

**OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION**

January 26, 2023 - Minutes

Kathleen Austria, Chair

APPROVED: February 23, 2023

Motion moved by Commissioner Molina, second by Commissioner Sanabria

## Discussion

### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Commissioner Root (AE), Commissioner Padilla-Frausto (AE), Commissioner Friedman (P), Commissioner Stevens (P), Commissioner Barbour (P), Commissioner Austria (P), Commissioner Dagleish (P), Commissioner Banko (AE), Commissioner Okonji (AE), Commissioner Molina (P), Commissioner Sanabria (P), Commissioner Cooperberg (P), Commissioner Weissman (P), Commissioner Schallert (P) - **QUORUM PRESENT**

### Public Comment

#### 2. Public Comment: Agenda & Non-Agenda Items

**Osbee Sangster** obo Los Angeles County Black Client Coalition Inc. Black's effort as part of our vision to live our value of continuous improvement, a generous donor in support of Black's digital literacy effort to help the greatest number of people. We are in need, or if you are in need to the digital, the Black Los Angeles County Plan Coalition Literacy Project has launched and provided technology to communities in Los Angeles County needy stakeholders. Giveaway Chromebook Computers help provide access to digital inclusion that includes a full year of IT support and a full year warranty and/or replacement.

In addition, we can help you apply for the low-cost internet through Affordability Connectivity Program, ACP, along with Black's HP Chromebook intake interview giveaway enrollment to determine if you are LA County stakeholder eligible for the ACP connectivity program. Let's check your eligibility. Currently, we have a limited supply; however, expecting more digital devices in the future to insist with technology, digital literacy, and internet access ongoing.

Please visit -- please visit [www.blacc.org](http://www.blacc.org) website and obtain our telephone number. Call, leave a message. This is BLACC's landline, so please don't text, call to set up an intake appointment. If you don't reach a human, please leave a message. Thank you.

**Jean Harris:** Good morning, commissioners. This is Jean Harris, uh, SALT 1 in the Antelope Valley. I did not see on the agenda any time designated for any SALT report. And so, should I do it in the public comment period? I was able to email a written report that, uh, informs the commission that I was reelected as a SALT co-chair last Thursday at our meeting.

Okay. So, our meeting was on January 19th. Service Area 1 Leadership Team and the issues that we were currently addressing as efforts to expand community engagement and increase client and family attendance and input, we had a presentation from the Fostering Dreams Project that provides dance classes countywide to foster youth. Uh, the key struggles this month is that our children's mental health services are impacted, and all providers are saturated and cannot accept any new clients.

Uh, comment in our chat by an attendee: "During our meeting was, this is sad. I am witnessing the same waitlist and no availability responses for mental health service agencies from meeting youth involved in the delinquency system. Our key successes this month: uh, new DMH Antelope Valley Child and Family Mental Health Center, which will be directly operated, was approved by LA County Board of Supervisors to hire 32 new full-time professional staff. And I was, uh, elected as the third one co-chair. And additionally, SALT 1, uh, asked me to represent at the CLT input sessions at St. Anne's Conference Center in Los Angeles. And I invited Wendy Cabil as a client advocate to join me and Jacqueline Fontana as a family advocate to represent our SALT 1. Thank you.

**Lilian Garcia:** Okay. Good morning, commissioners. Um, my name is Lillian Garcia, and my mental health matter is 365 days and you're 24/7. I've currently received my mental health services from DMH Chatsworth, West Valley Mental Health. I'm currently dealing with a dilapidated slum apartment building, slum landlord who is a drunk alcoholic who frequently shows up to do repairs drunk as a skunk, who verbally abuses his tenants in his drunken abusive condition. Um, the unsanitary living conditions, substandard living conditions, toxic Black mold and mildew and cockroach infestation is what I'm dealing with here. In addition, also water leaks, water damage. Um, the landlord that's a slum landlord is also a pervert creep who illegally enters my unit without providing notification. He does this -- he does things with my private undergarments and removes my personal items from my unit without any permission and more.

Next, let's talk about DMH Chatsworth, West Valley Mental Health. Um, Mr. Orlando, the case manager, and Ms. Marcello, the housing navigator housing specialist. I brought to their attention my current living situation and there is no sense of urgency. No case management services, no rental assistance to pay for the new unit that I have applied yesterday for online with the management company. No assistance with credit check fees, no assistance with the holding fees, application fees or security deposit fees; no assistance with any agencies or organizations that could assist with appliances, furniture, bedding and linens. And, um, from Marcella and Orlando, they specifically say that there are thousands of homeless people outside that take priority over you. And I do agree with them that, yes, they matter; however, I feel discouraged and demoralized. I've been put to the bottom, and this has adversely affected my mental health. Um, I have, uh, a compliment to say about Dr. Nachoku that's there, and praise and a deep appreciation for Ms. Reba Stevens, DMH commissioner. Thank you for your time today. Have a wonderful day, everyone. Thank you.

### **Administrative Matters**

**3. Approval of November 17, 2022, Full Mental Health Commission meeting minutes**

Motion to approve, move by Commissioner Molina, seconded by Commissioner Cooperberg. Minutes carried for call roll vote:

**Ayes (9):** Commissioner Friedman, Commissioner Barbour, Commissioner Austria, Commissioner Stevens, Commissioner Dalglish, Commissioner Molina, Commissioner Cooperberg, Commissioner Schallert, Commissioner Weissman

**Nay (0)**

**4. Approval of December 15, 2022, Full Mental Health Commission meeting minutes**

Motion to approve, move by Commissioner Cooperberg, seconded by Commissioner Barbour. Minutes carried for call roll vote:

**Ayes (8):** Commissioner Friedman, Commissioner Barbour, Commissioner Austria, Commissioner Stevens, Commissioner Dalglish, Commissioner Molina, Commissioner Cooperberg, Commissioner Schallert

**Abstain (1):** Commissioner Weissman

**5. MHC in-person meetings update: Memo from EO Zavala, BOS regarding [Virtual and Hybrid Commission Meetings](#)**

Kelly Hassel, Deputy County Council, spoke about in-person meetings and remote regulations under Assembly Bill 2449. Effective March 1, 2023, all commission meetings will require one of the following: in-person attendance, compliance with the Brown Act's traditional teleconferencing requirements, or compliance with the Brown Act's new teleconferencing requirements under Assembly Bill 2449. See link for more information about virtual and hybrid commission meetings.

## Updates/Action Items

### 6. Committee/Ad Hoc Proposals

- Established
  - i. AOT - Chair announced AOT is functioning well. The board has moved forward to implement the CARE Court; we will soon hear what the plans are.
- Under Consideration
  - ii. MHSA – Chair Austria was asked to hold off on the MHSA stakeholder process and proposals. Chair Austria stated she wants to stay in touch so that the Commission is in front of the proposals and not at the back end.
  - iii. Data Notebook/Commission Annual Report – Commissioner Dalgleish asked to move the data notebook update to the retreat agenda. Commissioner also stated she will contact Kenia Fuentes for staff to assist with the annual report.
- Commissioner Update
  - i. Commissioner Weissman reported Hollywood 2.0 is hosting an in-person event for all participants in the community. The event is centered around the three Ps, people, place, and purpose. Commissioner plans to present the ideas to DMH in February and March 2023.
  - ii. Commissioner Friedman announced approximately 2000 therapist are available waiting to help are open with pop ups and ads. “Better Help” and “Okay Humans” are two places to visit.
  - iii. Commissioner Schallert acknowledged the report provided by Jean Harris, Co-Chair SALT 1. Ms. Harris announced the Antelope Valley Child and Family program is coming online with 32 full time staff. Commissioner also reported Henry Mayo agreed to apply for state money to fund a center and increase mental health beds.
- MHC retreat update – Kenia Fuentes gave an update on the upcoming MHC retreat to take place February 2, 2023.

### Community Stakeholder Reports –

- a. **This is Hector Ramirez**, one of the co-chairs for the Access For All UsCC. I'm a consumer at West Valley here in Chatsworth. Um, and I, first of all, as a consumer, I just want to say I love the newsletter. My peers really like it. Thank you. Uh, I really, really -- we really appreciate the communication. Um, not sure if it's in Spanish, if it's not, we, we'd got to help you to, uh, figure out how to do it. Uh, we just wanted to -- uh, I'm reporting on behalf of my peers. We've been participating with the department in this MHSA stakeholder process. Um, we've, we've been meeting in-person. Uh, again, I just want to remind, uh, the commissioners that this is a process that is completely driven by the department and its consultant. Um, you know, uh, we appreciate the fantastic information.

We finally, uh, were told about the over \$1 billion have unspent MHSA money and how to utilize this process to try to find services for our equity stricken populations. Uh, but we still want to just reiterate that, uh, accessibility is, is really forefront, um, especially remote, uh, sessions for some folks. Uh, many of you were discussing some of the challenges. None of these proceedings were done remotely, and so folks have been able to jump remotely. So it was very challenging for our peers, some of which are isolating because they had to travel, uh, you know, and they think they might have COVID.

And then plain language. Um, you know, that was also a recommendation from the beginning. We didn't have to materially in Spanish, uh, even the day before, uh, the application to submit proposals wasn't accessible in Spanish. Uh, so we really left at a big part of our population, and we understand this learning process. But, you know, we, we already knew this process and, uh, just really want to

- say that. And I'm kind of concerned about with the declaration. I really supported. But, uh, there was a consideration that LA County DMH consumers, uh, might have to be removed so that services can be prioritized for the people in the declaration. And while I support services for, for our folks, um, disrupting services, uh, for many of our peers is both something that is protected by Medicare and MHSA, right? But it could potentially significantly affect the lives of people in community that are already getting services. Thank you.
- b. My name is Andria McFersen. I'm a co-chair with SALT 5, and I had some relative information to the topic that you spoke about with, um, the attendance. Actually, um, as far as the age, and, um, just making sure that, um, our content of the meeting is relevant to someone who may be under 18, like, um, PTSD topics and, um, how they affect people for, uh, you know, life situations, for army vets or domestic violence victims. You know, you might not want to talk about that during, you know, a family moment where they have their kids there in the room and things like that. But anyway, um, the crisis work that you spoke about, too, um, with the kids, I thought that was so awesome, okay? Um, it would build confidence and, um, actually it would be great if you had fun activities as well, you know, and that, that engagement would actually put smiles on their face while they're doing something healthy, you know. And, um, you know, but anything simple, now, don't mind me. But this is, um, an example, um, like stature, you know, names like lions and tigers and bears, you know, that's - I might sound like a kid, but I'm just being honest. That's how kids, um, you know, involve themselves in situations like that, that would build, build incentives, during events and make sure that you may have swag items, you know, something like that. That would be great as well. Um, the only other thing I wanted to say was, um, the training that she spoke about just recently, virtual training for empathy training would be great. Walk in the day in someone else's shoes, okay? And then that way they can learn how to, um, I guess, respond, and communicate better as well. So, there you go. I'm done. Thank you.
- c. Hello. Just quickly, Jean Harris, again, Service Area 1. I wanted to thank you. Your staff emailed me the recording link and the presentation link from the Executive Committee meeting the following day. The minutes of the Mental Health Commission are all caught up on the DMH website through October, and I am thrilled and happy that the presentations are included because it's important to share this information. The legislative update is also important, uh, for people that have a relationship with their legislators in their service areas, to be able to reach out to them and give them input on what legislation that they want to support. There are so many wonderful things happening, and I just want to give everyone kudos for all the hard work you're doing and thank God we have an administrative assistant. That is awesome. Thank you so much.
- d. This is Wendy Cabil from Antelope Valley, and I'm a client stakeholder, and I also have the privilege to attend the MHSA annual updates. And it was quite a very informative and a positive experience. Um, yes, I do concur with, uh, those areas needing improvement that Hector has already shared, and that Jean has shared, and I do see progress, uh, in the making. Um, Dr. Rodriguez is, is a fabulous facilitator, and I hope that you all support him and his efforts to help bring, uh, DMH into compliance, um, and with the education and training.

I'd like to see, uh, more push, uh, for everyone to get on the same page, including staff and our co-chairs. It was quite alarming to hear, um, and I won't say now, but I, I can write it later. Uh, the, the comment, uh, I should say, um, when it was time for DMH, uh, DMH co-chair report, uh, it was stated that it was business as usual, and it caught me by surprise and was very frightening, um, to know that there was no, um, information shared other than that. So I'm concerned about those who are coming in new on the scene to get them up to speed if there is a recording, I understand. Um,

there's no, no excuse to be in the dark. Anyone can take advantage of that opportunity to get educated online.

And I also want to bring attention to the fact that I, I see the DMH put out special statement, uh, a special statement about the recent mass shooting in Monterey Park and I'm glad to see that support. But I would also like to see that racial, um, parity and extending it to all people of color. Uh, there were three recent shootings by LAPD. Uh, I would like to see emphasis in reaching out to the Black, uh, community and those people of color experiencing that as well. And I'd like to suggest that we have a stakeholder engagement, uh, workforce work group for the external, external peers, uh, who are clients in the community.

e. **Jean Harris, SALT 1 Co-Chair (received from MHC email)**

Efforts to expand community engagement and increase client/family attendance and input. We had a presentation from the Fostering Dreams Project that provides dance classes countywide to foster youth. IMPACT — FOSTERING DREAMS PROJECT

**Key struggles this month:**

Lack of capacity for children's mental health services. All providers are "saturated" and cannot accept any new clients at this time. Comment in our chat by an attendee "THIS IS SAD, I AM WITNESSING THE SAME WAIT LISTS AND NO AVAILABILITY RESPONSES FROM MHS AGENCIES WHEN LINKING YOUTH INVOLVED IN THE DELINQUENCY SYSTEM."

**Key successes this month:**

A new DMH Antelope Valley Child and Family Mental Health Center which will be directly operated was approved by the LA County Board of Supervisors to hire 32 new full-time professional staff. I (Jean Harris) was elected as 3rd SALT 1 Co-Chair

**What else do you want the Mental Health Commission to know?**

SALT 1 has sent Jean Harris to represent us at the CLT Input Sessions at St. Anne's Conference Center in Los Angeles and she has invited Wendy Cabil (Client Advocate) and Jacqueline Diaz-Fontana (Family Advocate) to attend and represent our SALT 1.

f. **Paul Stansbury, SALT 8 Co-Chair (received from MHC email)**

**Meeting Overview**

SALT 8 did not meet in January. However, there was work by the Executive Committee on reviewing the surveys and results of the meetings regarding the priorities for SALT 8 and discussion of meeting topics and presentations for meetings in 2023.

The Co-Chairs and Liaison have participated in the CLT meetings and discussions on possible changes to CLT and to the process for the MHSA updates and three plan process. The discussions have been very productive and should be very helpful in the stakeholder process.

**Meeting Presentations**

No meeting in January 2023

**Goals Achieve**

SALT 8 in the previous couple of meetings has been able to compile survey results, have breakout discussions and receive input on priorities. Resources and materials on the MHSA process have been distributed to members and participants.

### **Group Questions or Concerns**

The group questions and concerns continue with addressing the homeless and mental health issues, underserved populations, integrated treatment, racial and social justice, alternative to incarceration, mental health and youth and others. The increase in mental health conditions in the community and challenges of staffing within DMH and mental health providers are going concerns to address the needs especially in view of the increasing needs of the 988 and CARE Court programs. Some concern about being able to have hybrid meetings and when in persons meeting will be possible.

### **Additional Comments**

SALT 8 is discussing possibility of having in person meetings. Attendance has been very good at meetings but has been considerable interest in having some in person meetings.

### **Presentations**

#### **7. DMH Update (Dr. Lisa Wong, Interim Director): Dr. Wong provided information on the following topics: [\(link\)](#)**

- DMH Hiring Efforts to Date
- DMH Hiring Efforts – Leadership Positions (December 2022)
- Update: Koreatown Mental Health Center-first mental health clinic directly operated by DMH in Koreatown opened December 8, 2022, located on the ground floor in DMH Headquarters.
- Update: Status of MHSF Funding to ODR (\$25 million)
- LA County/DMH Involvement with Emergency Order on Homelessness:
  - I. City of Los Angeles declared local emergency on December 12, 2022
  - II. County of Los Angeles declared local emergency on January 10, 2023
  - III. Board directed County departments to participate in several workgroups to address the crisis.
  - IV. DMH is involved in four workgroups – contracting and procurement, hiring, services and spending
  - V. CEO will be providing regular report backs to the board – anticipated due dates 1/24/2023, 1/31, 2023, 7/10/2023 and 1/10/2023.

#### **8. DMH Financial Report – Kimberly Nall, Administrative Deputy III (new position)**

Ms. Nall reported on two topics:

- a. Impact to DMH on the state budget – No negative impact to DMH on the state budget, good news. The state budget did include startup costs and ongoing support for CARE Court.
- b. Regulations and restrictions of spending funds for the Mental Health Commission – Ms. Nall began to research regulations and restrictions on spending of funds for the Commission due to changes in the department. To better understand the roles and responsibilities Ms. Nall will schedule meetings with the board and report back to the Commission.

#### **9. DMH Legislative Updates (Cynthia Wheaton, Legislative Analyst) - See supporting documents:**

Ms. Wheaton reported on the following topics:

State Legislation

- AB 67 Homeless Courts Pilot Program
- SB 45 California Acute Care Psychiatric Hospital Loan Fund
- SB 63 Homeless and Mental Health Court and Transitioning Home Grant Programs
- SB 35 Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court Program
- SB 43 Behavioral Health

Substance use disorder related bills.

- AB 19 – Public Health: Opioid Antagonists
- AB 24 – Emergency Response: Opioid Antagonist Kits
- SB 10 – Pupil Health: Opioid Overdose Prevention and Treatment
- SB 19 – Anti-Fentanyl Abuse Task Force
- SB 33 – Fentanyl Task Force

Federal FY 23 Omnibus Bill

- Mental Health – \$5.27 billion, an increase of \$803.2 million for mental health research, treatment and prevention
- Crisis Care Services and 988 Implementation – \$501.6 million FY 2023, a \$00 million increase to transition the Suicide Prevention Lifeline to 988
- Behavioral Health Workforce Development – \$153 million for Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) program, \$20 million above the FY 2022 enacted level

**10. Update Briefing on Training/Interns (Debbie Innes-Gomberg, Deputy Director)**

Dr. Innes-Gomberg spoke about the training program motioned by the board, graduate students to work as trainees in directly operated and contract clinics starting in the fall. Students will receive psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, occupational therapy, and licensed psychiatric technician training. We have 40 sites where students will do pre-degree internships and rotations; student capacity is about 125.

**Adjournment**

**11. Commissioner Sanabria moved to adjourn, Commissioner Dagleish second, meeting adjourned.**