

OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

April 23, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Brittney Weissman, Chair, Presiding

APPROVAL: Slate of minutes approved at June 25, 2020 meeting

DISCUSSION

Call to Order

Call to order – Chair Brittney Weissman

Roll Call:

Present: Commissioners Susan Friedman, Reba Stevens, Stacy Dalgleish, Kevin Acebo, Judy Cooperberg, Kathy Cooper-Ledesma, Harold Turner, Mike Molina, Patrick Ogawa, Imelda Padilla-Frausto, Merilla M. Scott, Luis Orozco, and Brittney Weissman – QUORUM PRESENT

Excused: Commissioner Kita Curry

Department of Mental Health Report

DMH Update – Dr. Curley Bonds, Chief Medical Director

DMH Response to COVID19 in LA County:

Timeline

March 3 – CEOC (County Emergency Operation Center) Activated

March 16 - Safer at Home Orders Issued

April 10 - Safer at Home Orders Updated and Extended

April 22 - DMH COVID-19 Dashboards Created

Areas of Focus

1. Problem: Staff Displacement –
 - a. Due to Safer at Home order, DMH had to quickly develop workflows to as many staff as possible to work from home, 1) telework tools developed rapidly, and 2) at present 85% of workforce is working from home fulltime or at least part time.
 - b. Disaster Service Worker Deployments – 1) CEO and OEM notified DMH workforce could/would be assigned to other duties, 2) to date approximately 130+ staff have been deployed to cover none routine duties, 3) quarantine and isolation sites (~15 now) have opened, 4) goal is to identify a site that can be designated as for those with severe and persistent mental illness.
2. Client Engagement –
 - a. Clients unable to keep usual appointments because of Safer at Home Orders - staffs outreach by phone or telemental health is very successful. March saw 87,025 engagements total with 34,308 by phone and 672 by videoconferencing technology (DO programs only)
 - b. Paring down services to essential functions – because of workforce shortages due to a number of factors (illness, age, medical vulnerability).
 - c. Field based and urgent services (hospital and jail discharges, injections, 5150 evaluations) continued at clinics but with a skeleton crew
 - d. Juvenile justice - able to maintain contact with youth using teleconferencing and telephone. More challenges due to safety concerns (devices not allowed inside halls and camps, custody supervision and attitudes), 50-60% of services are provided in-person, and 30% reduction in census
 - e. Child Welfare Division – 1) school closures led to challenges with engagement, 2) providers stayed connected with clients via telehealth, 3) referral

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- portal is being established with LACOE to identify high risk or children in need of services, 4) medication support via telehealth.
- f. Emergency Outreach and Triage – 1) support for “crisis in place” approach, 2) PRMT and LET/MET teams continue to roll out for extreme circumstances, but work is done by phone whenever possible, 3) work closely with QI sites (when circumstances escalate they go out)
 - g. SURGE/ICD – 1) need to vacate inpatient psychiatric hospital units to make room for COVID-19 patients, 2) goal is to send those who are stable (sub acute) but still in acute care settings to lower levels of care, 3) ICD Team identified a significant number of new hospital beds that could be quickly licensed and staffed (Las Encinas among others) to accommodate these patients, 4) Public Guardian’s office involved in reviewing placements at lower levels of care, 5) ERS/ERCS – beds made available, given enhanced rate to encourage them to accept patients, 6) challenges with screening protocols/requirements unreasonable (e.g. 3 negative COVID tests before acceptance), 7) fears of introducing COVID into their facilities – congregate living environments pose particular challenges
3. Prevention
- a. Establishment of new Warm Line – new channel of the helpline: 1) ACCESS for routine calls/emergency response, 2) Community Support Line staffed by DMH workers and community volunteers (24/7) support for those experiencing crisis, 3) Employee Support Line will be staffed by UCLA Luskin – accompaniment to Employee Assistance Program
 - b. Continue to provide support for community access platforms
4. Administrative/Finance and Business Optimization
- a. Tracking hours worked
 - b. Claiming and reimbursement
 - c. Disaster claims tracking
 - d. PPE–face masks, gloves, face shields, facial coverings, hand sanitizer – we have made efforts to distribute these resources to all staff who need them, with priority being nurses and others who have direct face-to-face contact with clients.

Questions from Commissioners:

Imelda Padilla-Frausto - Could Promotoras hold group meetings via zoom, skype, or similar platform? These groups are crucial for Latinx mental health.

Other questions presented to Dr. Bonds resolved.

ACTION ITEM FOR FOLLOW UP – DMH report back on status of Roomkey Program. 1) How has DMH been able to provide county services to the homeless now that they are in temporary housing situations, 2) Has the program generated the opportunity for some of these members of the homeless community to move into permanent housing.

Public Comments:

Hector M. Ramirez-We also had new Spanish community support groups in Spanish that were all over the county. They could also be possibly done remotely with some of this conferring technology. And it’s very important to also engage our peer workers who are also LACDMH workers and clients.

DISCUSSION

Chair Announcements

Chair Weissman reported:

1. SALTs are ready to get back on virtual meeting platforms starting May.
2. SALT Co-chairs have been collaborating on how best to support the community during the COVID19 circumstance using the \$50k budget.
3. Nominations for new officers are on hold. The Executive Committee, which consists of Commissioners Friedman, Ogawa, Turner, Dalgleish, and Weissman, agreed to stay in position until they can conduct a traditional nomination and voting for a new slate.
4. MHC meetings will continue meeting on a virtual platform until further notice.
5. MHSA 3-Year plan is postponed. It will occur virtually.
6. Commission Chair receives inquiries from members, public and other contacts about mental health challenges and questions and changes to the landscape and protocol and vulnerable population. Chair continues to be the receiver of inquiries and will forward despair questions to Crystal Kibby, Board Liaison.

Questions/Comments–

Commissioner Turner – It seems in various communities around the county different COVID19 response in connection to resources have been set up. There is one here in south LA set-up is through the mayor’s office and a consortium to help provide resources and connection to resources for the people in this area specifically. I am wondering if that’s going on in other areas as well.

Recap CALBHB/C Meeting

Commissioner Dalgleish attended the CALBHB/C quarterly meeting on April 18. The CALBHB/C is a statewide organization that supports behavioral health boards and commissions. A general meeting in the morning covered performance outcome data and the Promotora model. In the afternoon there was training on unconscious bias. The next meeting will be held via teleconference on June 20, 2020 and available to everyone. Links with more information will be available on the MHC webpage.

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Stevens – Churches in SA 6 provide showers and COVID-19 fact sheets on information for the homeless, and food boxes for seniors. I attended several Bridge and Interim housing locations to educate those on the importance of staying inside to prevent contracting COVID19. DMH is very helpful moving seniors in the Roomkey Program into motels in the Roomkey Program. The task went very smooth.

Commissioner Dalgleish – SALT 5 continue meeting via teleconference and email reaching out to clients to assure everyone has what they need. I forward resources received regarding food and housing from local companies and government agencies to SALT contacts.

Chair Weissman – Appreciate staying in loop of countywide efforts on COVID-19 updates. Recommend visiting the DPH website. It is very helpful and up to date with links to everything related to COVID-19, please share with fellow Commissioners.

Adjourn/Next Meeting

Next Meeting – Thursday, May 28, 2020 – Skype (Online Virtual) @ 11 am

Meeting highlights submitted by Canetana Hurd