

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

**Eastern-European / Middle Eastern (EE/ME) UsCC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

May 27, 2020

2:00PM – 4:00PM via Teleconference

**Present:** Sarkis Simonian, Mariam Nahapetyan, Mastaneh Moghadam  
**DMH Admin:** Anna Yaralayan, Dr. Sandra Chang

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions
<b>Introductions</b>	Everyone introduced themselves
<b>Discussion about COVID-19</b>	<p><b>(i.e. How members are doing individually and ensuring that everyone is safe)</b></p> <p>Sarkis Simonian inquired from Dr. Sandra Chang if she has heard any information on the LACDMH employees returning to work at the office?</p> <p>Dr. Sandra Chang responded, “I have not heard any specific information regarding the Department returning back to the office. We are waiting for developments and instructions. We still need to take precautions and practice physical distancing to stay safe during this pandemic.”</p> <p>Sarkis shared his perspective coming from a Dictatorship Country in the Middle East where he lived for over 20 years. He reported that what people are experiencing right now due to COVID-19, is nothing compared to what he lived through. People are not following the rules. He stated, “I feel that we should keep others in mind and wear masks.”</p> <p>Mariam Nahapetyan expressed that in the COVID-19 pandemic we are dealing with much more anxiety and depression. However, we are coping with it the best way we can, things are not normal.</p> <p>Dr. Anna Yaralyan expressed that in the last 2 weeks the infection rate of COVID-19 has gone up in Armenia, as they opened the local bars and restaurants. It seems like Armenians in Armenia are not taking the virus seriously. When some Armenian citizens were interviewed by the local media, they stated that they have gone through Genocide, massacres, earthquakes, and lived under Communist dictatorship for over 70 years, as a result, nothing can touch them, and they can survive this pandemic as well. There is also economic crisis in Armenia, added to the pandemic.</p> <p>Sarkis Simonian reported that Spain and Italy have been in full quarantine for COVID-19. In these countries, people can only go outside 1 to 2 hours a day for essential aspects such as grocery shopping or doctors’ visits. Most Europeans are now stuck in their homes. Americans usually only go out on Friday and Saturdays the weekends, and the rest of the week we are home, most of the time. We are finding it harder than Europeans to remain in quarantine. Sometimes this quarantine</p>

does not make sense for Americans.

Mariam Nahapetyan shared information she received from her cousin that is a Nurse at a hospital in Armenia. She said that 80% of Doctors and Nurses have contracted the Coronavirus. Mariam added that her neighbors were infected with the virus as well. People are afraid to leave their homes.

Sarkis reported that eight thousand cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Armenia; this is a lot of people for a small country.

Mastaneh Moghadam shared that she also is feeling all the insecurities that are going around about what could happen and how our future will look like in this pandemic. She also stated, "I also am enjoying a little slower schedule and enjoying my down time." Mastaneh also inquired when the mental health clinics may open for clients who do not want to have Telehealth?

Dr. Sandra Chang responded she heard that 80% to 90% of DMH is conducting business remotely through Telehealth. The clinics are doing screenings over the phone for consumers who maybe experiencing acute symptoms or have suicidal or homicidal ideations. In these situations, clients maybe given face-to-face appointments for office visits. Clients who are more stabilized and do not need office visits, usually receive Telehealth care.

Various EE/ME subcommittee members had a conversation pertaining to the Youth in COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, they stated that in talking with Youth, it is apparent that they have lost a great deal due to the COVID-19, as there is no Graduation, Grad Night and Prom. There is a tremendous amount of trauma caused by this pandemic.

**DMH Announcement: Dr. Sandra Chang reported the following information:**

- Dr. Sherin put together group of Consultants for COVID-19 activities, services and resources in the Department.
- To ensure adequate translation of COVID-19 materials, the Department wants to consult with different subcommittee members about the wording and phrases on languages that are difficult to translate from English to different threshold languages.
- The Department is also working on creating PSA's in different languages about the services and resources provided by LACDMH on the COVID-19 pandemic.
- LACDMH wants to focus on recovery and come up with Capacity Building Projects to address Trauma, Grief, and a sense of loss caused by this pandemic.

**Arabic Parenting Seminars Presentation**

Dr. Heather Laird did not present.

<b>Future Meetings Times &amp; Date</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6/4/2020 – <b>“DARK”</b></li><li>• 7/29/2020 – <b>“DARK”</b></li><li>• <b>8/2020 – To Be Announced</b></li></ul>