

OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

September 24, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Brittney Weissman, Chair, Presiding

APPROVED:

DISCUSSION

Call to Order

Call to order – Chair, Brittney Weissman

a. Roll Call – *Commission Staff*

Present: Commissioners Susan Friedman, Reba Stevens, Stacy Dagleish, Kevin Acebo, Judy Cooperberg, Harold Turner, Mike Molina, Patrick Ogawa, Luis Orozco, and Brittney Weissman – **QUORUM PRESENT**

Absent: Kathy Cooper Ledesma and Imelda Padilla-Frausto

b. Approve Meeting Minutes: **June 25 and July 23 minutes approved by unanimous vote**

II. Department of Mental Health Update

Dr. Jonathan Sherin, Director Mental Health - Review of DMH Basic Principles from the LPS State Audit recommendations

Dr. Sherin discussed the audit recommendations were unusual because the legislative process is similar to applying a band aid. Audit did not resonate at all about the challenges LA County face. It was punitive, did not produce the results expected and a disconnect on the issues DMH discussed.

Dr. Sherin continued the discussion on basic principles to work with the legislature to improve how LA cares for people.

- LPS law is about engagement focusing on levels of care and treatment clients need.
- Inform legislature to tailor new conceptions and implement LPS resources.
- Community base volunteer access to resources
- Shared decision making
- Advance directives
- Temporary conservatorship
- Full conservatorship
- AOT is a very helpful program and should be reviewed and modified.

Please see attached the LPS Audit Q &A document for additional information regarding the Departments response.

Questions/Comments were resolved

Dr. Curley Bonds, Chief Deputy Director, Clinical Operations

1. Organizational Structure

a. Key appointments – none new. We remain in a hiring freeze, so there is very little activity in this area.

b. We continue to further define roles on administrative and clinical sides with ongoing close collaboration between all Divisions.

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- c. Disaster Service Workers – election poll workers (800+ staff identified)
2. Updates around Program/Services, emphasis around integrated approach; and
 - a. Telework – 88.3% of staff are teleworking, 97% have clear assignments and 99.3% feel that they are prepared and have the skills needed to Telework.
 - b. Key Priorities – to help us focus and organize our work
 - i. Community Ambassador Network (CAN)
 - ii. FSP Redesign
 - iii. Therapeutic Transportation – launch expected in January 2021
 - iv. HOME Team Pilot – outpatient conservatorship (1 completed)
 - v. HELP LINE (and all associated warm lines) – we’ve seen an uptick in volume of PMRT calls, crisis calls have remained stable.
 - DMH Help Line – During months of March through June we so sequential increases in calls (8% March, 20% April, 36% May, 60% June) Calls in July and August still about 50% higher compared to 2019. Total average number of call/month = 15,000/month
 - c. Intergroup Dialogue Conversations

To address systemic racism and its impact on the Department we have partnered with academicians Rigoberto Rodriguez and Shametrice Davis – groups will allow staff to discuss racial equity concepts and empower them with the tools and resources to further explore, discuss, and take action on these issues in their workplaces and communities.

Action Item Updates

Board and Care Update

1. Closures: 1 additional facilities serving MH clients have closed since last meeting
Bjae’s Home Inc. was a 6 bed ARF in Covina, closed due to operator no longer wanting to operate the facility
2. In process of closing
 - Charlie’s Guest Home was a 44 bed RCFE in Santa Monica property sold to a developer
 - Golden State Lodge- 14 bed facility in Sylmar, closing because of operator financial struggles, despite funding assistance from DMH
 - California Green Tree Villa Assisted Living and Memory Care- 200 bed RCFE in Woodland Hills. Facility needs significant repairs est. \$2 million.
3. Capital Improvements Funding and Collaboration with Philanthropy
 - This project had begun prior to COVID but is now resuming
 - Cedars Sinai allocated \$5 million to California Community Foundation (CCF) that will be used to align with our efforts. This funding will provide a needs assessment to facilities requesting capital improvements funding. This work will inform the distribution of capital improvements funding by helping DMH to understand true needs of each applicant
 - This funding will also fund an evaluation of the impact of the funding and to test a new funding structure of these facilities and assess their role in addressing homelessness.
 - CCF will be releasing an RFP to solicit a project manager and other key contributors to this project including CDFI’s (Community Development Financial Institutions; nonprofit lenders), research partners and subject matter experts

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Membership Association

- DMH will be releasing an RFP for applicants interested in running a membership association for facility operators. This project had begun prior to the pandemic and is now resuming.
- Association will provide free training as well as provide a space for facilities to collaborate around best practices and advocacy.

MHSA 3 Year Plan Stakeholder Communication

The MHC received the update that the schedule for community engagement would be finalized this week and disseminated to the community soon thereafter. They would like to hear a more detailed description on how the Department plans to communicate with and receive input from the community in this process. They would also like to know if the Department plans on communicating this information in “laymen’s terms.”

Jail Linkage/Reduction of Jail Population

In order to address the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission in an incarcerated setting, during the first four months of the pandemic, the population of Men’s Central Jail and Twin Towers Correctional Facility decreased by approximately 31%. DMH assisted:

- a. Development of DHS Surge List to prioritize transfer of individuals from Correctional Health Services (CHS) to IMDs and higher-acuity placements
- b. Weekly calls among CHS, DMH, ODR, Sheriff, and others to effectuate transfers, deal with impediments to process
- c. DHS Whole Person Care, DHS Care Transitions, Linkage to Men’s and Women’s Community Reintegration Clinics, Linkage to Full-Service Partnership
- d. Assessing and increasing MH/SUDs bed capacity

In order to address the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission in an incarcerated setting, by the end of August 2020, CDCR released approximately 1,865 clients early to Los Angeles County. DMH have regular planning calls with CDR around “regular” releases and COVID-19 early releases

Mental Health Court Liaison Program

1. MIST (Misdemeanors Incompetent to Stand Trial) program jail population significantly decreased in jail (now approximately ten individuals, down from 250 individuals several years ago)
2. Community Reintegration Program
The Community Reintegration Program offers mentally ill defendants’ community-based treatment as an alternative to incarceration through referral to specialized treatment programs that focus on providing rehabilitation skills and reintegration into the community.
3. Co-Occurring Disorders Court Program
The Co-Occurring Disorders Court (CODC) Program is offered to non-violent criminal defendants with co-occurring mental health and substance addiction disorders who voluntarily agree to participate in a 12-to-18 month comprehensive, court-supervised treatment program. Residential and outpatient treatment services are provided by a DMH-contract Full Service Partnership (FSP) provider.
4. MacArthur Pilot Program/Expansion
Penal Code 1001.36 permits courts to divert mentally ill defendants into treatment without first convicting them of a crime.

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Office of Diversion and Re-entry (ODR)

- a. Full Service Partnership placement for ODR clients
- b. Women's and Men's Reintegration Clinics accept referrals from ODR

COVID-19 response

In the light of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic multiple steps were taken to minimize the risks to staff and youth in the juvenile justice system.

- a. A bifurcated model was developed wherein DMH staff (including psychiatrists) would evaluate youth in crisis and on enhanced levels of supervision on-site and on an in-person basis at the Probation halls and camps.
- b. Videoconferencing options six videoconferencing kiosks were installed. The number grew to 32 kiosks-16 at each of the two juvenile halls- and seven more at the Probation camps and Dorothy Kirby Center.

Question/Comments were resolved.

Action Item: Provide more information on the FSP redesign and how DMH is involved (Acebo)

Action Item: Breakdown what data captured (# of clients, where are they going) on the 31% released from the county jails – (Acebo)

Recommendation: Invite Criminal Justice program presentation at full meeting

Action Item: Expand on Ambassador Program specifically the impact on disparities – Ambassador Program presentation at full meeting (Ogawa)

III. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Pete Thompson - Content of therapy in Los Angeles communities have PTSD issues and triggers regarding child sex abuse.

William Legere - Supportive employment is part of the MHSA and a big issue with BLACC, need more support. People that want to work need to be working.

Hector Ramirez - Commented on increase of mental health crisis in Latino communities relating to rise in suicidality, especially among TAY, a rise in anxiety due to COVID-19, poverty, domestic violence, law enforcement, and current hateful rhetoric by President Trump and his administration. Lack or limited access to wifi, cellphone, computers, and safe space are a major barrier of Latino community to access necessary services from LACDMH. Spoke about family members who are dealing with the coronavirus and the impact on his family and others.

IV. Reports from Community Co-Chairs (SALTS & UsCC & CCC Co-Chairs)

SALT 3 - Andrew Preston, Co-Chair

We are continuing on working on improving our community feedback loop. Our strategies to achieve this is Incorporating Core Member reports at each meeting as well as a service area wide survey that was administered in August. In September we focused on Suicide Awareness having a presentation by Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center and having Share Self Help inform on the vast array of peer ran self-help groups they facilitate to promote wellness. SALT 3 assisted in hosting a Census and Voter Registration awareness webinar to increase education on how to complete the census and register to vote. Key struggles this month: Key struggles for this month include the concern over homelessness and pandemic.

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Public comments were made by Osbee Sangster from Black Los Angeles County Client Coalition Inc our SALT3 grassroots organization detail this issue. You can find the written transcript of that comment below. Key successes this month:

We continue to have core member reports on API, Veterans, LGBTQIA, Public Health and Mental health that helps bring community awareness and understanding of community health concerns from the lens of the variety of demographics that make up the greater san Gabriel valley.

SALT 4 - Carmen Perez

Low attendance at meetings and issues with telehealth because of technology. Noticed more homeless in the community that require SMI services. Expanding MET, PMRT programs would help along with increasing the Promotores program with the \$30 million, which we hope to happen before the deadline. We continue to advocate for our community.

Bianco Gallego – Latino UsCC

The group has added a subcommittee for our Promotora stakeholders in addition to our 7 on going COVID-19 response subcommittees. 8 Key ad-hoc Committees: (1) Support for children, adolescents, college students (and their families) (2) Support for Older Adults (3) Undocumented immigrants/Mixed-status families (4) Supporting parents/older adults in the use of Technology (5) Basic Needs (Food, financial, housing) (6) Safety (Domestic/Family Violence/Trauma) (7) Stigma Reduction (Communication & Outreach) (8) Promotores / Community Health Workers 3.- The committee will have a special listening session for our Promotoras members and community stakeholders to provide support and recommendations to the recent BOS motions regarding Latino mental health services . 4.-For many of our stakeholders this meeting is the one place where they can reach out for LACDMH support, report new emerging mental health issues, and obtain mental health information specific to the Latino communities. As a result our committee will explore adding to our charter a element that recognizes a process by which we can report to LACDMH comments, concerns, recommendations, and issues in a way that allows for participants to know if these issues have been presented to LACDMH and what actions LACDMH takes on this issues. 5.- This UsCC has significant attendance from TAY stakeholders from local junior high school, high schools, and local colleges and universities.

Rick Pulido – Reaffirms Bianco’s comments. Request MHC write a letter of support for the Promotors funding of \$30 million spent before the deadline December 30, 2020.

Bernice Masher and Sonny Whipple – CCC Co-Chairs

This month celebrated suicide prevention with Each Mind Matters presentation including the wonderful kits they hand out. We continue to look for speakers. Last meeting presentation was Racism as a Global Pandemic. Participating in other meetings and hosting sessions to create space. Excited, getting ready for the EQRO this week.

Amparo – Stakeholder in the community planning process for Latino UsCCC.

The Promotores program is funded through CARES. There is \$30 million remaining to be spent. Please don’t let this money go unspent because there are many underserved populations that are in need such as Latino, African-American, API, LGBTQ, and many other groups available to benefit from the funds.

Osbee Sangster – BLACCC

Speaking on behalf; of the Black Los Angeles County Client Coalition Inc.

BLACCC's advocacy effort; to (redress) "Societal Development - Housing the Homeless" Authority and Citations:

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Even before the coronavirus devastated the economy, the southland's homeless population had already grown significantly from the previous year with efforts to provide housing again; outpaced by the number of people falling into homelessness, according to figures released. According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the homeless count conducted in January found the county's homeless population; "numbers from LAHSA released in June, Los Angeles County had 58,936 homeless people in January 2019, but this year's number rose to 66,433. The city of Los Angeles counted 36,165 in 2019, and 41,290 in January, "Reported By City News service News Partner July 17, 2020 at 8:06 a.m. PT

V. Commission Business

a. Retreat Planning – FY 2020-21

Planning committee, Chair Weissman and Commissioners Molina and Padilla-Frausto.

- Manage logistics, confirm date, time and strategies to accomplish goals.
- Speaker(s) availability
- Ways to involve the CLTs, SALTs and UsCCs

b. Project Updates

i. Dashboards – Commissioner Frausto – no report

ii. Data Notebook – Commissioner Dagleish -

Data notebook is required by WIC. Per CALBHBC data notebook theme will be telehealth related questions.

iii. Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) – Commissioner Turner

Due to technical difficulties the meeting was rescheduled. La Tina Jackson currently oversees the program. Recommended dates are being arranged.

iv. Annual Report – Commissioners Weissman/Dagleish

Recommendation made to format report to match Orange County annual report. Each MHC will be asked to submit a mission or purpose specific to serving on the Commission.

Announcements

- Commissioner Resignation - Chair announced the resignation of Dr. Kita Curry effective August 30, 2020 and Dr. Merilla McCurry Scott on August 1, 2020. Dr. Curry was appointed by the 2nd District. She was the advocate guru for LA County committed to the critical issue suicide prevention. Dr. Scott was appointed by the 3rd District. She served as Chair in 2018 leading the Commission develop priorities to partner with DMH strategic plan and worked diligently for the district she served. Dr. Curry and Dr. Scott brought great value to the Commission during the five plus years of service committed to the needs of the LA County population. Best wishes to you.
- Commissioner Cooperberg announced the Antelope Valley Urgent Care Center scheduled to open mid-October 2020
- Chair Weissman announced Urgent Behavioral Health Care Center opened in the City of Industry.

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c. Action Items

June 2020 –

Action: Updates on FEMA reimbursement and SAMHSA grant coming to LA County for the overall budget when it comes to COVID-19 and shortfalls (Molina).

Action: Schedule a new meeting specific for public comments and the final vote from the Commission on the MHSA plan. **Completed** – Special meeting held July 2.

Action: Draft letter to Board of Supervisors regarding concerns with MHSA 3-year plan approval. **Postponed** – MHSA plan deadline extended to 2021

July 2020 –

No new action items

August 2020 – Executive Committee

Action – Notify MHC of CLT (Community Leadership Team) meetings. Chair encouraged Commissioners to attend

Action – Monitor the status of SALTs funding postponement.

d. Ongoing/Future meeting presentations

- Update on TAY group presentation - Commissioners Friedman and Dagleish work with Commissioner Ledesma to coordinate TAY presentation at full meeting and SALT meetings - **Pending**.
- Presentation - Commissioner Padilla-Frausto's report, *Unmet Needs for Mental Health Services* - **Pending**
- Mental Health Court and Criminal Justice Presentation – Commissioners Friedman and Dagleish, Molina, Acebo, Ogawa, and Turner are collaborating to share presentation - **Pending**.
- **DMH Update** - Update on closing and potentially closing board and cares – **Ongoing (updates provided 7/23, 9/24)**.

VI. Public Comments

Ezezial Reyas – Project Roomkey Update

Project Roomkey provided food regularly helped stabilize residents' state of mind. Many are curious to how much longer services will last. They feel fear and let down as the deadline becomes closer. The Roomkey program was beneficial. At the beginning there were lots of fighting among one another.

Barbara Wilson - Regarding Board & Care facilities:

DMH is doing a really good job in assisting residents of Board & Care facilities that are closing in identifying and relocating residents. However, the staff seems to still focus primarily on residents that are known to DMH rather than looking at ALL of the residents. Residents are being handed a LIST of licensed facilities county-wide and expected to locate their own facilities. At a time when residents are already in a state of anxiety due to being told they must move, they are

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being expected to visit facilities on foot despite the fact that they have little sense of county geography, etc. This is simply Appalling. It is also unfair to assume that there is family who can become default placement coordinators.

2) Re: the issue of funding for capital improvements of Board & Cares - is there a timeline of an expiration of disbursement of these funds?

3) Re: Funding for the Actual Purchase of Board & Cares - I understand that there currently exists funding for the purchase of Board & Cares but that the funding expires December 31, 2020, is that true?

Wendy Cabil – Service Area 1

Complimented Dr. Sherin on his innovative out-of-the-box advocacy approach to deal with legislature. Legislation and decision-makers need to hear from client stakeholders, it is required in the MHSA.

VII. Adjournment

Next Meeting – Thursday, October 22, 2020 – Microsoft Teams (Online Virtual) @ 11 am

Minutes submitted by Canetana Hurd