a Mental Health Training Coordinator. I'm excited, and what we usually do is popcorn and do check-ins, so I will popcorn it to.... I will start with Mr. Jim and then we can popcorn it around to all of the participants today.

>> JIM: Okay, pop pop pop corn. If you want to be able to enjoy your popcorn, there is a new movie called Marry Me. if you have not seen it, it will make you cry. I don't know, I'm kind of a romantic and romantic comedy, but it is so much of understanding our limitations and getting beyond them and then being able to understand and appreciate our differences. I do suicide prevention and last year we got so many calls from people who were tired of being married, they had to be there together, and we finally helped them appreciate their differences and to value those differences. And that came from the advice from JW.org, the family that prays together stays together, and we got so many good results. So Marry Me is kind of like that, it's a good result. I will popcorn it to Hector Ramirez.

>> HECTOR RAMIREZ: Hello, everybody. I'm so grateful to be able to share this space with you all. My name is Hector Ramirez and I am one of the Co-Chairs for the Access for All UsCC and I am also a consumer. I'm really glad to see you all today and I really miss being in person with all of you, so thank you for sharing the space. I will popcorn it to Mary McQueen.

>> MARY MCQUEEN: Thank you, Hector. Hello, everyone. I, too, am very thankful to be here today. I was invited at the last minute and I'm so grateful to be here and for this opportunity. I am with CAMHPRO, California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations. I am a Los Angeles southern region representative bringing peer voices to the table of the peer certification in the County. I am so glad to be here. I was also invited by one of my fellow ambassadors for personal reasons, my mother recently died in prison of negligence, so yeah, outside of work I have attended as well. I am a part of the community, I am a peer and consumer. Thank you, everyone. I will pass it on to Pharaoh Mitchell. Did I pronounce that right?

>> PHARAOH MITCHELL: Yes, ma'am. Forgive me, I am literally in two different Zoom meetings at the same time. My name is Pharaoh Mitchell and I'm with the community, and I'm here to be of assistance in any way I can. I cannot see anybody's name to popcorn it to, so I will give it back to Desiree to popcorn to someone else.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Okay, thank you. I will just go down the list of the people that I see. Erica?

>> DR. ERICA MELBOURNE: Good afternoon, I will actually be off of camera today so I apologize, I have food sitting in front of me. I am Dr. Erica Melbourne with Service Area 6, and that is about it. I will popcorn it to Marilyn.

>> MARILYN HUFF: My name is Marilyn Huff and I am a Psychiatric Social Worker for Service Area 6 and I am also the vice chair of the Black Mental Health Task Force. Happy to be here with you all, and I will popcorn it to Shallen.

>> SHALLEN PRICE: Hi, everybody. I am eating as well, so my camera is off. I am Shallen Price with UMMA Community Clinic and I am the Wellness Coordinator there for the Black Vision to Wellness program that we offer. I will popcorn it to... let's see, Imani?

>> IMANI: Thank you, Shallen. My name is Imani and I am doing some work with the Black Mental Health Task Force, TPF, and I have been a part of the UsCC for a while off and on. I went on maternity leave and came back, and I'm excited to be back with a lot of work that is being done in our communities. I will popcorn it to... I can't see all of the names, can you popcorn it to someone, Desiree?

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I will popcorn it to Gerald, he's here with us today.

>> GERALD GARTH: Good afternoon, my name is Gerald Garth and I am the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with the LA LGBT Center and I am also the Co-Chair of the LGBTQIA2-S subcommittee of DMH as well. I'm glad to be here. I will popcorn it to... is Madeline here?

>> My name is Madeline Tapia. I have been in meetings all day and my computer has restarted or has frozen already, like, four times at this point, so I will just not use video right now. I work in SPA 3 as a mental health promoter, and this is my first time here, so hi!

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Welcome. Can you see people to popcorn it to or no? Maybe she cannot, let me go back to the list. Jessica? Miss Joann?

>> JOANN: Hello, everyone. My name is Joann Freeman and I work in Service Area 8 as a community health worker, and I am with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. A little bit of background, I minored in Black studies and I have my bachelors degree in psychology and AA in paralegal studies. I have been working as a volunteer before I got my job here in March 2021 as a WOW worker for the Department of Mental Health and then worked as a community consumer advocate, so I'm very connected. I also represent for the learning disability and intellectual community SALT

8 peer adoc as well, thank you. Wendy Cabil invited me, so it is nice to be here. I will popcorn it to you, Wendy.

>> WENDY CABIL: Good afternoon, everyone. Happy Black History Month! It is good to see everyone and all of the new faces. I am Wendy Cabil and I am now representing as a client stakeholder with MHSA emphasis, as an advocate as well. You may or may not know yet but I'm no longer your Co-Chair, so that will be discussed later in the meeting. But I am glad to be here and I'm still advocating as much as possible considering the load that I'm carrying. This year, I am moving forward with a priority on my self-care. I'm still here, don't worry, I am still here to support.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you, Wendy, can you popcorn it to someone?

>> WENDY CABIL: Let me see, who do I see. Let me look at the participants list. I lost it, hold on. It's kind of hard to manage. Do you see anyone who has not had a chance?

(Overlapping Speakers)

>> ROMALIS TAYLOR: Hello, everyone, I am glad to be here. This is Romalis Taylor, a member of the UsCC for a long time. I am still here to support what the community needs and wants in regards to resources and support, advocacy as well. I'm going to popcorn it to Senait.

>> SENAIT ADMASSU: Hi, everyone. I am from the African Coalition and I've also been a member of this group for awhile, and I see a lot of people I know, so welcome and it is nice to see you all. I will popcorn it...Yue?

>> Thank you, this is Vicki Xi from Service Area 3 administration. I'm happy to be here. I will popcorn it to Mary.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Mary already went, so I will go ahead and popcorn it to Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood.



>> SYLVIA GONZALES-YOUNGBLOOD: Hello, everyone. My name is Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood, I am Ohlone Mission Indian of the [indistinct] tribe and I'm the Co-Chair of the American Indian/Alaska Native UsCC. I am presenting today with my Co-Chair, Shannon Rivers, so I will popcorn it to him.

>> SHANNON RIVERS: Hi, everyone. I've got to say that I love popcorn. My name is Shannon Rivers, I am [indistinct] from the state of Arizona, you call it Arizona. In my language it is "the place of many little streams." We will be presenting today here in a few minutes to this committee and we will talk about indigenous peoples or first nations people or people that you call American Indians or Native Americans, so we will try to educate you as we go along and talk about indigenous peoples. Thank you. I don't know who went, so I am new to this group.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: No problem, I will popcorn it to Philip Butler.

>> PHILIP BUTLER: Hello, everyone, Philip Butler here. I'm glad to be back, I know I was out at the end of last year so it is good to join

you all again. I'm the founder of the Seeker project, and I used to teach at LMU, and now I teach out here in Denver. I am joining you from a few states away. In terms of popcorning, I'm not sure who else is left. Has Carrie gone yet?

>> Thank you, Philip. Forgive me, I am actually in transit right now and I'm hopping from site to site. My name is Carrie McIntyre, I am a senior community ambassador with TCC Family Health in Long Beach. I currently have an African-American storytelling class that is in the works, so I am thankful to be a part of this space and I'm thrilled to hear from you all to see how I can be a better support to my community in Long Beach. Thank you. Sorry I cannot popcorn to anyone.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Great. Shalae Lewis?

>> Hi, everyone, can you hear me okay? This is Shalae with the LA County Department of Public Health, San Gabriel Valley Region. I am also a co-lead for the San Gabriel Valley AIM Initiative, so I'm

happy to be here. I'm not sure who has not gone yet so I will pass it back over to Desiree.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Who else do I see? I see Reba Stevens.

>> COMMISSIONER STEVENS: Good afternoon, everyone, my name is Reba Stevens and I am a member of the community advocating for mental health, homelessness, and substance use disorder. And I'm a Department of Mental Health Commissioner for the second supervisorial district. Did Hector go already or Gerald Garth?

>> DESIREE DESHAY: They did.

>> COMMISSIONER STEVENS: Then it's on you, Desiree.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Okay, thank you, Reba. Carlene?

>> CARLENE DAVIS: Hi, Carlene Davis with -- project.

>> ROSARIO RIBLEZA: This is Rosario, I am the liaison for Access for All UsCC. Hello to my Co-Chair, Hector.

>> KELLY WILKERSON: Hi, this is Kelly Wilkerson and I am a liaison as well, like Rose and Desi. My two groups are the American Indian/Alaska Native and the LGBTQIA2-S UsCC. Thank you for having me. I think we might have done it, Desi, I think that is it.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: No, I have a couple of more people that I just saw. Oh my goodness, Joyce?

>> JOYCE SALES: Hello, everyone. First of all, I want to give condolences to Mary McQueen's family and just praying and wishing you the best. I am Co-Chair of SALT, about a year in now. I live in the West Adams neighborhood and I am also a consumer, and I'm a licensed real estate agent working LA proper, Westside, beach cities, etc. Thank you, and I will popcorn it to -- I have a nephew named Pharaoh, so I will popcorn it to him if he has not spoken.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: He has already gone. Thank you, Jay. I think I have my captioner left, would you like to introduce yourself?

>> CAPTIONER: Sure, hello. My name is Anna and I'm your captioner today. Thank you.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I also have captioner support?

>> CAPTIONER: That's me as well.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Okay, the last one I have is the Fireflies notetaker, is that the one on that end?

>> IMANI: I think it's an app.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Okay, I think we got everyone. Do I have anybody on the phone? Then we will move forward.

I did send out the agenda, and the next thing on the agenda is the approval of minutes. I have the January minutes attached along with the transcript of the January 2022 Black and African Heritage

Committee meeting. If you have that and if you could review it, at the end I will note in detail that there are approximately -- the captioner critiques the whole meeting and we do have a recording of the meeting, so for detailed information other than what is put in the minutes, you have that for your reading as well. I will give it about three or four minutes to review the meeting minutes for January.

[reviewing minutes]

>> WENDY CABIL: I did not want you to forget if you haven't already done it, but for December, even though we did not complete our meeting it still needs to reflect that --

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Actually, what I will probably do with the December meeting minutes is attach the transcript with it because we need [audio interference] before with the meeting minutes, but I will actually include them. Thank you for that.

>> WENDY CABIL: Great, thank you.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: All right. Can I have a motion to approve the January meeting minutes for the Black and African Heritage committee?

>> WENDY CABIL: I move that we approve our January 2022 minutes.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: A second please?

>> ROMALIS TAYLOR: I will second the motion.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you, Romalis. It has been moved and properly seconded for the January 2022 minutes for the Black and African Heritage minutes to be approved. All those in favor?

>> Aye's

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Nay? Okay. Any abstentions? The minutes have been approved and passed, thank you so much. We will move

on with information regarding our Black Mental Health Task Force.

Imani, are you available to give us a little update?

>> IMANI: Yes, I can give you some updates and I think Nakeya will come on a little bit later and provide some additional information. Our Community Awards Gala is coming up next week, so I really hope everyone has registered. We have put a lot of work and energy into making this an amazing event to celebrate the leaders and the people who have contributed to the Black community and the work that we are doing. We have our MOVE project with Minding Our Village Elders. We completed the training for the peer community service leaders. We started with 15 and we graduated 15, which is a huge accomplishment in itself. It is a very motivated team and it is going to be a very high bar that has been set because the passion, expertise, knowledge, and work that these PCSL's are prepared to do is beyond what we could have ever expected. We will be providing additional information to the committee once we get the topics for their presentations that will be conducted between this month, February, and May 2022.



There are some workgroups that the Black Mental Health Task Force have been a part of with regards to addressing issues in the Black community surrounding the gap in services for mental health services, ranging from concerns of providers, the Black community not being heard, and a big one right now is the Black community showing up. There are a lot of resources, information, and funding being provided at this time to bridge the gap with Blacks and mental health services and they're trying to figure out why the community is not engaging. There is a lot of reasons why and maybe we can present on that in a future meeting, but the light that is being shared by the community as to why they have not been showing up for services has been very moving, and we would like to do some work with regards to bridging that gap and encouraging others to see if we can make a difference.

The last part is there are some concerns surrounding individuals and supermarkets, where there are people who are suffering from mental health issues are somehow showing up at supermarkets and being run off, and I'm not really sure if it is due to food inequities or just mental health needs. So a lot of times the grocery store workers are actually acting as mental health peer

providers as, you know, ranging from people having breakdowns, loitering, so we are talking about possibly creating some tools to work with grocery store managers and identify areas to come up with a plan to figure out what the need is and to address the need, instead of always having to call law enforcement and have the issues escalated and these individuals walking away with their needs not being met. We find it as an opportunity to engage the community.

That is all for now.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you so much for that. I see a hand, Carlene?

>> CARLENE DAVIS: Just a question. I was just wondering if she could bullet two or three of the recurring points that you are hearing from the community that is providing barriers to accessing care?

>> IMANI: Sure. One of them is that there is a request and need for people providing the services to look like the community that they are servicing, that is a long-standing request and identified

need within communities of color. We're actually coming up with ideas and solutions in the workgroups of how we can accomplish that. They continue to tell us the same thing and there has not really been a large movement with regard to that need being addressed, so I know there are a lot of elements of education and peer training, but one thing I recently suggested is opportunities for people of color to be educated, like stipends or scholarships, specifically to encourage the Black community to go to school and to get these degrees and certifications to be able to provide those services and do the work in the community, by people who look like the people who are being served.

A second bullet point is that a lot of incentives that are being offered are not desirable to the community, so figuring out what the incentives to bring them in might be. A third bullet point would be essentially, as a part of dealing with mental health, making excuses for not showing up. How do we educate and get around and teach an understanding of the importance of mental health and seeking services before they are in crisis, because we are finding that when they are in crisis and seek services, one that was identified is proposing a method of holistic treatment instead of clinical, like

diagnosis and, you know, just the language that is essentially surrounding encouraging individuals to seek mental health services needs to be changed. We need to look closer in the community to see what is already working and how are they currently using self-care or how are they currently engaging in self-care needs?

Religion, churches, barbershops, beauty salons, these are areas that the Black community is already accessing to engage in self-care, so maybe utilizing some of these and doing partnerships to kind of expand on these already existing relationships instead of different entities that the community does not trust coming in and continuing to push the services and there is just ongoing disconnect. I hope that makes sense.

>> CARLENE DAVIS: Yeah, so when I look at it from a systems perspective, and particularly in Los Angeles County some years back when the County moved to only contracting with companies and organizations who had evidence-based programs versus community-defined, evidence-based programs. When that switch happened a lot of providers, not just on the mental health side, but lots of community service providers who were culturally responsive

and who were culturally competent could no longer obtain county contracts.

There is a systems issue here because there are organizations on the ground who are engaged in community-defined evidence practices that can serve this community, but they do not have the resources or the big university partners or the time to do what is required to have an "evidence-based program." So this is a system based problem and until the County changes it, you are going to keep running into this. Until that has changed...I mean, there are people, there are folks right now where, with a policy change, you could have an increased workforce that is coming from it from a more holistic perspective in addition -- like, you could come at it from a holistic way and then know when it's time to do the referral to more clinical.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you for that feedback, Carlene. I appreciate that. Senait, you are up next with the African Coalition.

>> SENAIT ADMASSU: I was just going to add to what you have discussed and -- with CBO's who provide culturally linguistically

appropriate treatment. We work with two things, the African Coalition among the other 29 CBO's who are working through DMH incubation. We pretty much completed that and it is supposed to get you prepared on how to become a legal entity, to be a contracted provider to provide services in LA County. There's 29 organizations and now we've completed it, so we are asking to support that on an ongoing basis to sustain it so we can deliver, whether it is evidence-based practices or community-defined practices, that works for the population we serve. We are in the process of working towards the Board of Supervisors for support to sustain these programs and CBOs, that is one.

Another one we were asked about, actually some concerned parents came to us that during this pandemic, there are black and brown parents having difficulty engaging their children, and the suicide and substance abuse rates are increasing highly within underserved communities. We are in the process of developing a survey that goes to the community members to do a community assessment so that we can come up with a program and solution for why services aren't being met during this pandemic. That causes increasing substance abuse and mental health issues, so that is

what we are working on and we can update you as it comes up. We want to ask for your participation and support, and we will send the digital survey to Desi to share with you guys, so please make sure you share with your family and your communities to fill it out so that we can get the assessment results and we can provide it to decision-makers to come up with some specific programs, whether it is prevention or early intervention. Thank you, that is what I have.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you so much, Senait, for that. All right, any questions before we go on to our presentation for today?

We have the AI/AN UsCC subcommittee presenters today, which are Sylvia and Shannon, so I will go ahead and give the floor over to you. Please make sure you are on mute so that they can have our undivided attention.

>> SHANNON RIVERS: My name is Shannon Rivers, that is my colonized name, and the kind of language that I'm going to use today is sometimes jarring and concerning for some of our audience. I am -- and the First Nations peoples from Arizona. I have

a Masters degree out of UCLA and an environmental science degree out of Northern Arizona University. I live in Los Angeles in Tongva territory. There are several positions that I hold. I was a former delegate to the United Nations permanent forum on indigenous issues. I hold a position as a Chaplain, as a Native American spiritual leader for men and women who are incarcerated in the state of California, Arizona, and New Mexico. I'm currently the Director of Programming for the Native American Resurgence Initiative, Native Ways to College here in LA County. Finally, I am an American Indian/Alaska Native UsCC Co-Chair here with the Department of Mental Health.

Some years ago, the Poor People's campaign, which I also work with, which was restarted by Reverend Barber and Leslie O'Harris, asked for some information about native peoples. They did not have a lot of information because the United States does not carry a lot of information, and if we know anything about the history of the United States, it is at very best mostly whitewashed, it is mostly academically whitewashed, and most books written about indigenous people or Native Americans, as you call them, are written by 80% non-native people. I would imagine it is almost as



high in African-American communities, but I do not know that number specifically.

We're at the bottom of the list of many things, or at the top of the list, however you want to look at it. We are high in alcoholism, drugs, violence, and incarceration. We are the number one in incarceration despite what some of our experts talk about and the reason we say that is because of population. There are about 6 million Native Americans left in the United States. There was once 100 million or 125 million. I'm going to throw out a lot of data to you, but before I do and before I jump into the fact sheet that we're going to share with you, the Poor People's campaign myself and a colleague of mine to give them information on Native Americans. Specifically, what we focused on was four areas of indigenous peoples and Native Americans.

The first was systemic racism within the United States, and I don't know, Kelly, if we shared that fact sheet with the group but if we can, we can do that now. Poverty and inequality was number two, and then ecological devastation and health, and finally, the last focus that we wanted to deal with was militarization and the war economy and specifically how it impacts indigenous people. I want

to turn it over to my Co-Chair, Ms. Youngblood, to read to you the first page starting with indigenous peoples and their respective First Nations, because when we talk about native people here in LA County, and I will speak to that in a minute, I want you to try to understand the logistical, the cultural, the economic, the educational, and the poverty and the war economy on how it impacts indigenous peoples today in what we call North America and Canada. North America, according to the United Nations, is the Northern regions of Mexico, The United States, and Canada. I will turn it over to Sylvia and then ask her to read the first page.

>> SYLVIA GONZALES-YOUNGBLOOD: Hello, everyone, I will give a little introduction to myself, a little more in depth. My name is Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood, and I am Ohlone Mission Indian and Chicana. I am of the Ohlone people from Northern California, -- Carmel Tribe. We were colonized by the Spaniards, the first colonizers to come over and the first foreign language to hit the land, which is Spanish. I am also a special-needs advocate and that is where my passion is here in the American Indian community. I will keep it short and I'll start reading from the documents sheet.

It reads: Indigenous peoples and their respective First Nations are not only place based peoples relationally connected to their traditional homelands, but their own distinctive cultures, traditions, and precolonial and colonial histories since European contact. The World Bank 2020 report states that the global indigeneous population is 476 million or 6% of the world's population that live in over 90 countries and, through the cultural practices and traditional ecological knowledge, protect about 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity. Within the United States, Native Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians comprise about 2% of the entire United States population. There are indeed more than 6.9 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and in 2019 there were 1.9 million Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Within the US, there are 574 federally recognized Indian nations, 62 state recognized Indian nations, and hundreds of non-federally and non-state recognized Native American nations. There are also over 40 million Mexican, central, and South American migrants that are either indigenous or of indigenous roots residing within the politically defined borders of the US. Of these, about 3 million still have active ties to their tribal, linguistic, and traditional knowledge.

Indigenous peoples are experiencing protracted violence of ongoing land loss and displacement that began with the Doctrine of Discovery. The central, theological, and settler colonial legal instruments used to dispossess all indigenous peoples ownership of their traditional homelands, regardless of historical and current political status. Even Indian treaty nations only have the right to occupancy and not ownership of lands. Moreover, the US government has never entirely honored any of the approximately 370 signed and ratified treaties with Indian nations, and that includes an equal number of treaties signed and never ratified during the Treaty era of 1778 through 1871.

The settler colonial legacy commencing with the Doctrine of Discovery patterns of domination is directly connected to the present genocidal form of environmental conditions of state, economical, political, and cultural violence perpetrated against indigenous peoples and their respective First Nations. Indeed, the Doctrine of Discovery is one of the clearest expressions of the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism, which the Poor People's campaign has taken a core stand against. Therefore, we recognize that for a just and moral transition to occur, unconditional

full support of indigenous peoples' self determination and sovereignty, revocation of the doctrine of discovery, total compliance with all signed, unsigned, and ratified treaties, and full acknowledgment and adherence to the United Nations declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples are a necessary prerequisite for creating intergenerational and cultural sustainability and sustainable futures for all.

>> SHANNON RIVERS: Thank you. And you can stop sharing the screen, Kelly, thank you. Am I still there? Can you hear me? Okay, I'm not coming up on screen for some reason. You're probably wondering why this is important and I'm going to give you some statistics here in Los Angeles County and in California.

In the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, there was a program called the Relocation Act. The program asked that Native people get rid of or move off of the reservation and into large cities, cities like Seattle, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago. What they determined was that if you get the Indians off of the reservation, you are going to have these Native American folks become better citizens. What happened then was they moved into areas, mostly African-American areas,

already impoverished communities, redlining districts began, Native Americans were subsequently treated, not only as American citizens but we were treated in a way that said get rid of the Indian and get rid of the reservation and try to have them become better citizens.

The reason we put this study together was because we wanted to start out with where these problems happened and where they began from. 1492 is a marker in the history of the colonization of the Western Hemisphere, from the Tiano and Arawak-speaking people, all the way through Central and South America. When we come to Los Angeles, we have roughly about 170,000 Native Americans, some estimated as high as 200,000 Native Americans alone living in LA County. I put my website to you and to your team of the program that I am working on right now, Native Ways to College for Native Americans, and I want you to take a look at that because you may know Native Americans in your community and they may have family. In fact, a lot of our Native American community migrated during a time with African-Americans, with Mexican-Americans, and thus became a relationship that developed over time.

Here in LA County, the mental health department, as native people we have been kind of isolated or erased from the discussion altogether. Part of that reason is if we want to look at the document, we look at the ongoing history of racism of indigenous people. Native people continue to be isolated in many forms, politically, socially, economically. I say this quite often when I give a lecture, we are in fact probably the moral compass and the thorn on the side of this place that we call the United States and the reason being, because the treaties that we acknowledged or that should be acknowledged and the Constitution of the United States says that treaties are the law of the land, but unfortunately almost every treaty that you look at today in the United States with Native people or First Nations peoples has been violated or taken. We do not own the land, so we are landless. We have reservations and reservations were termed as prisoner of war camps in the early 18s and 1900s. I come from a reservation, I come from Arizona, I come from the Gila River Indian community. Even though we have progressed now and we have gaming and hospitals and things like that, we are still very much so in poverty. My tribe is one of the most impacted tribes with

diabetes, diabetes runs high in our community, in fact we are the highest in the world next to other Third World countries.

I say all of that to say this, and I'm trying to give you 500 years of history within 30 minutes, within our time frame, and I was excited to present to this committee because of our deep relationship with the African-American community, with the Black community. We have the same kind of suffrage that goes on and we see that within our departments, not only in Los Angeles County but throughout the country. We see high levels of poverty, high levels of unemployment, high levels of homelessness within our communities, and these are all based on this idea of superiority. When we talk about systemic racism, we do not just talk about the issues of systemic racism being something in the past, but something that continues today. And we see that within the Department of Mental Health and in fact, Dr. Andrea Garcia just did a study recently and it was found that Native Americans still suffer from mental health care and care for Native American families and their children.

The reason is because there is an assumption that we as Native Americans are -- and I use this term but I do not want you



to feel uncomfortable with it, because you are speaking to a Native indigenous person of the First Nation -- I'm not an American, I am First Nations. I don't consider myself American, I speak English, I speak my language, I do my ceremonies. Most Native people do their best to maintain those cultures and traditions and societies, only because they have sustained themselves for a millennium. But we find ourselves in these two worlds where we are trying to get services and we are trying to find a better way out of the system. We believe that the colonial structure right now is something that is harmful to, not only us but to mother Earth. So when we talk about systemic racism, we don't just recognize it as something that is new but as something that has been ongoing and that is predicated on the Doctrine of Discovery. If you don't know about the Doctrine of Discovery, I ask you to Google it and take a look at it, it is something very important.

The final thing that I will say about that particular issue with regards to systemic racism and the law is the Johnson v McIntosh case that took the Cherokee and removed them and put them on the walk to Oklahoma. And the final case that we were dealing with just recently with Ruth Bader Ginsberg, one of the things that she

did was she said that Indians, Native Americans, do not have title to them or rights to the land. The Doctrine of Discovery is still very much in play, so how does this impact Native Americans here in the United States and how does it impact us with regards to health, poverty, and inequality? If Native people do not have systems that support not only their culture and traditions or they do not have access to it, then they continue to lag behind both economically, socially, and politically. Right now we have one political leader within the state of California, assemblyman Romos. Los Angeles has moved to Indigenous Peoples Day. We have done things that look well on the surface and may present themselves well, but we are still lagging in many areas with regards to service.

When we look at poverty in the United States, Native Americans can sometimes be two or three times higher on the poverty scale. Our unemployment rates can sometimes be as high as 12%, if you look at the document in 2016 compared to the national average of 5.8%. And one of the things -- and I will try to wrap it up here shortly -- is that when we look at the health of our Indigenous peoples, we were unfortunately taken away from our lands and our territories and our waters and our livelihood was

taken away. My people specifically, the water was dammed up by Roosevelt and Hoover at the time, President Hoover. So you take away the hunting rights, the fishing rights, and then we go to the Americanized food. I heard somebody earlier mentioning eating healthy and that is something that we all have to do, but if you do not have access to those kinds of food because you are in poverty, then diabetes or hypertension or heart disease increases. So when we look at ecological devastation, that is a big part of our livelihoods and it destroyed us. Specifically in Arizona, if we look at the border issue, Trump wanted to put up a border wall and it ran right through our territory. They started draining more of our water that was very limited in the first place to use it to develop and build the wall and use the water for the concrete, and that creates a health issue.

The last thing I will say as I start to close here is that the border issue impacted us because of militarization of our borders. This is happening in Arizona, New Mexico, and California. When you prevent people, whether they are indigenous Mexicanos or indigenous peoples that recognize themselves as Native Americans and that live here in the United States but have families and

relationships on that side of the border, and you prevent them from crossing a border because of US policy, this impacts our livelihood. Not only spiritually or economically, but socially, and in many ways it impacts them with their mental health.

I just tried to give you 500 years of history, and the reason I was excited to share this with you is because I know that a lot of our community members can relate to this. We shared it across the board with the other UsCC's and the SALT committees and we share this document freely. It may be a little bit outdated but the numbers are pretty much the same. Finally, my program that I work with, the Native Ways to College program, the American Indian Resurgence, is a new program and it is a \$6 million dollar, five-year grant with the office of Indian Education, focused on trying to find services for Native American students in LAUSD. Well, LAUSD just recently came up with a report that said they only had 240 Native American students within their system and we believe that number is wrong. Again, the -- of Native people continues to happen. Our school systems are lacking and we deal with issues like racism that keep coming up with Riverside Unified School District and the teacher that was recently let go. We deal with it at the Cal State

systems with the examining of our ancient relatives, our skulls and our bones.

So all of these things have an impact on Native Americans in general. If we are considered mascots, if we're considered something of the past, we do not receive the healthcare and the benefits of these healthcare systems that should be awarded to Native American and that indigenous peoples and First Nations peoples should have access to.

I want to thank you for having us and we will open it up for brief questions.

>> SYLVIA GONZALES-YOUNGBLOOD: Before we open it up, Shannon, I just wanted to add a little bit because I am a California Indian and I want to kind of give the California-specific perspective. Because a lot of people feel that, like Shannon mentioned, Native Americans come from Cheyenne, Lakota, Apache, different names but you never hear about anything specific to California. California Indians, we are all across the state and like it was mentioned, we are here on Tongva land. There is a tribe that resides in this area and on this land.

For my tribe, we are from the Monterey Bay Berkeley area that goes up through San Francisco. When Shannon mentioned treaties, back in 1972 the United States decided that they wanted Monterey. Up until that time, Monterey was protected by the treaty and it belonged to our tribe, but they had to seek us out because they did not recognize myself. They do not recognize my family, my relatives as a tribe, as a whole, because the numbers are going down, as Shannon mentioned, not because we are not here but because the United States refuses to recognize us as Native Americans. Just imagine that, that the United States government looks at Mary and says, Mary, you are not Black, you are American, you are not African-American, you are American, we don't recognize you as that. And you say, but that is what I am, that is what my grandmother is and what my ancestors are. No, we do not recognize you that way, therefore your existence is no more. They had to seek this out and they had to find a in order to pay us to take the land, so they could not do anything with us until they proved that we sold it or that we were no more. Back in 1972, they paid me \$500 for the Monterey and Berkeley area all the way up to California. They paid me \$500 as a five-year-old and they were able

to do that, these are the kinds of things they do in order to take the land.

And not to say anything radical against the government, like Shannon said, to be something that is shocking, but these are the things that happened to Native Americans and especially in California because we are so invisible to the government. They had to recognize me as an individual, so as an individual they recognized me, Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood, as a Native American, but not my family or relatives or extended relatives collectively as a tribe because then that would change. There are a lot of different stigmas that go on. I live here in Arcadia, California and when I go to St. Gabriel, Father Junipero Drive is right there in the mission. The mission is where the start of our genocide is, which is a genocide that is not recognized by the government. You see a lot of people saying to never forget a genocide, but you never have people acknowledging a Native American genocide. Every day I drive by that, but that's okay because that is the Catholic Church. So there are a lot of different things that go on with those little subtle mental things that go on within the Native American community that people deal with every day, but I think it is getting

better because we have more advocates and more people out there telling our story so that people understand that we are here and we are relevant people and we are a thriving people, but our connection with this land is very different because it is our homelands.

It is different when you walk into your homelands -- we can't go to another country and see that everyone there looks like us. I wish we could, but it is here. Here on our land, you look around and everyone looks different because everyone has come here and created a home here, which is a beautiful thing, but it still has an effect when you are still an invisible people on your own land. So that is kind of what I wanted to add to the presentation to kind of put something into perspective. Shannon, if you don't have anything else you want to add to wrap up then I think we can open it up for questions.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you. Carlene has her hand up and then Wendy.



>> CARLENE DAVIS: I just wanted to try to understand from a legal policy perspective, when you say not recognized, what does that mean -- I'm just trying to understand that.

>> SYLVIA GONZALES-YOUNGBLOOD: The federal government has tribes that they recognize, who have federal recognition. Some states will recognize them by state standards, and when they want to take back land they will recognize it.

>> CARLENE DAVIS: I got it. So your tribe was not federally recognized nor recognized at the state level, which means that essentially the power was taken away. You need to be recognized in order to exercise or to fight for what is yours.

>> SHANNON RIVERS: Yes, and I want people to understand that because you are federally recognized there is not a gang of benefits. There are tribes in North and South Dakota that are some of the poorest nations in the country. Sheridan County in South Dakota is some of the poorest, the Navajo nation is some of the poorest. Money with regard to the COVID relief fund did not hit some of the

tribes. Some tribes, California is a unique place in the sense that they have many tribes but some of these tribes -- and I hear these real outrageous things sometimes at some of the meetings. In fact, I heard it last week at the Anaheim Unified School District meeting where I was at. This non-native lady asked me, why don't you Indians use some of your gaming money? Well, first of all, there are 576 federally recognized tribes and there are state recognized tribes, only 20% of these tribes have gaming facilities, 5% of them live near major metropolitan areas like Los Angeles or San Diego and do very well financially. There are small tribes in Bishop, California that have a small casino and they barely make payroll. So we have to put this into perspective, but with regards to your comment on federal recognition, these are standards that still have to be met by the United States government and they determine who is an Indian. They do not allow Native Americans or people who have long ancestral ties to territories to have that recognition. Let's go to the next question because I know we're short on time.

>> WENDY CABIL: Thank you. Thank you both for sharing your history with us and I know it has been a while that we were

expecting to have you, so here we are. I just want the Black and African Heritage Underserved Cultural Community group to take note of what you all are sharing with us as an example of why we need to dig deeper in our own history. That being said, I have been on my own personal journey and every time I turn around I am looking around and finding something new that scientists are now discovering, especially like in Egypt recently and with other researchers and anthropologists. I'm like, oh my gosh, every day it's hard to know what is real. This is very mind blowing for me as I'm experiencing this, but I cannot keep quiet and keep silent. It is one thing that they did not put it in the textbook or they put it in the textbook knowing that we wouldn't read it either, so either way, we need to do our own research. I see a lot of information on YouTube and I'm just floored. I want to encourage us all to dig deeper in our history because I am finding out that there are Africans, in the name of Moors, who were here before Columbus. And then there is the cross-section between Africans and Indians, so a lot of us have Indian in our blood and I know I have it on both sides of my family, so I just want to encourage us all to get real. Let's find out for ourselves and let's remember what is in our DNA

and know that there is a lot more to this history that we are not being told. That will empower us to be who we are in our identity.

>> SYLVIA GONZALES-YOUNGBLOOD: Something to add to what Wendy said for you all to think about when there is discussion about reparations coming through or the topic of reparations for atrocities that were committed against the Black American community, like Wendy said, get your documents together because that is exactly what happened to my family when they were looking for us. My grandmothers and her sisters and all my aunts had to go all over to the natural history museums, they had to go to the missions, they had to go to Washington, they had to go all over to connect all of the pieces to prove who we were. The good thing is the Europeans were very good record keepers, so even though there were a lot of things missing, there was enough there to show that we went through all of the missions down and came and settled here where we are in Southern California. So where all Indians are connected to genocide, not all Black Americans can connect themselves back to slavery because they could very well be someone who as not a descendent of slavery. It is like Wendy said, document and make

sure you start that because it is a long process and they are going to ask for it.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you so much, Sylvia. Go ahead, Jim.

>> JIM: A couple of months ago I started doing a little bit of research on my own family history and my grandmother is 1/8th Blackfoot, and I checked and checked and did a little bit of research and it seems like I might have some land back in Missouri. It's like you say, they set the system up where they can redline you from getting your property, so it is a difficult world that we live in filled with racism to try to crush a person's hope, but I use the article "Free from Racism" at JW.org to give me the strength to go ahead and fight those documents. It'll be a long legal fee, but my main thing is to establish the boundaries that we need as people of distinct color, I like to call it like that, distinct color, to be able to exercise the freedom that we all do because of coming to this land and living in this land and living in this land and making this land better, a world that could be. [audio distortion] and to another

system where we can all come together. We have to start doing a little research to see what property we really do own.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Jim, thank you so much. Shannon and Sylvia, thank you so much for a beautiful presentation and the information that you shared. And sitting here listening to you, the collaboration efforts that could come from your presentation with regards to our Underserved Cultural Community groups is really an effort that we need to strive for. Though it is our Black History Month, just listening to what you were sharing makes me realize, you know, the atrocities that we all suffered in our communities of color and how unfortunate is that we need to be a voice and keep on fighting for what Jim just said, to know our history and be able to advocate for ourselves, and maybe if we collaborate together we can get there and do the same. I appreciate you. Thank you so much.

>> SHANNON RIVERS: Thank you so much for having us and I encourage you all to do some research to find out the relationships

we had, not only in the South, in North Carolina, Florida, and all of those things that took place. Again, visit our website and if you know folks that are in the Native American unity, please share our information. Thank you so much for having us.

>> SYLVIA GONZALES-YOUNGBLOOD: Thank you for having us.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you, again. Now we're going to go ahead and talk about the Co-Chair recruitment. As you heard, Wendy has had to step down and she may want to have a few words, but the conversation that I would like to have is to support the effort to find other Co-Chairs to support the Black and African Heritage committee. Wendy, if you want to say a few words, and then we will just kind of have an open discussion and dialogue about that.

>> WENDY CABIL: Thanks, Desiree, I wasn't prepared to say a few words but thank you for giving me that opportunity. It's definitely a learning experience and it has really opened my eyes about the

systems. It is one thing to be on one side as a recipient, but then to have to be a part of some type of decision-making process, you get to see a whole other culture. As I have been stating in other public forums, I am not happy as a stakeholder with the way DMH is not really engaging us properly as clients and as other community members outside of our contract providers, but I am hopeful that with this new Peer Advisory Council and their information -- there is an input session this month, and Desiree did send it out earlier, but for some of our new guests today, want to make sure that you are included in that as well and we look forward to having your input.

I'm hoping that we will be on the right track moving forward. I'm still here as a support and mainly to shed light, just to enlighten and empower us. We've already seen it established with the Black Mental Health Taskforce that we have to do for ourselves if we want to see the change that we want and if we want to be that change, so I encourage us to keep coming and let's still be supportive and keep an open mind, and let's keep working together. Thank you.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I would just like to say, Wendy, thank you for your service and for your leadership for the time that you did



serve. You are valued and appreciated and I just want to make sure that you know that.

>> WENDY CABIL: Thank you, Desiree, that means a lot.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I just wanted to bring up the conversation as I will conduct the meetings with or without Co-Chairs, however, we do need some support and leadership to step up and if there is anyone who is willing, my thought about it was to maybe initially have members who attend the meeting to maybe be guest Co-Chairs for a particular month. Maybe starting with March we could have a couple of Co-Chairs or members step up in regards to just kind of helping me with the meeting.

The other piece is that we have our former Co-Chairs, we have Nakeya also and she stepped down for the reasons -- she is a vendor for DMH and she is handling two of our projects right now, which she will discuss later, and it is a conflict of interest. We also have Romalis who facilitated as our Co-Chair for various years and he is a great leader and a great advocate and consultant to the Black and African Heritage committee. He also has offered to

consult with the Co-Chairs as well until we can solidify some permanent Co-Chairs. I just wanted to bring that discussion up to talk about that before we get into the other pieces of business. Any takers or any comments or thoughts?

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: I just want to say hi, everybody. I'm here to support you. I can't be a Co-Chair but I will continue to support you all in any way that I can, especially to you, Desi, as we try to move forward in finding someone who can handle the responsibilities of the Co-Chair. Maybe we can talk a little bit more about what is required to be a Co-Chair, just to refresh everybody's mind.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Okay. The requirements are really simple. As far as attending the meetings, you have to have attended 50% of the time. They cannot be a part of DMH. At one time, that was kind of the system that was set up for DMH to be a Co-Chair with a community-based organization but now it is only community-based organizations and members who can facilitate as Co-Chairs. The thought is that because of our special circumstance in regards to this, I was thinking that we could probably lift a little bit of the

requirements, particularly just to do some guest co chairing to see if it would be comfortable for members to want to take on this role. It might not be to where they are fully committing to the role, but maybe we could just start off with you facilitating the meeting for a couple of months or so until we can really forge in to have the community members take over.

>> JIM: What is March like?

>> DESIREE DESHAY: It is wide open, Jim.

>> JIM: If you give me some instructions of what you want as a Co-Chair, I will volunteer for March to be a guest Co-Chair.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I appreciate that, and what I will do is -- and I did not do it today -- but I will send out the requirements for the Co-Chairs so that everybody can read it and they'll know what the requirements are in writing. If you want to, if anybody wants to nominate anybody, they can do that if they want to do that. We will

do that with Jim and I will also add Romalis to the meeting to see if he will kind of support -- are you still here, Romalis?

>> ROMALIS TAYLOR: Yes, I am still here.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Okay, I will bring Romalis in because he is our fearless leader from the past and he is still an ally and advocate for us, and we could have a pre-meeting to kind of discuss how we have operated in the past and moving forward, Jim, and I'll get your information and contacts and we will set that up for sure in March.

>> JIM: Let me give you my email. [MT2521win@gmail.com](mailto:MT2521win@gmail.com). What's important now.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Perfect.

>> ROSARIO RIBLEZA: Desi, this is Rosario. Just to let you know, you can also nominate yourself if you feel like you want to be the Co-Chair. You can nominate yourself or email Desi if you feel like you are interested in doing that.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you, Rosario.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: I will add as somebody who was a Co-Chair, you know, a lot of it was creating the agenda with Desi and coming to these meetings and facilitating them with the support of Desi, and then attending the leadership meetings that are once a month. This is where we meet people like Shannon and Sylvia that were just on the call because they are Co-Chairs of the other UsCC's, and that leadership meeting is where you build your network and, I like to say, where you build your power structure because every little bit of power and voice we got within DMH is what we grab and take.

So remember that there has to be intention behind taking this position and if you are going to be in rooms of leadership with people and you want them to listen to you and be a part of the change, then it takes some practice with engaging with those people in that way and being with them in the way that they are used to communicating, even if it is not in our culture. It is a hard position as a Co-Chair to have that balance because we are very newly in this world where we can even say events are specifically

for Black people. I remember two years ago, you could not even do an outreach event that was specifically aimed at Black people and put somebody's logo on it, so there has been progress and there has been regression but I do hope that we continue to keep moving. Thank you, those are just my thoughts on this role.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I'm a firm believer that it is not what you say but how you say it, and if you want people to hear your message then you need to make sure that you voice it in an appropriate and a respectful way. That goes a long way, even though we may have a lot of passion around the events and the traumas that we hold, I think it is really important to communicate it in such a way where you want people to hear you and not just look at how you presented the information, I think that is super important.

So Mr. Hat, we will have you as our guest Co-Chair for March. I will send out the requirements as well and thank you, Nakeya, for giving a little bit more about those details, and we will move forward from there. I will set up a meeting with Mr. Hat and Romalis to have some dialogue and conversation around how we set it up.

We will move on from there and if at any time you think about this opportunity, you can always email me and let me know if you want to sign up for another month and/or if you are considering nomination or want to be nominated and do it permanently, that is fine as well.

>> MARY MCQUEEN: I would love to do it in the near future.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Okay, Mary, thank you so much. I will put you down and maybe if you come to the March meeting and see how it operates, we could put you for April.

>> MARY MCQUEEN: I will.

>> ROSARIO RIBLEZA: And one of the basic qualifications is that you attended the meeting for 50%, right, and many of you are attending regularly so there are a lot of people who are qualified.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Absolutely, thank you so much, Mary.

Nakeya?

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: One more question on the process of the Co-Chair for this UsCC. I would just put it out there in the universe of DMH, because people are listening and taking notes and all that jazz, we were extremely disrupted through the pandemic in terms of the way that we interacted as a Black community. There was a lot of crisis and a lot of energy and emotion, particularly when we went to a fully virtual format here in this room. I think there was emotion, there were thoughts, and now we have come and have moved along and we have started a task force and a lot of movement has happened. I wonder if we could consider people as a Co-Chair that have not attended 50% of the time, and I only put that out there to say that we might have very high quality candidates who are ready and have the energy now, but perhaps with the pandemic it was too much to attend all of these virtual meetings and to hear about the pain. Because it is hard to come to a DMH stakeholder meeting and have people talk about their pain and the power that they feel, seeing people die, we had a lot of meetings where we talked about that openly in here and that could have been triggering and it could've stopped some of our



engagement. So I don't know, I think that maybe we could ask somebody if, for this particular moment, especially because we do not have another Co-Chair, maybe that requirement could be waived. Just a thought.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Absolutely. I think we could do that and honor that request with regards to what has happened and what the pandemic has caused, and I do believe that we may have other people -- like Ms. Mary, I have not seen her before but I'm glad that she is here to represent and feel like her energy would definitely be something needed to add to this body. Hector, I see your hand.

>> HECTOR RAMIREZ: Nakeya actually just put it to the point. This is an MHSA funded stakeholder group and the guidelines on membership and attendance and who can be a Co-Chair, those are just suggested guidelines that the Department created. The membership of this group, you all actually have the decision of how this group is run, the roles, and definitely the significant trauma that is still ongoing for the community has impacted the stakeholder involvement process. The lack of access to technology, support, just

so many things. That in itself gives all of you more than a justification to decide whether or not you want to revisit the original requirements of the membership. And the Latino UsCC, when I was a Co-Chair, we were able to exercise those same purviews and we ended up with three Co-Chairs to be able to spread out the work. But also because we had a lot of membership that was directly impacted and we had people would show up one or two months and then they were sick, so it is unfair for our communities who are already burdened to have this particular requirement and it delays the work that we're doing, it impedes the necessary stakeholder engagement that is supposed to by law be supported in every way possible.

The theme of the Mental Health Service Act is to do anything we can, try anything. This is exactly one of those particular instances where those things have to take consideration, so it is really all up to your particular committee and all you have to do is put it as a motion and then follow it up through that. That is how you are able to uphold that. If somebody says no, you just uphold it like it is. Our communities are suffering and to not do it, not only would it be an equity thing but it is borderline racist to our

communities, so just calling it out like it is and having the Department defend that, and they won't because they know very well that it is a disparity.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you, Hector, for that. I'm going to skip over for a second because I have Kelly doing my technology for Nakeya's presentation. We need to skip down for just a minute with regards to the voting for the Empowering Black Families Gala. I want Nakeya to come on and Kelly is going to pull up our information. What we have also decided to do, for those who are still here, to actually help us with this process of voting for the nominations. We don't have any requirements per se, for those of you are in this meeting and supporting us today for this particular project. So Nakeya, take it over, and then Kelly will set up the voting.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: I just want to thank Hector again for that comment and for the follow-up, and perhaps after we do this part we can talk about a motion, because I think that we need a motion before we even do the voting right now on the awards for the gala.

Originally, we said that the only people who could vote were voting members of this UsCC, but I feel that the nature of the Empowering Black Families Conversation Series, the many people who were involved in it and the many people who did nominate people, I think they deserve the right to also vote for the people that they nominated, even if they did not come to 50% of the meetings.

Desi, maybe I could be the one to ask for a motion to be able to have the general membership be able to vote on the gala award nominees and also to participate as a guest Co-Chair, right? And then we can move it forward later. Do I have a second?

>> IMANI: I second, Imani Bradley.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: All right. It has been moved and properly seconded that we lift the requirements for voting privileges and give it to all who are here with us today with regards to the Empowerment gala on Feb 26, 2022, as well as lift the requirements and have guest Co-Chairs for the Black and African Heritage Committee meeting moving forward for March and possibly April as well. All right, thank you. All in favor, say aye or raise your hand.

>> Aye's.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you so much. Let's go with the voting, Nakeya.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Are you going to share the screen with the nominees? I don't have it in my memory.

>> KELLY WILKERSON: I can do that. I got you.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Thank you. I wish I had superpowers to keep PowerPoint presentations in my head where I can just project it. That would be crazy, y'all would be scared of me. [laughing]

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Please explain it to them, Nakeya, really quickly so that they know and then go for it.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Sure, let me tell you where we landed. Many of you have been a part of this process along the way at some

point, so just as a refresher, the Empowering Black Families Community Awards Gala is a capacity building project that we came up with here in this group, I believe it was in 2019. It was actually pitched by my organization, Therapeutic Play Foundation, and we were very lucky to be the organization that both pitched it and implemented it. You know how rare that is, that is something that we talked about earlier, and the reason it was able to happen is because we had the Black Mental Health Taskforce, we had mentorship to be able to teach us how to actually apply for the ability to do the project. Every step of the way it was this UsCC and the Black Mental Health Taskforce that made this happen, so we were the organization that moved it forward.

We had six conversations about various topics in the world that impact Black mental health and they were very successful. We generally had 40 to 50 people participating at every conversation, both when we had it in person and virtual, and this gala is our finale of the event. You might remember that our launch event for this whole series was a Juneteenth celebration in the park. We partnered with the AIM initiative for San Gabriel Valley, we had JJ Fad come perform, we had all of these outreach panels, so that was the

launch and this is the conclusion. Just like we started with a party, we are going to end with a party. We have already completely sold out of the gala tickets, we opened it up for 110 registrants. The event will be catered, we have some yummy food, we have a DJ that will be playing hits that we all know and love. By the way, I don't know if I'm a GenX-er or a millennial but y'all are about to hear the wobble and -- with curse words blocked out -- but music that I plan to dance really hard to and I hope that everybody who's registered is ready to come out and have some fun.

We have St. Bridget Catholic Church out here on Western, that is my family's church and they will be performing two songs. We have a hip-hop group, what is the name? -- Imani, help me out. Banded Future, they are performing two songs. We have a drummer doing some interactive drumming, and we gave our awards gala. We are actually honoring some of our Black Mental Health Task Force organizations and warriors who have helped us along with this series and has helped the task force actually grow to its ability to actually get funding for events like this. If you are being honored then you have already been reached via email or I have been in touch with you and you know that I've already asked you to register

for the event so that we have an accurate count for the caterer and for the food and all of that good stuff. Now, what we are about to do is, there are four categories. Throughout the conversation series we have been telling people that we are accepting nominations. The four categories are distinguished service award, and as you can see, people have already been nominated and I'll go through and read out all of the names.

For the distinguished service award, this is the award for a community member who outreaches and has outreached to the Black community for a long period of time and they have a reputation of someone who has definitely done distinguished service and served their part in outreach for the wellness of the Black community. We have Glory Christian Fellowship International Church, Mental Health Ministry. By the way, the award comes with a scholarship amount and it varies in the amount that they get, but they get an actual physical award that they will come up onstage and accept. We have MC Harris, who many of us know, he has been very active in the community and we know that he is a community member who has distinguished service. We have Parenting Black Children, another organization that is SGV based that does outreach



to children with disabilities. We have Patrice Marshall McKenzie, and if anybody is here who knows her and nominated her -- hey, Desiree, go ahead and say a few words about Patrice.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I did not nominate her but she is my sorority sister and I'm in the same chapter with her. We are in the Pasadena chapter of [indistinct] and she is very instrumental as far as an advocate in her community and she does a lot of great work in various organizations that she is in, so I am excited to see her name and it is a nice surprise.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: You know what, these nominations, people just had the link and we've been putting it at all of our events and have been advertising to nominate people, so we did not nominate anybody, nobody from DMH, nobody from Therapeutic Play Foundation, nobody from Black Mental Health Task Force, this is the community truly nominating the community. So it has been a very fun process.

We have Romalis Taylor, we all know Romalis. Hey, Romalis! Look at you being nominated. He's also already being honored as a

mentor because he's had a very active part, as we all know, but this is an additional award that he is up for. So these are the people who you can vote for today and we are going to give you guys an opportunity after I go through this whole list to vote. I think Kelly and Desi will give you a link in a moment and then you will be able to vote. We are going to limit and break down the list to the top two people from whom you vote down and then we will calculate out of the top two, after we do a final vote at the event, those people will find out at the event whether they won the actual award. Last up is Senait, you know Senait, I don't know if she is still in the room but she was here earlier from the African Coalition. We would all agree that everybody nominated on that list has had distinguished service and I hope that you vote for who you would like to win in the link when it comes up.

Next up is the good trouble award. Some of the nominees are duplicate in a way, because Ardena Bartlett is also the founder and organizer of Parenting Black Children, so her organization and the work that she does has been nominated for the distinguished service award and the good trouble award, so keep that in mind when you are voting that maybe you could allocated your vote for

one person if you are really interested in them and then switch it up if they show up in multiple categories. We have Brianna Bradley, does anybody want to speak for a moment about Brianna?

>> IMANI: I did not nominate her but she is my daughter and she has done a lot of working with the community and educating them on mental health, employment, equity, having a voice with an employer if there is an injustice and communicating that process surrounding how to do so and just having an overall support system for people having challenges in the workplace, and she is ex-military with the U.S. Army.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Cool. And this is Imani, she is next up, she has been nominated for her work and doing good trouble. I see her, she started as a peer and member of the Black Mental Health Task Force and she was such an advocate that I had to steal and recruit her. Yes, Imani, I support that you were nominated. Next up is Marilyn Huff, who we all know as the vice chair of outreach. I did not do this, this is the world that said that Marilyn deserves the good trouble award, and I really do agree. I think she is the one

that coined the term that we are doing good trouble in the Black Mental Health Task Force and we were a force to be reckoned with, so that is Marilyn. We have Patrice Marshall McKenzie who is also here showing up on this award, so you have choices between that, or we could give her all of them. Then we have Rayshelle Chambers, who we all know and love as our policy workgroup vice chair for the Black Mental Health Task Force, and she is also the founder of Painted Brain. She is for sure a real voice of good trouble out there and she is making a lot of changes in policy issues and in rooms around policy. I don't if Rayshell is here, but you go girl. We have Turning Point 123, and I think we know that it's Michelle Perkins representing her organization, which supports the wellness of our Black community through substance abuse and youth services. And we have Wendy, who is our outgoing Co-Chair, who has done an amazing job and we know why she is nominated, because she definitely is someone who comes in the room to make good trouble. Congratulations, Wendy, on being honored with his nomination and I wish everybody in the category so far good luck.

Let's scroll down a little bit to the outstanding leadership award, so here is our list for outstanding leadership. Angela Scott,

who is with the racial justice initiative or racial equity initiative for the city of Santa Monica, and she is out there in the world, I think she is a veteran, she was on a commission of something, a student at USC, so she is busy and congratulations to you, Angela. Imani is also nominated in this one. Kasi Patterson, who is the founder of the Black Equity Collective, and she has a lot of consultant work in the Black community, trying to get Black people and Black organizations paid and get money. She has been a big part of why Therapeutic Play Foundation and a lot of other black-led organizations have been able to thrive within this pandemic because she has been introducing us to funders, and that is the outstanding leadership, if you are in the room with the money and you give that money to Black people. That is why she has been nominated, I believe.

Linda Offray from Shepherd's Door. She is the founder of a domestic violence agency based in San Gabriel Valley and she has been at this for a while, especially with maternal health. Melissa Franklin -- even if they don't win, know these people on the list because they are leaders and they are doing the work. Melissa is with social solutions, she works in communications and she is a big

part of the AIM initiative, a leader in the AIM initiative, and she has a lot of connections so I could see how she would be nominated for outstanding leadership. I've been nominated, you know me. And Nina Womack is one of the Peer Community Service Leaders from the MOVE project and she also came here and presented for Let's Be Whole, so she is a queen mother and she is an amazing woman. So all the people on this list, you have the opportunity to vote for at least one and then once we go through the first round, we will get the count down to just two. Either way, the top two will be honored in some way but only one will get the award and the scholarship.

The last award nomination category is the future warrior award. If anybody in the room knows somebody that I do not know, please go ahead and let me know. Giana Camacho, does anybody know Giana?

>> IMANI: She does work in local schools for people with disabilities, ADHD. She is 11 years old and she is already making an impact in working with people with mental health diagnosis.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Thank you, I appreciate that. Next we have MC Harris Jr. For those who went to the Juneteenth event, you can't forget him, he was on the stage dancing with the rap group and this is MC's son, who is already a leader. He is at most of the outreach events that I have been to for the Black community, he is a budding photographer and I think he is a future warrior, so I think that contributed to his nomination. Next up is Savannah Thomas, I think she is from Painted Brain, and I know she is a very bright young lady who is able to do most things, I know she does podcasts and marketing and journalism. Rayshell, do you want to speak to Savannah?

>> RAYSELL CHAMBERS: She just got promoted at Painted Brain to a development specialist. She has a media major and is graduating this year and has led most of the media and press kits for Painted Brain. Painted Brain has been featured in the LA Times and it will be on local neighborhood radio stations, and Savanna has done most of the talking points and coordinated Black media and messaging. She has done cultural specific talks and PSA's relative to

black mental health and generational trauma, and she is definitely an up-and-coming young leader for black Women and media.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Thank you so much. Last but not least is Shamika Beaugard. I know she is in Antelope Valley and she started her own nonprofit as a young woman and really had a lot of movement in her first formation. Does anybody want to speak to Shamika or if you know her and want to speak some words.

>> GERALD GARTH: I could, actually. I actually had the great privilege to work with Shamika Beaugard through the AIM initiative in the initial cohort. I am actually the facilitator for AIM and AIM is the African American Infant and Maternal Mortality Initiative, and she was one of last year's grantees. She is the founder of Youth with a Purpose, an organization that works specifically with young moms and families. She is a dynamic young woman doing great work, bridging the gap not only for Black mothers and families but also bringing innovation to the AV and building leadership among young women. I definitely celebrate Shamika in this space.



>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Yay, thank you so much. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to introduce you a little bit to the nominees and to the different categories. Now I will give it over to Desi and Kelly to explain how you can vote. Good luck!

>> KELLY WILKERSON: I will pop that link that you were just looking at into the chat and then you should be able to click it and it will take you right to the survey. We ask for your name but just know that your responses will be anonymous, we just use it for tracking purposes. So here you go. Desiree, I don't know if you want to let folks know how much time or anything?

>> DESIREE DESHAY: We will just give you guys about five minutes, it shouldn't not take you very long, because we're at the end of time and we still have a couple of things to talk about really quickly.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: We might have to go a little bit over because we do have to have you vote for the first round and then we have to

identify the top two. Or do you just want to take the numbers and narrow it down?

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Do you want -- you want us to give you the nominees, right? You want it to be a surprise, yes?

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: The thing is we have to narrow it down to at least the top two so we can make sure that the top two know that they are coming to get something as opposed to everybody on the list --

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I understand that but I am saying that we will send the tally and it will come to you, so you can do that.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Okay, so you want me to just reach out to the top two in the end to make sure that they -- okay, I'm fine with that.

>> WENDY CABIL: The link is not opening up.

>> RAYSHELL CHAMBERS: You have to cut-and-paste it into the browser. And Wendy, I am trying to call you, it's Rayshell.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: By the way, this vote does not come to us at all, everything is handled by DMH UsCC staff in the room and they will be the ones to tell me who the winners are and we will take the winner's name and have everything ready for you guys. We hope that you are coming, we are going to have so much fun. It is in person and it is at PCC.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I'm going to pull up the flyer really quick, I think that I have it.

>> KELLY WILKERSON: The votes are rolling in, we have nine so far. Great job, everyone. There are 10 more of you who can put them in there.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Let me look.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Where is it? I can't pull it up.

>> WENDY CABIL: Why does it ask for the person's name who is doing the survey?

>> KELLY WILKERSON: I just added that there. We keep the responses anonymous but we need to make sure that folks -- we just want to make sure folks aren't voting multiple times, in case there are issues with the link. If you have to vote more than once and something happens with the link, we will have the name and we'll know who it was and we could get rid of one of the responses.

>> WENDY CABIL: Oh, okay.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Are you still looking for the flyer?

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I just pulled it up and now I can't find it.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: We might open up some more space because we have to add a media table, we have media who wants to come, so if we have to add a table for media then we might be able to add

more nominees who did not register. If there are people who were nominees and they didn't register, even though we are sold out, if they are nominees and they want to go and see if they won, please do reach out to me so that I can open up space for you to be able to come to the Gala if you want to, as a nominee. If you guys know nominees that are not here and you see their name on the list, please let them know that they are nominated because sometimes people nominated people and didn't tell us how to contact the person they nominated.

>> KELLY WILKERSON: About two more minutes, everyone, get those votes in and I'm going to close the voting. I will make this very official.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Thank you, I appreciate your help with the voting and all that good stuff.

>> KELLY WILKERSON: Heck yeah, it was fun to make it. We have  
16.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I don't know why it won't let me share it.

>> KELLY WILKERSON: You want to email it to me really fast?

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Yes, because I'm having technical difficulties.

>> KELLY WILKERSON: Quick like a bunny, though, I have to sneak out here in a minute. One more minute, everyone, get those final votes in.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: I also put the link to the Eventbrite, you will not be able to register now because it says it's sold out and not letting you take tickets, but if you look at the Eventbrite it will tell you all about the event and, like I said, I put my email in the chat so that if you are a nominee or you know of a nominee and they want to go and they didn't register in time, I will open up space for them.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I just sent it, Kelly, so they could see it. And I will send it out again. Thank you, can you make it a little bit bigger?

>> KELLY WILKERSON: Here we go. All right, we are closing the voting right now. Let me go over there real quick. We are closing at 17 responses. Thank you, everyone, for voting.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: So excited!

>> WENDY CABIL: Thanks, Kelly.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I will send out the flyer once again, but this is the gala flyer. It is February 26 from 5:00 to 9:00 P.M. at Pasadena City College. What is the name of the lounge? Can you scroll up just a little bit?

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: It is called Creveling Lounge. If you RSVP'd, you will be getting all of the emails telling you how to get there. We have a shuttle service that is picking people up from the parking lot

and taking them directly to the entrance, because we know people are in heels and we wanted it to feel like the gala that it is, so please come looking your most fabulous and be ready to enjoy yourself and know that we are taking care of you. We will let you know how to get there and everything when the event gets closer, it is next Saturday.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you. Nakeya, we will send over the votes for you and you can go from there with your team. Really quickly, guys, are there any other thoughts before I finish out? I wanted to quickly mention that we are -- I am working on the three capacity building projects that we have for the year 2022. I want to let you know that we have chosen, we chose three early back in 2021 and I just wanted to mention the three. There is the Blacks-innate in LA, which was proposed by Marilyn. I wanted to give you an update in consulting with my supervisor and my team that we probably have to reconnect the name or change the name a little bit, only because it is geared towards vaccination only but because of the fact that there are political obstacles around vaccination in and of itself, we would really prefer for it to be a psycho educational



aspect and also center it around mental health issues or challenges as to vaccination and why or why not vaccination. I just wanted to let you know that we love the overall premise of the proposal and we are keeping the language around education and the effects of vaccination from a mental health standpoint and perspective and psychoeducation, so we are keeping that.

Then we have the Seeker project, and the author of the Seeker project is Philip Butler. Are you still on the call, Philip? He may have dropped off. The Seeker project is an artificial intelligence project that is centered around mental health support. He authored the project but in order for us to utilize this particular project and move it forward, we have to create it from a stance of not his project but more so that we are developing and wanting to develop a -- it's on the tip of my tongue -- emotional intelligence. There he is! Philip?

>> PHILIP BUTLER: I'm sorry, I was away from my phone for a second.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: I was explaining that we had a conversation a couple of weeks ago around this project and I just wanted to make sure that people are aware that we are not necessarily changing the thought of what the Seeker project represents, but how we have to present it and bring it forward as it will relate to DMH is what we were talking about, so I just wanted to kind of reintroduce you and give you the opportunity to talk about it.

>> PHILIP BUTLER: Sure. It is a culturally relevant artificial intelligence agent, so it is basically like talking to a pocket therapist. The idea is not to replace any particular mental health professionals but to serve as a conduit for folks in between sessions and to be a safe space, even for therapists who are trying to decompress in between their sessions. The idea is to give people an opportunity to self reflect and to engage on a 24/7 basis. As a capacity building project it will be discussed more, but that is just the idea and getting the feelers out for what people think it ought to look like or what would best suit them as we continue to build this out on how to make it more responsive to folks. The idea mainly is to center Black experiences, so this thing talks like a Black person and

understands itself as a Black person, and it essentially provides a safe space for folks through a digital medium for them to engage in their own healing practices.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you, Philip. Hector?

>> HECTOR RAMIREZ: This is actually really good. I know at the state level, Cal Mesa and DMH have the tech suite program that is funded through the Mental Health Services Act, and it was a \$100 million investment to fund, seed, and develop the technology that you are talking about. I remember that it had to be a statewide project because there was a lot of new opportunity that was needed but there were also some safety concerns, particularly utilizing AI to replace therapy. So it sounds like a great idea but I would also invite you to look at the Department's Mental Health Services Unit that is handling the tech suite component, because there are a lot of really great opportunities here. Google and Microsoft are at the table and so is Apple because it is app development, so you might both be able to find more opportunities but also ways to expand the work you are doing, because some of the players that we have right

now at the table are not necessarily people of color or who look like us. And while it is great that we're having these developments, a lot of this new technology is not necessarily coming from our communities and it is not necessarily going to get the same response, so I'm so glad you are here and able to connect as we have not had a lot of people in LA County connect with DMH to develop technology like the one you are working on.

>> PHILIP BUTLER: I think we had a little conversation last fall and I would love to follow up with you and learn more about what that looks like. I think you're right, the goal is to reflect on what the folks want that we're trying to reach out to, so to let the Black folks see themselves through these digital entities, I think it could be really transformative. I would love to hear more about what you are talking about.

>> HECTOR RAMIREZ: Thank you, Philip, I will put my email in the chat.

>> ROMALIS TAYLOR: Keep in mind that just like other cultures, Black people are not monolithic and we are not all the same, and we come from different backgrounds and different areas and even different cultural perspectives based on where we came from and how we lived our lives. A simple example, people from South versus people from the North versus people from the East and the West, each of them already have differences there and then within that, you have the same cultural differences. This is very important and it's very good in the sense that we need to make sure that we have targeted universalism, and what that is is that even within the culture, it talks about the differences of how you look over a fence. Some people only need one box, some people need two boxes, and another one may need three boxes just to look over the same fence, even within one culture. So it is just a visual example of how different we can be within one culture. So I like what you have said already, Hector, but I want to keep that in mind too, Philip, when you are going forward and putting that together. Great idea.

One more thing, I know that the task force did something for the older adults. I would like to see something done for the youth to represent the youth, doing the same kind of development of them

and putting them out to reach out to other youth in the community.

I just want to -- I hope, Nakeya, that the task force can put something together as a proposal for that concept. Thank you.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you, Romalis. We will be doing proposals starting in March, so we can work on that moving forward. I'm excited about moving forward to bring your ideas and brainstorm about what proposals we will move forward for the 2022-23 year. The last project and then I will let you go, we are way over time, is the Black Mental Health and Early Childhood Intervention Empowerment project. Rayshell and MC, was this the one -- with regards to that, there are no particular changes that need to be made with this project and we will push this forward and do the SOW as it is stated and written, but just keep in mind that everything has to pass the mandates as to how the Department wants us to put it out there, so I just wanted to let you all know that and hopefully we will have these projects out and ready to send to ISD. I will of course let you know when the bidding process opens. Do know, again, that even though you are the author of these said proposals, you may not be the person who actually gets

these proposals, so I just want to reiterate that to you. The process is about helping the communities and the proposals that you bring forward are strictly for that reason, so do know that there is no guarantee that those authors of the proposal will be the vendors to execute the proposal. Okay?

>> MC HARRIS: Yes, the proposal that I had helped with was basically for fathers and Black boys and youth to have better resolution and outcomes and intervention and training, so that we can be healthy while going about throughout our community and the legal justice system.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Absolutely, absolutely. Thank you, MC. Romalis and Nakeya and then Mary, and then that's it! [laughs]

>>ROMALIS TAYLOR: I just wanted to shout out and make sure, Nakeya, that you put that proposal for the youth like I talked about and give it to Desiree as soon as possible. Thank you.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: I will. I just had a clarification on the three capacity building projects. I think the three that we voted on and approved were the early childhood intervention, the seeker, and then the men's outreach. I don't think the Blacks-innate one actually moved forward because we made those same comments that we needed to address -- the culprit was still happening, so that is why it didn't move forward.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Oh, you are absolutely right. Hold on.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: Wendy, they did turn in a proposal so maybe we could resend out the three proposals that were approved, because Wendy says she was not clear about MC's project but it was a full proposal.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Yes, it was. You are absolutely right. Please disregard my memory, only because I am doing dual work, but I do remember and I do have the proposal and I will pull that up to make sure. You can resend it to me, but I do have it and I do



remember that is what we voted on. I do remember the Blacks-innate one was the one with the challenge, so that is what I was talking about with one of my coworkers with regards to that. Thank you, Nakeya, for that.

>> NAKEYA FIELDS: And if we know that we voted on three that move forward and you said that the scope of the work is coming soon and you said the maternal health one is coming soon, is there a specific order or is there anything that we need to do as a UsCC? Because we would benefit by moving this along because we've already had this big break.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: No, we are right on time. It is just me putting the projects together, but I've got you. Wendy, did you say something?

>> WENDY CABIL: No, I meant to say status and I left the word status out, but I cleared it up. I just sent an email about tonight's LA County Youth Commission meeting at 6:00, if you could share that.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you. Anything else? Mary, you had your hand up for a second?

>> MARY MCQUEEN: I know that we are over time but I was just going to comment that I cannot wait to hear more on the youth intervention. I go into the juvenile halls often working with our youths. I'm a former lifer sentenced to life in prison who won my freedom after 13 ½ years. I'm an ex-gang member, I've been shot, I've been through a whole lot, but I got a second chance and I have been home for seven years working with reentry, peer specialists, Tri-City Mental Health Authority, now CAMHPRO --

(Overlapping Speakers)

[APPLAUSE]

>> MARY MCQUEEN: I am so blessed because it is nothing like -- and I'm just going to say it-- being in a predominantly all-white mental health surroundings, which I have been for the past seven

years. So anyways, when I paroled home I did not go back home to LA. I am from LA and was born and raised, but I have lived all over. So yeah, I am just so looking forward to this.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Oh good, so we will definitely brainstorm in March around the proposals and that is what we will do for the majority of our meeting and I think that will be really helpful when we can just powwow and brainstorm about these proposals that we want to bring forward. I'm excited to hear your expertise about that. Absolutely, thank you so much. Hector, you have your hand up but I've gotta go, what do you need?

>> HECTOR RAMIREZ: Sorry, I was talking too much and I forgot, I put in the chat an invitation to all of you. The California State Secretary, Dr. Shirley Weber, who just took on this position, is going to be having an event with Disability Rights California this month. She is really interested in connecting with all Black and African-American led organizations in the state, particularly folks with disabilities. I really wanted to make sure that all of you get the opportunity to -- don't share this, I'm just giving you early access to

this link, because there is really no other stakeholder like this throughout the state and all of you are invited and should be at the table, and she needs to know who you are and connect with you. She is really looking forward to developing more mental health strategies for the Black and African-American community.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Thank you so much. MC, I have to go, what do you need? [laughs]

>> MC HARRIS: This is just my bag from my program, so if you are on the website or Facebook page, don't be surprised if you see me!

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Congratulations, thank you.

(Overlapping Speakers)

>> MC HARRIS: On top of the hill past the Beverly Center.

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Very nice. Thank you so much, everyone, it was a great meeting. I look forward to seeing you all in March.

(Overlapping Speakers)

>> DESIREE DESHAY: Nice, okay. I will be at the gala with Nakeya in a week and a half and I am super excited about that. If you can join us, please do. Until then, I will see you in March. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to send me an email. Thank you so much and thank you for visiting us, Hector. I appreciate you all. Bye!

>> JOYCE SALES: I am so proud of you Mary, this is Joyce.

>> Take care.

>> Bye!

[meeting adjourned]