

County of Los Angeles – Department of Mental Health

**OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION**

May 28, 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, Harold Turner, Mike Molina, Patrick Ogawa, Imelda Padilla-Frausto, Kita Curry, Luis Orozco, and Brittney Weissman – **QUORUM PRESENT**

**Excused:** Commissioners Kathy Cooper Ledesma, and Merilla McCurry Scott

Chair Comments

- Approval of April 23 Minutes – April minutes tabled until June 25 meeting.
- Add SALT Co-Chair Report Updates on agenda
- Public comment concept - Public comments emailed to [mhcommission@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:mhcommission@dmh.lacounty.gov) prior to meeting are official and will be shared with the MHC.

**Department of Mental Health Report**

**DMH Update – Dr. Curley Bonds, Chief Medical Director**

Budget - Financial Impact of COVID-19 update from Finance/Administration:

1. The long-term effect of COVID-19 is being reviewed to determine the impact on the budget now and later. DMH is reviewing allocated funding, funding reserves, and funding commitments to develop a plan to address any funding shortfalls and a timeline to implement any funding changes.
2. CEO has implemented the following actions that have allowed DMH to begin to address both the short term and long term effects of COVID-19:
  - Hiring freeze on non-essential items and positions
  - Freeze on non-essential services and supplies and capital assets
  - Suspend County match for the non-represented savings plan participants until July 2021.

Organizational Structure –

1. Candidate for Senior Deputy Director vetted to be announced next week. Duties involve overseeing 2 Program Manager IV directing organizational responsibilities for Outpatient Programs, CalWorks, Genesis, Community Based treatment and access to care.

Update on DMH housing and COVID-19 -

1. ProjectRoomkey – Housing for 15,000 intended for program – as of March 18 approximately 3,000 currently housed.
2. SURGE Plan – DMH’s overall bed capacity has increased since the COVID-19 crisis began and the flow of patients from higher to lower levels of care has been accelerated. DMH activated a number of interventions as a part of a SURGE plan in coordination with DHS, Correctional Health Services and the Public Guardian to divert patients away from acute inpatient settings to community facilities including ERS, Crisis Residential and FSP programs. The main

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goal of this 'cascade' of patients has been to decompress DHS inpatient psychiatric wards and emergency rooms for a potential influx of medically ill COVID-19 patients.

3. DMH currently has access to approximately 1130 subacute beds available. This number represents an expansion of approximately 70 beds since the COVID-19 crisis began. Additional beds have been brought online at other levels of care including acute and enriched residential services (IMD step down). The expansion is funded by a combination of realignment and MHSAs funds. We will also apply for COVID-19 funding. We have added approximately 138 beds towards our goal of an additional 500 community beds.
4. DMH is using a "Crisis in Place" approach to address acute needs of community members experiencing distress due to psychiatric illness with a goal of avoiding inpatient admissions. This supports our SURGE planning efforts by reducing the demand on DHS hospitals on the front end.
5. Disaster Services Worker Deployment – As of May 22 DMH deployed 270 DMH staff
6. Preparations to open DMH services for clients and employees to return to work have begun on a case-by-case basis beginning July 2020.

### Commissioner Questions/Comments:

**Molina**– Will ProjectRoomkey continue after COVID-19? Please continue to provide updates on ProjectRoomkey

**Ogawa** – There are no protocols for DMH clinicians and other outreach staff who work in the jails. Not sure if Sheriff and DHS is monitoring to assure the employees are safely protected working in the jails.

**Acebo** – What's going to happen to the homeless under freeway passes?

**Friedman** – Any concerns on the article in the TIMES about the pandemic affecting mental health.

**Response** - Warm-lines are in place as a resource for help, hotline linked to care, food distribution at clinics, and PMRT availability.

**Padilla-Frausto** – How is reserved MHSAs funds being transferred? Are dollars included for COVID-19.

**Response** - DMH will host a deeper dive for potential budget needs, and the MHSAs 3-year plan next month

**Orozco** – Are any other collaborations being planned like HEADSPACE to offer wellness resources to reduce anxiety and stress?

**Response** – Open to collaborate whether volunteer or philanthropic.

### Chair Announcements

#### Chair Weissman reported:

1. Submit public comments to [mhcommission@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:mhcommission@dmh.lacounty.gov)
2. **ACTION:** Add SALT Co-Chair reports on full meeting agenda. UsCCs are welcome to report after SALTs.
3. MHC was one of few Commissions to meet immediately after the COVID-19 impact.
4. Information on HEADSPACE is listed on the agenda.
5. Congratulations to Commissioner Patrick Ogawa nominated on the CALBHBC governing board.  
**ACTION:** Add CALBHBC updates on agenda
6. MHSAs 3-Year plan is available for review. MHC will vote on MHSAs report at June 25 meeting.
7. MHC Election – Ad hoc committee formed to oversee MHC election: Committee members are Commissioners Weissman, Turner, Padilla-Frausto
8. CAF and Mini Grants update – DMH will review both programs to reopen in July.

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### SALT Co-Chair Report

#### SALT 1 Update – Jean Harris, Co-Chair

SALT meeting held on May 12:

- Preparing leadership training for Co-Chairs to serve with more knowledge and best practices.
- Hosted a community wellness give-away. Over 500 resource bags available for attendees.
- Still no beds for crises hospitalization in the service area.
- Lack of internet service because of rural area location, difficult to access technology to participate in virtual treatment.

#### SALT 3 Update – Andrew Preston, Co-Chair

- Shifting gears to conduct meetings virtually
- ProjectRoomkey program is successful particularly for 55 and over.
- Update on populations: DMH and DPH accessing services for veterans, LGBTQ postponed gay pride events, API awareness, disabled clients are accessing care and outreach, African American population shared concerns with CAF status.

#### SALT 4 Update – Carmen Perez, Co-Chair

- Technology problems with PCs or phones connecting to services from DMH because of low bandwidth.
- Access to services is the main issue for seniors and undocumented clients.

#### SALT 5 Update – Yolanda Becerra, Co-Chair

- First skype meeting held last week had 50 participants.
- Discussed ideas on what people are dealing with and how to regroup for the coming pandemic wave. Food is a big issue for particular families. Would like Co-Chairs to participate in the pandemic issue.

#### SALT 7 Update – Rick Pulido, Co-Chair

- Thanks to DMH Disaster Service Workers for a great job providing services to the community
- NAMI G-LAC is providing virtual countywide family support groups in Japanese, Spanish and English languages.
- SALT drafted a letter regarding DMH cuts due to COVID-19; will forward copies to Commission

#### SALT 8 Update – Paul Sansbury, Co-Chair

- First skype meeting held kicked off May is Mental Health Month on May 1. Skype was very helpful for participation. WeRise video viewed. Commissioner Molina organized a presentation on the ProjectRoomkey program, access to telehealth and telepsychiatry treatments, and HEADSPACE.
- SALT discussed concerns around the pandemic and access to care through telehealth, and resources from DMH

### Commissioner Reports

**Chair Weissman** – Reconvene ad hoc committees on priorities and access to treatment. Resume communication with other commissioners on board and care to begin collaborations to provide PPE. **ACTION:** Chair asked Commissioners from the 1<sup>st</sup> district to create a body of questions for legislative presentation at June

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meeting

**Commissioner Curry** – Announced national suicide prevention hotlines: National Suicide Prevention Hotline – 1 800 273 8255 and National Disaster Distress Hotline – 1 800 985 5990

**Commissioner Stevens** – Involved in a 100-day ProjectRoomkey challenge to access permanent housing for 700 people ages 55 and over. Also involved in assessing racial inequity with housing. Continues to work with churches in SA6 to feed homeless.

**Commissioner Dagleish** – DMH update from Jacqueline Wilcoxon on the crisis response. Teams are active in the community mitigating risk through a telehealth and a tier system. Received 95% response from Hope Recovery and Wellbeing telephonic and virtual contacts. Homeless Action team published food distribution center locations and what items to donate. Client subcommittee continues to meet before SALT meeting. Commissioner continues to follow CA legislation bills relating to housing.

**Adjournment - 1 pm**

**Next Meeting – Thursday, June 25, 2020 – Skype (Online Virtual) @ 11 am**

Meeting highlights submitted by Canetana Hurd