

County of Los Angeles – Department of Mental Health
OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
December 15, 2022 – Minutes
Kathleen Austria, Chair
APPROVED: January 26, 2023
**Motion made by Commissioner Cooperberg second by
Commissioner Barbour**

DISCUSSION

1. **Call to Order / Roll Call**

Commissioner Root (AE), Commissioner Padilla-Frausto (P), Commissioner Friedman (P), Commissioner Stevens (P), Commissioner Barbour (P), Commissioner Austria (P), Commissioner Dagleish (P), Commissioner Banko (AE), Commissioner Okonji (P), Commissioner Molina (P), Commissioner Sanabria (AE), Commissioner Cooperberg (P), Commissioner Weissman (AE), Commissioner Schallert (P) – **QUORUM PRESENT**

Acknowledgements: Chair thanked you to our ASL Interpreters, Spanish interpreters, CART captioner, technology and multimedia team, and staff support

Announcement: Chair Austria introduced and welcomed Kenia Fuentes, new Executive Assistant, Mental Health Commission. Ms. Fuentes shared information about herself and looking forward to supporting the work of the Commission administratively and technically.

2. **Public Comment**

- a. **Osbee Sangster on behalf of the Black Los Angeles County Client Coalition:** Black advocacy effort as part of our vision to live our value of continuous improvement. Are you in need of access to the digital world? The Black Los Angeles County Client Coalition Literacy Project has launched and providing technology to communities and meeting Los Angeles consumers, families, and stakeholders. Chromebook computers to help provide access to digital inclusion that includes a full year warranty and RT and T support in our replacement. In addition, we can help you apply for low-cost internet through the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), along with Black HP Chromebook intake interview giveaway, and enrollment. To determine if you are an LA County stakeholder eligible for the ACP Connectivity Program, let's check your eligibility. Currently, we have a limited supply and are expecting more digit road devices in the near future to assist with technology, digital literacy, and internet resources ongoing. Please visit Black's website, black.org and obtain our telephone number. This is Blacks landline number, so please don't text; call to set up an intake appointment. And we thank you and look forward to speaking with you.
- b. **William Legere:** (inaudible)
- c. **Barbara Wilson:** I just wanted to thank the commission for all the hard work. I also wanted to update you and make sure that you're aware that we are still having licensed board and care homes, also known as adult residential facilities closing in our service area. I don't know if that's countywide, but it certainly is still happening in our area, and this is cause for concern. While I'm excited about the state of emergency that's been declared about homelessness, I wonder if that will be some -- a mechanism whereby we can supplement the rates that board and care operators get separate from being attached to a patch. Because when the client moves, the money leaves. And so this really is a problem for the facility operators. Also, just wanted to make you aware that we still do have a transportation problem between the Santa Clarita Valley and the San Fernando Valley. There are no adult day treatment programs in the Santa Clarita Valley, and therefore it's a barrier to treatment for people to be able to access adult days programs in the San Fernando Valley, unless they have a family member to transport or something like that. And that really defeats the whole purpose of individuation and school empowerment. So, I'll send this on to you because I do have some other comments. Thank you so much.

- d. **Selam, S-E-L-A-M. Last name Alem, A-L-E-M:** Thank you for letting me in. I'm sorry to let you know you want the public -- you want to hear from the public, but at the same time, there is high synergy of this meeting today. It was very difficult to find out where and how to get hold of this meeting. This is not going to help you address the issue, the crisis, the humanitarian crisis that we're facing in this county or nationwide. If you want to address the homeless issue in connection of what you are doing, the main thing is to let the public know when the meeting is to listen, to listen to us. But you're not. I called Canetana's administration office, they didn't have the information. County commissioner's secretary, they didn't have the information. I left a message to your secretary. She didn't return my phone call. And there is the system breakdown. So how do you fix this problem? I really think I'm asking you and begging you to stand up. Call a town hall meeting. Listen to us. Listen to the people with those who are elected together. We can end this crisis, humanity, and the crisis that we are in. You cannot be late. You cannot. It'll help you. You need help, don't you? Let's help you because the first step is to listen to us. Thank you.
- e. **Hector Ramirez:** I'm a consumer at West Valley Mental Health Clinic in the City of Chatsworth. And I've been a consumer here for a while, and so I go to my service area too. And I think I was just going to -- the problem communicating with the Mental Health Commission right now is difficult. Sending emails and getting no response from either the secretary or from anybody in the commission now for over two months has been very challenging, particularly sharing information, reports, and problems that we're having with the MHSA planning process. And problems that we're having with our service area to meeting, which really has not been kind of successful or even inclusive of our Spanish-speaking community. And those here in my clinic. My clinic has gone from used to providing 2,000 people with services to 4,000 people since the Pandemic. And our staff shortage is significant. We're the largest service -- office for the county, and yet our services for our Latino population are just so disproportionately inadequate and not existent. And I've been trying to communicate this up myself meeting, but it usually turns into a NAMI meeting or in trying to communicate with the commission. You know, just not even getting a response or acknowledgement of my emails or concerns has made it really challenging. So, I hope we look forward that that can be changed so that we do have to approach other supervisors or health deputy with these concerns, because this commission is not being responsive for whatever reason. You don't think that we're doing it out of retaliation, but we are coming here and we're just not getting any type of response. So as a consumer, it feels sometimes like, I don't know what has happened, but it does feel like a waste of time and, like, this is not even a place where we can really get support. And I know that's not the case, but I just really want to make you aware that that's how it's coming across, particularly given the significant inequities and problems that we have, particularly in my side of the county.
- f. **Jean Harris:** I am calling in with an issue regarding communication with the Mental Health Commission. I have been trying since the end of October to rectify an issue. Since November 17th, I've gotten no email response. I have a family that is dealing with an individual in psychosis that is on parole. And he is unhoused, and he is cooperative and willing to accept service. But because of his criminal justice background he cannot find any housing and he is having to wait several weeks to be seen in the Department of Mental Health. I've been trying to find resources for them, and he is very ill. And I don't know how long we want to wait for his psychosis to increase, getting worse before we do something for this family. And I also would love to see minutes of the Mental Health

Commission posted online. The most recent minutes are from May. And so, if there's something that we could do about that, that would be amazing. Thank you.

- g. **Anonymous:** Thank you very much. Yeah, I have my daughter, my dad's daughter next to me. That's why I couldn't talk to you. We pulled over, I'm free to talk. So, this is regarding my dad's daughter who was removed from my apartment, taken to the hospital, then transferred to Alejandra Behavioral Health Center. Then I was denied saying that they didn't know where she was, which I knew where they took her. It took us two, three hours to get her to find where she was. So, anyway, to make a long story short, this is how people missed some lost contact from their loved ones. They get drugged up. We don't let us know where they are because of the HIPAA. And then, yeah, I did find her because by the time she called me, she was drugged up. I had to reintroduce myself and find out where she was. I kept in contact with Alejandra Behavioral Health Center that she cannot come home regardless, let me talk to the different discharge social workers. They did it January 6, 7, 8, on the 9th, on Sunday, they let her out on the streets. While she was on the streets, she was raped. And I'm on Section 8, Housing Authority there under my truck. I cannot have her. So, the system lays her down time after time. What do you guys do? You didn't even have courage to communicate with the parent. Can you please help me before I lose my child? I want to save my daughter. She's my only child.

Administrative Matters

3. **Approval of November 17, 2022, Full Mental Health Commission minutes:** Minutes tabled until January 2023.

Presentations

4. **DMH Update - Dr. Lisa Wong, Interim Director:** Dr. Wong reported on DMH Vacancy Rates:
- In 2018 vacancy rates were steady at 17% and 16%. During the pandemic rates increased 22 to 27%
 - Last fiscal year 519 were hired and promoted
 - From July 2022 to the end of November 338 were hired and promoted, specifically with clinic programs
 - In November 2022, 27 positions filled and 48 pending
 - Leadership Positions Hired – Deputy Director, Prevention – Dr. Robert Boyd
 - Program Manager II (Hollywood Mental Health Center – Carolyn Kaneko
 - Program Manager II (Women's Community Reintegration Program – Staci Atkins

Dr. Wong reported hiring an outside video media campaign consultant to recruit different kinds of classifications. Field bonuses were implemented and retroactive from July 1, 2022, paying \$180 per month. DMH were given authority to work with temporary agency to fill in for staff on leave.

5. **DMH Financial Update – see supporting document**
- Kimberly Nall, DMH Financial Manager spoke about submitting FY 2023-24 recommended budget in early January 2023. The Commission is interested in submitting proposals or funding requests for consideration in the budget process.
 - Kalene Gilbert, MHS Coordinator for DMH, provided information on how to submit proposals. See *documentation*
 - First step - submit the proposal, a requirement for everyone.

- Second step - stakeholder review process, review is two steps.
- Third step – stakeholder review/comments go to executive leadership who will receive funding or not.

- 6. CARE Court Update- *Connie Draxler, Acting Chief Deputy Director.*** Connie Draxler gave an update on the status of the CARE Court:
- a. CARE Court legislation was signed by the governor to take effect for two cohorts.
 - b. First cohort are Orange, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco City and County, Glen, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne to be completed by October 23.
 - c. All other counties will be in cohort two. See supporting document link for more detail.
 - d. Department of Healthcare Services will start planning with the first cohort in January 2023.
 - e. First and second cohorts received planning money specifically for behavioral health programs. LA County received over \$7 million.
 - f. BOS proposed a motion for DMH to start planning how to spend the money.
 - g. Effective January 2023 CARE Court will be located at the Norwalk Courthouse

7. Hollywood 2.0 Update- Dr. Curley Bonds, Chief Medical Officer

Dr. Bonds reported on key development updates:

- a. Closely working with Hollywood 4WRD, a stakeholder engagement group
- b. Board passed allocation of 54 new positions for the Hollywood project, now called H2O.
- c. Hired staff will be called Hollywood Intensive Services
- d. About 4,000 – 4,500 people in the Hollywood area will benefit from the services.
- e. Another component of the work groups is establishing supportive housing
- f. Two supervisorial districts and three different city entities are participating in H2O.

8. DMH – The Intersection of Homelessness & Mental Illness – *See supporting document*

La Tina Jackson, LCSW, Deputy Director, Countywide Engagement Division, Maria Funk, PhD, Deputy Director, Housing & Job Development.

- a. Ms. Jackson gave an overview of the intersection between homelessness and mental illness and the services provided for people who are homeless and housing resources available at DMH:**
 - In 2022 the homeless count estimated 25%.
 - 15,500 total,
 - 11,500 unsheltered,
 - 3,911 sheltered
- b. Pathways for individuals to receive services with DMH:**
 - Direct Outreach
 - Referrals (generalist and multidisciplinary outreach teams, elected officials, DMH program staff, community)
 - www.LA-HOP.org
 - DMH 24/7 ACCESS Line: 800-854-7771
 - 988
- c. Services for people experiencing Homelessness – see supporting document for details**

Homeless Outreach & Mobile Engagement (HOME)

 - Full-Service Partnership (FSP)
 - Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)

- Outpatient Services
- d. Maria Funk reported about the housing resources managed by DMH. Programs managed by DMH:
 - Interim housing enriched residential care programs, capital investments and permanent supportive housing.
 - Manage the contracts with city and county housing authorities for tenant-based resources, Housing Assistance Program, Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool, and Housing for Mental Health Programs. See supportive documents for details

Action Item: Commissioner Molina requested an update given at the next meeting or afterwards on the county and DMH's involvement with the recent emergency order by Mayor Bass on homelessness and how that affects our working going forward.

Updates/Action Items

9. Committee/Ad Hoc Proposals

- a. MHSAd Hoc or Standing Committee
Commission recommended to name the MHSAd Hoc group "MHSAd Hoc Committee"
- b. MHC Annual Report and Data Notebook Ad Hoc Committee
Commissioner Dalgleish reached out to other entities to move forward completing the data notebook.

10. Board of Supervisors Update

- a. Effective November 06, 2022, Mental Health Commission was assigned to Supervisor Janice Hahn. Chloe Cheney-Rice, Associate Justice and Mental Health Deputy for Supervisor Hahn attended the meeting on behalf of Deputy Kyla Coates.

11. Commissioner Updates

- a. Commissioner Dalgleish commended DMH on the two-day event sponsored by Speaker's Bureau.

12. MHC Retreat Update

- a. Kenia Fuentes, Executive Assistant, reported retreat planning is moving forward to secure the venue and meetings with the consultant. The retreat will be a 2-day event held February 2 and 3, 2023. There is no available funding to cover Commissioners' overnight stay expenses.

13. Community Stakeholder Reports

- a. **Hector Ramirez, Access for All UsCC, Co-Chair** for the Department of -- the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. We had our last meeting of the year this month, this week actually very, very successful. We have a brand-new co-chair, Dr. Alison Freeman who joined us. Because of large amount of work that our UsCC does, our stakeholder group decided to vote for three co-chairs. I want to remind this commission that the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is the largest public agency next to the US Veteran's Administration that provides services to the largest group of people with disabilities, particularly mental health, and psychiatric disabilities, which are oftentimes inappropriately called mental illnesses. So, we do have three co-chairs, one of which is deaf. We have somebody who's hard of hearing, me, and then we have a community member. So that's a historic first for the county, having our first deaf co-chair for a stakeholder group. And it's reflective of how our community members really appreciate envelope particularly around MHSAd Hoc and the advance that we're doing. So, we're very excited. We work with the department. We've been working closely with the

department to not only help the department become ADA compliant with the state and federal law requirements for our disability, but also to really start working on the issue of workforce, which we recognize is one of the things that your group has been working. So, we're working closely with the state and local agencies to really help increase the capacity workforce around the language interpreters for our community, but also to be able to have more direct providers who are deaf in hard of hearing because right now there's only one for the whole state. And she's here in Los Angeles County. And so, it makes it very difficult. So, we're working closely and we're very, very glad to have had an opportunity to work with Destiny Walker during the interim period -- and she not only listened she offered her to what our concerns shared and this kind of and so just recognizing that our stakeholder processes, you know, have gotten better, but I should just, like, kind of really leading the way. So, we're really, glad that of all the work that we've been doing. So, we look forward to working with all of you the next year.

- b. **Barbara Wilson, SALT 2 Co-Chair** - We had a meeting last Thursday and we had a panel that had three people on it all with lived experience about how to get through the holidays if the holidays are not just happy for you. So that was very informative. We also talked about the resources or lack thereof, particularly in the Santa Clarita Valley. We really do not have any resources for inpatient care for children and adolescents. That requires the families to travel huge distances, 40 and 50, 60 miles, one way to participate in their child's treatment. And oftentimes the family hour is at six o'clock. So, it's a problem. Probably won't get solved today, but we just want to put it out there that this problem still exists for residents of Santa Clarita. Thank you so much.
- c. **Andria McFerson, SALT 5 Co-Chair** - And I just wanted to say thanks and keep showing love to people who are unhoused because that is a life-altering status and could possibly cause PTSD, okay? On top of everything else having to do with mental health. So, this means more than most programs, I guess you can say, to house the homeless, to people who have many types of illnesses, ailments not only mental illness, but situations that cause mental instability, like domestic violence, physical disabilities that are not considered mental illnesses. Also, other debilitating situations that affect families like job loss. And something that we're all going to go through eventually is now being, you know, having either dementia or just being a senior and having a lack of just different things to live on a regular basis. That program means more than what people think it does. So, I appreciate someone coming out and explaining that to us and letting us know options for people who are unhoused and going through a whole lot of other debilitating situations. Like, I have a friend that is developmentally delayed, and he stayed on the streets for three years because he did not have family here and he couldn't live on his own. So, he found a program to help him not only be housed, but also to fulfill day-to-day things that he needed to do, like, take medication on a regular basis, like shop for groceries and food and, you know, soap and tissue.
- d. **Paul Stansbury, SALT 8 Co-Chair. Meeting Overview:** At the SALT 8 meeting on December 2, 2022 held we provided resources and events for the holidays and month We had a presentation on "Help Me Grow LA" by Laura Stein from the LA County Dept of Public Health. The Help Me Grow LA help families and providers who interact with young children and can assist with developmental services, materials and resources, referrals and navigating the system for child development services. They focus on ages 0-5 but will assist others. Bayfront Youth and Family Services presented on their new site at a school in Carson. They hope to provide services at other school sites. The main agenda item at the meeting was to have a discussion on priorities for the SALT 8 and to celebrate persons for their service. The discussion on priorities is a follow up to previous meetings. Our major priorities for the last couple of years have been addressing homelessness, trauma informed care and mental health in the schools. In preparation for the discussion the members were surveyed. The results of the survey were presented and discussed in breakout sessions. In the breakout rooms the discussion were focused on trying to prioritize the results from the survey and as appropriate introduce issues not addressed in the

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results. Next steps are to summarize the results of the discussion and narrow down the areas of concern where they overlap. Members were encouraged to complete the survey if they haven't already completed and submit comments. The goal is to send out survey results before our next meeting in February. SALT 8 does not meet in January. The other main activity was acknowledged and present awards for excellence to consumers, peers and family members in recognition for their service in address mental health needs and issues in Service Area 8. Over 20 persons were recognized. Special thanks to Dr. Ann Lee for all of her work to support SALT 8 as the SALT Liaison. **Meeting Presentations:** As indicated above there was a presentation on "Help Me Grow LA by Laura Stein from DPH. There were also updates from Dr. Lori Willis and Scott Hanada the Dept of Mental Health Service Area 8 Chiefs. The co-chairs also reported on the CLT retreat and the meetings on the potential changes to the CLT structure meetings. The Peer Mentoring Work Group continues to meet and provide opportunity for peers to learn how to get involved in the SALT. **Goals Achieve:** At the meeting the members and participants were able to learn about the survey results and discuss the ranking of priority issues. The discussions were informative and productive. The discussions will be part of the survey results and provide a update on our SALT 8 priorities for discussion on MHSA and DMH plans for coming year planning cycle. **Group Questions & Concerns:** The group questions and concerns continue with addressing the homeless and mental health issues, underserved populations, integrated treatment, racial and social justice, alternative to incarceration, mental health and youth and others. The increase in mental health conditions in the community and challenges of staffing within DMH and mental health providers is an ongoing concern to address the needs especially in view of the increasing needs of the 988 and CARE Court programs. Some concern about being able to have hybrid meetings and when in persons meeting will be possible. **Additional Comments:** SALT 8 does not meet in January as the normal meeting date is the first Friday of the month.

Adjournment

Commissioner Friedman moved to adjourn, Commissioner Dagleish second, meeting adjourned @1:33 pm