

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC)**

EASTERN EUROPEAN/ MIDDLE EASTERN SUBCOMMITTEE UNDERSERVED CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

February 20, 2019

3pm – 5pm

Present: Arpe Asatunyan, Seta Haig, Dr. Heather Laird, Jason Romero, Sylvia Gil, Avo Soltanian, Mastaneh Moghadam, Sarkis Simonian, Asbed Pogarian, George Gharibian, Jihad Turk, Marian Nahapetyan, Keacha Stewart, Dr. Nicole Eberhart, Gery Ryan, Anna Yaralyan, and Mirtala Parada-Ward.

AGENDA ITEM	COMMENTS/DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS
Introductions	Introduction of Members:
Review & Approval of Meeting Minutes	Reviewed and approved meeting minutes from 9/26/2018
DMH Updates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Mirtala Parada Ward, Program Manager reported that the 2nd YourDMH Stakeholder Engagement event will be on March 1, 2019 @ Friendship Auditorium. Breakfast will be served from 8:00am to 8:30 am. The event will start from 8:30 a.m. to 12pm. ●Anna Yaralyan will email this information to everyone tomorrow. Please try to attend. This is an opportunity to meet our Director, engage with other community members, and receive information regarding DMH’s budget and programs. We want a representation from this Subcommittee. Please RSVP, there will be parking available.
Rand Corporation Presentation	<p>Nicole K. Eberhart, PhD, is a Clinical Psychologist from RAND Corporation. She shared with the members that RAND is a Non-Profit Independent Research Organization. DMH is working with RAND in facilitating focus groups to help LACDMH with its strategic planning process. RAND is working with the Service Area Advisory Councils (SAACs) and the Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCCs) to engage them in focus group discussions and gather information about their needs.</p> <p>Gery Ryan is the lead representative from RAND. He explained that the RAND Corporation will assist LACDMH who is undergoing a strategic planning process that will transform their system of care.</p> <p>In this EE/ME UsCC subcommittee meeting, there were representatives from the Armenian, Farsi and Arabic communities. Gary Ryan asked the subcommittee members 3 questions.</p>

**Rand
Corporation
Presentation**

Question #1: What's working?

- Art classes, art events, television and radio, and the Armenian Mental Health Talk Shows are avenues to educate and inform this community about mental health issues. For example, discussing mental health issues and other difficult situations that are common in families is key in connecting with these communities. It is easier for people to learn about mental health and decrease stigma using non-traditional strategies of engagement.
- It is important to approach the EE/ME community members, asking if they need help, create a bond and trust, offer resources and support
- TV/Radio broadcasts have become more relevant as the community is more receptive and calls have increased to LACDMH Access Center since the airing of the Armenian Mental Health Show that was sponsored by LACDMH.
- Developing culturally sensitive programs and outreach and engagement strategies is very important.
- The Armenian Mental Health TV show has increased the need for Armenian mental health professionals and interpreters within the mental health system of care, including the LACDMH Access Line.
- LACDMH field services are available but, due to high stigma about mental health, EE/ME consumers are ashamed to seek these services.
- Consumers are not willing to go to workshops, classes, (i.e. family support groups), and mental health educational seminars due to the stigma attached to mental health within these communities.

Question #2: What's not working?

- We are not getting the message across to the key players. Grassroots organizations, churches and government agencies need to be involved.
- Billing isn't working; agency staff are unhappy about the paperwork. They claim that they are unable to meet their productivity requirements as 2 hours of paperwork is necessary per client.
- DMH does not have a special program to serve the Iranian community, and this is a problem.
- There is a lack of Farsi or Arabic speaking mental health providers that can deliver the services. LACDMH contracted agencies and directly operated programs have a few clinicians that speak Farsi and Arabic. The main issue is that we need culturally sensitive services for the Iranian and Arabic communities.
- There are not enough therapists who speak Arabic and many other threshold languages that accept Medical, and this is a problem.
- There are Non-DMH contracted mental health programs for the Arabic speaking community members.
- The Arabic speaking population does not have enough funding for mental health services. Additionally, there are not enough Arabic speaking mental health providers. If there are any, they are hard to find.

Question #3: What would you like to see change?

- More interactive engagement, not directly approaching it as therapy, providing a medium between the two.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More community based resources to help these communities. ● LA County Access Line should have employees that speak all the threshold languages. ● In Eastern European/Middle Eastern Communities, some individuals might be uncomfortable going to the agencies. In these situations, clinicians should make home visits. ● Develop Centers that have nothing to do with mental health, instead focus on community wellbeing and staff licensed professionals. ● Community members need help with applying for SSI, GR, Food Stamps, Medical, Section 8 Housing, Food Banks; meet them where the need is ● Figure out a safe place for people to go who are struggling to come out, help with case management, food, shelter, and showers. ● Systematic changes that requires Medical billings to be loosened and adapt to some of the cultural needs of the EE/ME community. ● MediCal reimbursement reform is needed. ● Provide information on MH services and resources, when you increase awareness you decrease stigma ● Hire or contract individual Mental Health license professionals who speak their language. ● Hire unlicensed Interns/Post graduates who also speak a threshold language. ● Increase psychological assessments for children under 18 years of age. ● Increase community involvement. ● Increase outreach and engagement efforts to engage the EE/ME Community. ● Increase referral and linkage information to distribute within the community. ● Advertise that MediCal pays for MH services ● Develop a hotline that offers resources and language assistance to the community ● There should be a Mental Health Hotline for every language, for example Armenian, Farsi, Russian, Arabic, etc. ● Seniors need supportive services such as housing, resources, etc. ● Create funding for leisure activities to increase community involvement ● LGBTQ population in the community doesn't have enough services <p>Meeting Adjourn at 5:00 pm.</p>
<p>Future Meeting: Times & Dates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wednesday March 20, 2019 – 3pm to 5pm ● Wednesday April 17, 2019 - 3pm – 5pm ● Wednesday May 15, 3pm – 5pm ● Wednesday June 12, 2019 – 3pm – 5pm ● Wednesday July 31, 2019 – 3pm – 5pm <p>● Location of the Meetings: Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services 1540 Colorado Street, Glendale Ca 91205</p>

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