

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Strategic Communications Division**

American Indian / Alaska Native (AI/AN) UsCC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2020

2:00PM – 4:00PM via Teleconference

Present: Raul Garcia, Farrah Ferris, Mark Parra, Monique Smith, Sylvia Youngblood, Melanie Cain, Monique Castro, Robyn Gomez, Tina Charley, Andrea Garcia, Hector Ramirez (representing Governor Newsom's new Behavioral Health Task Force from the California Health and Human Services Agency)

DMH Admin: Kelly Wilkerson, Connie Acosta Castaneda

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions
Welcome, Prayer & Introductions	Attendee introductions, Farrah Ferris lead the meeting with prayer.
Code of Conduct – Co-Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Membership Code of Conduct was developed a few years ago through the UsCC Leadership and vetted through the subcommittees as well. It is a voluntary document, it is not required that you sign but if you do, we ask if you can sign it annually, and email or scan a copy to Kelly Wilkerson at Kewilkerson@dmh.lacounty.gov and if you do not want to sign, it is fine, we just ask that you adhere to the Code of Conduct. • When things start getting back to normal we want to take another look at the Code of Conduct and add cultural specific aspects that suit each subcommittee. • Hector Ramirez would like to suggest since this form is not ADA compliant accessible, can I recommend to have this form also included in our UsCC description so that people have access to that remotely, and provide a link via the chat group when you do a presentation. It will give people the option to receive it through email. So that at our next meeting we might not have to use this particular time to go over this document, we can use this time on other projects. • Raul Garcia asked who is keeping track of the signed Code of Conduct documents? Kelly is keeping track internally and has all the copies at the office. Kelly will start keeping track by making a roster of who has signed and when they are due to sign again.
April Meeting Minutes – Review	Minutes have been reviewed and approved by Sylvia Youngblood and seconded by Monique Castro.

**UsCC Capacity
Building Projects
– Updates**

FY 20/21

- **Kelly Wilkerson:** The department is in full crisis response mode. As a result, a lot of the budgeting that happens within the department, it happens internally and through the Internal Service Department ISD. Right now because of the crisis and the pandemic, all budget approvals have to go through the County CEO's office and the CEO's office is on a hard freeze for any budget approval related to anything non-COVID.
- We can table the brainstorming for projects for FY 20/21 and for now just focus on FY 18/19 and then update everyone on FY 19/20 projects. At this point we do not know what our next steps will be, but we will certainly keep everyone posted.
- **Hector Ramirez:** Mental Health Services and the Oversight Commission met last week, to uphold MHSA spending and looking at big counties like Los Angeles County that utilizes UsCCs to target underserved populations, to start planning for a new wave of MHSA sponsored projects that are going to be targeting new initiatives as we deal with COVID related circumstances.
- Request to follow up with the department on how MHSA spending will continue. Kelly to follow up.

FY 18/19

- **Monique Castro:** The Final Summary has been finalized and submitted. The total participants that we had for all 5 events was 339 participants that signed up and participated in the gatherings. I feel there might have been more, there were some people that were late and may have not been counted. The feedback that was given was to continue with the gatherings, they liked that we had different topics. In the comment sections it was all positive feedback. I feel that we could have went deeper with each topic and each topic can have its own series of events. At the Indigenous Circle of Wellness, the interest of people in mental health services and getting new clients has increased since the gatherings. Another outcome was building of relationships.
- **Farrah Ferris:** Monique Castro's gatherings were amazing. Looking forward to future projects. I was very impressed by your set up, your sound system and how everything went so well. I have a question on demographics, I was wondering if in the future if we can capture household sizes. We want to expand on the Elder population and the 0-3 population that are at high risk for child abuse and neglect.
- **Kelly Wilkerson:** For other FY 18/19 projects, the Video Showcase has already been completed. They were completed a couple of months ago. The videos were uploaded onto the DMH website. For the Educational PSA's, I have been sending drafts and corrections and Jim has been making updates for the past month or so. The final deadline for the project was April 30, 2020. I sent out the links a little over a week ago to the subcommittee to get last minute feedback, and Jim made some last changes to the PSAs. The projects for fiscal year 18/19 have to be finalized and the final video files have been submitted.

FY 19/20

The group brainstormed project ideas at the end of last year. The three projects that were selected were: Wellness Forums, Media Campaign, and Outreach and Engagement Toolkit project. We did complete the Statements of Work for those projects and submitted them to procurement to be processed. Under normal circumstances, Procurement would process the SOWs and then submit to ISD so it can be reviewed and sent out for solicitation. When they were submitted to Procurement is when the COVID-19 crisis began, and that is what put things on hold. Kelly to continue to keep the subcommittee updated.

<p>So'oh Shinali Sister Project (SSSP) – Monique Castro</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This new project is an extension project of Indigenous Circle of Wellness. It will focus on much of the work that we did for the Mental Wellness Gatherings. • A little understanding of the name: So'oh-Shinali Sister Project (SSSP) – So'oh is Grandmother in Hopi, Shinali is Grandmother in Navajo on Maternal side. • Myself (Monique Castro), Melissa Alcalá and Elena Nori have been thinking about this project for years, of this organization that we wanted to form. There was an opportunity through LA2050. We decided to seek out that grant. And with this grant we wanted to solidify what we wanted this project to be and what is our longer term goal. • We are working on a website to add to the Indigenous Circle of Wellness website. This will be our Education and Community Engagement piece of Indigenous Circle of Wellness. • Eventually we will have a team and our longer term goal is for this to be the extension of our 501c3, so our nonprofit arm of Indigenous Circle of Wellness. • An application was submitted for a grant that is based off of Public Voting. Right now this grant is in its evaluation process, the finalist will be announced on May 25, 2020. If we are the finalist, then we move into a voting phase, the voting is open to the public and we ask for everyone's help and vote for this project. • The highest grant that is given out is a hundred thousand dollars. And with that we can do two big events. We plan on doing something amazing with those two events. I will be updating everyone on each phase. • You can go to the link on YouTube and watch the videos, they share more about the projects.
<p>COVID-19 – Discussion/Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrea Garcia, Workgroups and Data: There is a workgroup comprised of a lot of our agencies in Los Angeles County, some in Orange County, who directly serve our community, sharing resources and ideas. • The Department of Public Health released racial ethnic data as it relates to COVID. As a researcher I believe that this data is not a representative example of our community. 45% of the data is missing any information on race/ethnicity. For our population, our numbers are very small. We think that the data is misrepresented and they are not using the right definition of American Indian/Alaska Natives. There is not enough data and we do not think we are represented in it at all. • Our community is accessing testing the least. Our community is not accessing the online portals for COVID testing as much as the rest of the population are. People can also obtain COVID testing through 211 the County phone line. There is zero data for our community in that. There is a big concern that COVID is impacting our communities more than what the numbers are showing. • There was a survey that went out and one of the questions on the survey was “What do you think your likelihood is in getting COVID in the next 3 months?” That is the only piece of data in the report where our community unfortunately is off the charts. Half of the community that took the survey thought they would get COVID within the next 3 months, yet we are not getting tested. We need to figure out how to get our community tested. There is data, but it is incomplete and we are looking at better ways to build our responses. <p>FEEDBACK and RESOURCES FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Parra: Can UAI (United American Indian Involvement) or AICC (American Indian Counseling Center) practitioners share any stories regarding COVID-19? Can they please keep us informed with what they are hearing? There is a LA County link that you can register yourself to get tested even if you are not exhibiting symptoms, you still can register to get tested for COVID-19. Is this something being publicized actively?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sylvia Youngblood: Local television news give updates at noon by the Mayor and Governor regarding COVID-19. There was COVID-19 testing done at the El Monte Airport, in El Monte California. • Raul Garcia: I have not heard of UAll dealing with the anxiety of relatives or just concerned Natives of what is going on in the Navajo Nation, even with what is going on in our own communities. “Are we doing enough to ease anxiety in our community?” • Hector Ramirez: The data is a concerning factor and is an issue that we have brought up with the County before, even tried through DMH. One of the issues that I see with the testing problem for COVID-19 is the way the testing has been deployed. Some of the COVID-19 testing sites are primarily drive through sites and there are on-site walk in services, that can be a problem for some if they take public transportation or if you go in someone else’s vehicle, those are some added sources of anxiety. • Andrea Garcia regarding Public messaging and reaching the communities: if there were more resources to do direct messaging either through a PSA. “What channels do you suggest to reach our communities”? “What will communities see and respond to”? (Contact Dr. Andrea Garcia if you would like to join her group.) • Tina Charley: As a community member I read the Newsletter that some of the Native agencies send out like UAll and AICC. There should be some information in those newsletters addressing where Native people can get tested, especially because a lot of our Elders are not tech savvy. Regarding PUKUU it is hard to get information because they ask a lot of questions and require a lot of documentation, there is also a long wait. Talk to the Director and see if they can alleviate some of the restrictions and documentation, that way a lot of resources can be sent out to the community. • Robyn Gomez: It is a contractual issue and we need to ask for those documents. This is why agencies like ours located in San Fernando are trying to reduce the disparities to access services. For COVID services in the San Fernando Valley area, we have been providing food, diapers and wipes to our Elders, pregnant women and those who are disabled and need more assistance. Also we are accepting applications for our Youth Empowerment program, geared toward youth in San Fernando Valley and in Los Angeles and Riverside County and one from West Virginia, to provide case management placement and help with tutoring from students at UCLA and volunteers. We are also doing Cultural Programming three times/week. We started adding Family Cultural Night on Sundays to engage the entire family. It’s been helpful for the Youth to learn about their emotions and spiritual health and overall their wellbeing. We are using a virtual platform to provide our services. The parents reached out and said it helped the kids. We are trying to create a safe space. In May we will start a Parenting space once a week. https://www.pukuu.org/tutcint
<p>General Announcements – Subcommittee Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monique Smith: ECHO is starting virtual oral health education; it will be starting at UAll in a few weeks. We will continue to work with the community by providing them free oral health education via ZOOM. We also will continue deliveries of oral health supplies to the community with our partner agencies. We offer trainings to the community like Tiny Tots and Mommy and Me Programs, oral health and diabetes, etc. The local Dental Pilot Projects in California have all been trying to press the State to extend us one more year, we were supposed to end in December 2020 but because of COVID-19, we are now giving virtual dental screenings. • Sylvia Youngblood: For parents who have children that have IP’s, 504’s or are receiving services, they can get updates from the California Department of Education website. You can attend trainings for parents. If you are dealing with parents that are dealing with mental health issues or difficulties dealing with it, we have to help each other and empower each other. We have to make sure our children don’t fail. UAll has been putting out workshops in

	<p>Credit Management, Financial Management, and scholarships. It is a wonderful opportunity for kids to build that into their curriculum to get that post-secondary education and life abilities and to learn skills. Encourage your kids to turn in their work because the grading system is not the traditional grading system and assessments cannot be done. What they are looking for is effort, kids need to put in the effort and attend their ZOOM meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raul Garcia: I want to recognize that yesterday May 5, 2020 was a day of recognition for missing and murdered Indigenous women. I hope as a group and as agencies we can do more by bringing more light to those issues. UAll is still handing out food boxes to the community and to our clients. • Hector Ramirez: Governor Brown created just before this pandemic a new behavioral task force coming out of the California Health and Human Resource agencies. I have been appointed to this Committee and I get to sit alongside our Secretary of Health. We were going to target people that are homeless, children with high risk of homelessness and people with criminal justice involvement, but because of COVID-19 we are reevaluating that mission statement for those populations. We will still be working our main objective, to transform the Behavioral Health Plan. I will send Kelly and all of the subcommittees the Mission Statement and Objectives. I welcome any comments or suggestions. • Talking Circle Discussion and Older PSAs & Social Media Discussion postponed to June meeting.
Meeting Adjourn	Raul Garcia ended the meeting in Prayer.
Next Meeting	June 3, 2020 2:00pm – 4:00pm