

OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

July 23, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Brittney Weissman, Chair, Presiding

APPROVED:

DISCUSSION

Call to Order

Call to order – Chair, Brittney Weissman

Roll Call – Commission Staff

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

Absent: None

II. Department of Mental Health Update

Update on Peer Services – Keris Myrick, Chief of Peer and Allied Professionals

Update – August 4 is hearing date for SB 803. Peers are deployed as Disaster Service Workers on assignments for approximately 60 days providing both virtual and physical support. Peer staff are assigned to programs like serving meals at the COVID-19 Project Roomkey locations and answering calls on various support lines to build trust and connect to the community. Service Extenders work with older adults helping with technology so they can participate in virtual meetings and treatment.

Update on AB81/MHSA Extension – Dr. Jonathan Sherin, Director, DMH

AB 81 authorizes LA County an extension to complete the MHSA 3-year Program and Expenditure Plan because of COVID-19. DMH plans to redo the 3-year plan to meet the July 1, 2021 deadline. Despite uncertainty with the economy, access to health services, and the county budget DMH will continue to engage the community and support its needs to structure the 3-year plan effectively.

State announced the MHSA extension on short notice, deadlines and changes were not stated. Because of the serious impact COVID-19 LA County and DMH does not have firm information on the budget and program cuts.

Update on Board & Cares – Maria Funk, Deputy Director, Housing & Job Development Division

Dr. Funk provided an update on working with B&C operators and COVID-19.

- Resources developed: The “cascade” process was expedited to move 62 clients from hospitals into various B&C facilities. A taskforce organized with staff from DMH, PG, CCL, DPH, VA who are interested in people living in B&C. The taskforce developed a master list of 361 facilities which were assigned facility leads to support B&C operators. Leads provided, training, best practices, guidance material on COVID-19, proper use of PPE, location of testing sites, weekly webinars led by DMH, CCL, DPH, and workshops facilitated by CCL and DPH.
- Facility Closures: Three closures in January 2020 - Hollywood Recovery closed January 2020, Abby’s B&C closed because of a business decision, On the Lodge-operators retired to convert facility into rentals. Golden State Lodge pending closure in September, working with Community Care Licensing to relocate patients.

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- New program Project Homekey: State funding from CARES Act program provided \$600 million for purchasing apartments and hotels. LA County CEO is looking into the opportunity to purchase some properties that are closed to be reopened.
- New association: Organized a Membership Association for B&C operators. It will be a body to organize operators are on the same page.

Legislative Update – Kei Nago

Mental Health Commission (7/23/20) - Board and Care Legislative Bills

AB 1766 Licensed Adult Residential Facilities and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly: Data Collection: Residents with a Serious Mental Disorder (Bloom) - Status: As of 7/08/2020, AB 1766 referred to Senate Human Services Committee.

SB 1259: Licensed Adult Residential Facilities and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly: SSI/SSP Recipients: Report (Hurtado) - Status: As of 7/09/2020, SB 1259 referred to Assembly Human Services Committee.

AB 2377: Adult Residential Facilities: Closures and Resident Transfers (Chiu)
Status: As of 7/09/2020, AB 2377 referred to Senate Human Services Committee.

III. Public Comment

Amparo Ostojic

1. **Timeline on MHSA plan Extension** -Following up on C. Orozco's question: I am formally requesting a public timeline on the expected dates of when MHSA Plan will be discussed and voted on by the MHC. At this time the deadline of 7/20/21 is a full year, Dr. Sherin stated he expects this Plan to go thru before that. A timeline would give the public time to review, prepare and participate in this robust stakeholder process.
2. **Anti-Racist LA county Motion by Sup. Mark Ridley-Thomas**- Following up on C. Stevens comment: I agree that LA County Department of Mental Health make a specific Statement or Response to this Motion (that will hopefully become an official Policy) since oppression and racism greatly affects the mental health of the BIPOC community it serves. <https://ridley-thomas.lacounty.gov/index.php/antiracist-los-angeles/>
3. **MHSA 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 Revenue & Expenditure Report Request**- The DMH overall budget is being reduced due to COVID, we all understand that. According to the LA County Budget adopted on July 2020, (<https://ceo.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-21-Adopted-Budget-Charts.pdf>) \$6.05 Billion is still a lot of money in my humble opinion. I understand this includes ALL costs, like rents, capital cost, technology, administration, etc. Therefore, I am requesting an excel Revenue & Expenditure Report for the MHSA budget for the past 2 Fiscal years. That way the Mental Health Commissioners and the public can better understand the MHSA budget for fiscal 2020-2021 in comparison to the previous two years. I found the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 (version 7/1/2018) "Annual Mental Health Services Act Revenue & Expenditure Report" eight page Component Summary clear and easy to understand.

Osbee Sangster – Continuation from July 2, 2020 Public Comment Meeting - **Societal Development - Housing the Homeless**

In these days the road ahead requires a rapid rising of building innovation; modular accelerated units for the homeless for a post pandemic construction era. Housing units for the unsheltered, the elimination of congregate living quarters and the dense population street living. With united action; bring together; housing in this pandemic crisis: housing the homeless must be realigned with the (corona virus) eliminating shared rooms and establish back-up (dorms) for those who are (infected) or under isolation/quarantine. A public health and mental health system that is beneficial for all regardless; of race or social status.

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Monisha Parker – Please work on updating the technology because it is out of date. Was not aware that a application needed to be downloaded for an appointments with therapist.

Barbara Wilson – What B&C homes remain that will take clients who are severely mentally with SSI. Are we advocating for the people we serve the mostly?

Mark Gale

- First, I would like to speak about the Assisted Outpatient Treatment Oversight Committee which is under your purview. Our program helps some of the most challenged individuals in our county begin their recovery. In many cases, our AOT program is the last alternative available for treatment in the community instead of an LPS Conservatorship and placement in a more restrictive setting. We have helped hundreds of people engage in treatment and find their pathways to recovery and it is imperative our program deliver the highest quality treatment available to those who have been falling through the cracks of our system for years. Their lives have been filled with homelessness, incarceration, victimization, multiple hospitalizations, and worse which is why it is so important to continue to monitor, expand, and improve our program. There is still much work to be done, but it will not occur without proper oversight and accountability. When Brittney Weissman became Chair of the Mental Health Commission, she had to step down from her leadership role with the Assisted Outpatient Treatment Oversight Committee. Since that time, the work has stopped. And now that we are all working with the Zoom format there is no excuse to not resume our meetings. The lack of commitment of this Commission to restart our work has been both disappointing and disturbing. The Department of Mental Health hired an excellent research team from UCLA, and they did exemplary work. The committee drafted 17 recommendations based on their evidence-based research for DMH to respond to or implement. Has any change occurred because of their work? None that I am aware of. We have not had a statistical update since April 2019. DMH has remained silent, ignored our work, our questions, our recommendations, and the oversight that this Oversight Committee was supposed to provide. It is time for our quarterly meetings to begin again as soon as possible, but that will not happen without the participation and leadership from this Commission. Let's get back to work!
- A second question. How long should a new participant in our AOT Program wait for an initial assessment and examination by a psychiatrist? New AOT clients have endured catastrophic consequences in their lives and have remained treatment-resistant for years. This is their incredibly important moment when they have finally agreed to give treatment a chance, but instead of effectively utilizing the urgency of this moment we make them wait for 30-60 days to see a doctor. Another system failure! If this was your son, daughter, spouse, or sibling, how patient would you be with a 60 day wait for an appointment with the psychiatrist? How many clients do we lose every month because we only have one FTE psychiatrist for our entire county AOT Program? We don't know, because the meetings have stopped and there is essentially no oversight at all and even less accountability. This situation is unacceptable and must be remedied now-COVID-19 or not. In each Oversight Committee Meeting over the last two years I have advocated for the addition of a second FTE psychiatrist for our AOT program. The answer I receive from DMH leadership is "We asked but were denied." That is unacceptable. It is time to bring back our meetings to ensure the Department of Mental Health actually responds to the oversight that was mandated by this Commission and the Board of Supervisors along with the hiring of a second psychiatrist for our Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program.
- Additionally, as an alternate on the Alternatives to Incarceration Workgroup, which has provided a roadmap for reform for Los Angeles County, we discussed free-flowing referrals between the DMH-sponsored Court Linkage Program and its resources, and the resources of our Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) under DHS. I serve on the Permanent Steering Committee of ODR and am thrilled with the progress they have made. I have also witnessed the recovery of many clients who have utilized the Court Linkage treatment programs. They both do great work! Sometimes a client of Court Linkage may need resources that DMH does not provide but could be accessed through ODR. Likewise, an ODR client may need to access resources controlled by the Court Linkage program. Clients should receive the treatment resources they need based on a clinical determination, not based on what program they land

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in or fiscal ownership. Our ATI workgroup wrote this recommendation to deliver access to resources based on a client's need. It is part of the ATI report, but this flexibility is rarely utilized. We can change that. Let's help people access the treatment or services they require based on clinical need and implement free-flowing referrals between our county partners. Our agencies should work together seamlessly to support recovery and positive outcomes without bureaucratic barriers and walls.

Mark Karmatz – Attended a meeting that discussed possibly having certified peers in schools and jails

IV. Commission Business

Motion: Approve Executive Committee Slate – The Commission conducted the 2021 Executive Committee election by the following actions.

- Motion to close nominations from the 2020-21 Executive Committee slate - Motion by Commissioner Ogawa
- Motion to hold election through survey monkey. MSC: Commissioners Ledesma and Stevens
- The following officers were elected for 2020-21

Chair: Brittney Weissman

1st Vice Chair: Imelda Padilla-Frausto

2nd Vice Chair: Kevin Acebo

Members-at-Large: Harold Turner and Patrick Ogawa

Discussion: Resuming Quarterly Meetings

Chair and the new Executive Committee will discuss resuming quarterly meetings on Budget, YourDMH, MHSA extension, stakeholder engagement, and Co-Chair report topics.

V. Reports from Community Co-Chairs

Service Area Leadership Team (SALT) Reports

SALT 1 – Jean Harris, Co-Chair

- Last meeting, presentations from DMH Quality Assurance regarding surveys to increase participation, and Local transportation board plans to expand transportation in the AV
- SALT need information on MHSA 3- year to provide input to identify gaps.
- Meeting notification need to be sent earlier
- Urgent Care facility construction is on schedule building the behavioral health center

SALT 2 – Leticia Munoz, Co-Chair

- Attempted to attend Sheila Kuehl grab and go food give away in north hill
- Re: Survey – clients are fearful of repercussion from SALT
- SALT will meet in August
- SALT acronym-needs clarity
- Nineteen groups continue to be held during the pandemic
- Peer jobs – correct information needs to be provided; clients lose money when not notified of time changes
- City program resources available such as food and rent subsidy information needs to provide to clients

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- Religious sector talked about suicide

SALT 3 – Andrew Preston

- Working on improving community feedback loop to improve reports
- Continue to have presentations on each population groups
- SALT struggles are homelessness, especially with African-American and Vet with COVID-19

SALT 4 – Esiquio Reyes, Co-Chair

- Formulated a guide to help SALT reps to better understand roles and responsibilities
- SPA attends meetings and trainings with ACCESS (CALBHBC). Co-Chairs will continue to better grasp MHSA funding and impact on the community to help DMH understand the community.

SALT 6 – Trina Harris, Co-Chair

- \$50K budget allocated for SALT was put on hold. Members have attended trainings and workshops but technology to participate in meetings is insufficient. SALT would like to use funding to provide better technology for participants. Still no funding was provided. How do we retrieve the funds

SALT 7 – Rick Pulido

- Latinx taskforce meets tomorrow. Taskforce is building collaborations on the anti-racism and disparity board motion, and the CalHealth foundation.

Underserved Cultural Community (UsCC) Reports

Black Heritage UsCC – Romalis Taylor

- Last meeting presentation was about implicit bias.
- Discussion on community ambassadors, enhance policy elements within community, community establishing a taskforce to focus on issues happening in LA County.

Cultural Competency Committee (CCC) Update by Sunnie Whipple and Bernice Mascher - Co-Chairs

The CCC has been meeting virtually since May 2020, using Skype Business. We did not have an April meeting as Covid-19 temporarily required some adjusting due to the "stay home" order. The use of technology has enabled us to keep meeting, while it has also inhibited many regular members from attending. Our attendance has been getting better as participants become more familiar with the technology. With the transition to Microsoft Teams in our August meeting, we may again see some challenges as members have to learn yet another program. We got to experience some of this frustration ourselves today, when we were unable to figure out how to connect with all of you on the commission.

Our CCC agendas include ESM updates, presentations, personal stories and announcements. In May, a Dr. Gitlin, LGBTQIA-2S Services Specialist for DMH, joined us to get feedback on gauging the quality service to the LGBTQIA-2S community in DMH. We discussed survey questions and outreach methods. In June, Ms. Kisha Thompson presented on Headspace, and DMH updated its members on the DMH helpline and Speakers Bureau Initiative. In July, Lynette Shonibare discussed the "Reporting Client/Family Satisfaction Data: A stakeholder Engagement Project." We also included time in each meeting for members to share experiences, stories, concerns, needs and creative outlets around COVID-19.

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Next month, we are inviting Robert Sowell, the Assistant Executive Director of the County of Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations to present on "Racism: An Uncontrolled Global Pandemic." We invite all of you to attend this CCC meeting on August 12, 1:30 to 3:30. Contact Guadalupe Aguilar at GaAguilar@dmh.lacounty.gov for details.

Some of our other activities include some energetic discussion at the last UsCC/CCC Leadership meeting on July 21st and weighing in at the CLT meeting on July 15th where we are working out operation norms and establishing CLT priorities. Attending these events is important because we understand that the CCC represents communities that may not have a voice anywhere else in DMH, and we want to make sure to include the voices of all under-represented populations in the processes and decisions being made in DMH. When we can, we have connected with members outside of the meetings to inquire if there are needs, concerns and thoughts they want to share.

That is the sum of our update. We want to thank all of you for including the CCC on the agenda and giving us time to share. We hope that this email will provide the update we were unable to give in today's meeting. Thank you for providing another way for us to reach you and send our update to you.

VI. Adjournment @ 2:24 pm

Next Meeting – Thursday, September 24, 2020 – Microsoft Teams (Online Virtual) @ 11 am

Meeting highlights submitted by Canetana Hurd