

**OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION**

February 23, 2023 - Minutes

Kathleen Austria, Chair

APPROVED: April 27, 2023

Motion made by Commissioner Molina, second by Commissioner Dagleish

## Discussion

### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

- a. **Black History Month Commemoration** – James Coomes, LCSW, Chief for Service Area 1 and Founding Member of the DMH ARDI Staff Advisory Council. Mr. Coomes was invited to share the ARDI Staff Advisory Council plans to achieve racial equity in DMH, how he shared with his daughter reflections on Black History Month, and he recommended reading two books.

### 2. Administrative Matters

- a. Approval of the January 26, 2023, meeting minutes. Motion to approve, move by Commissioner Molina, seconded by Commissioner Sanabria. Minutes carried, roll call vote:

**Ayes (10):** Commissioner Friedman (P), Commissioner Stevens (P), Commissioner Barbour (P), Commissioner Austria (P), Commissioner Dagleish (P), Commissioner Molina (P), Commissioner Sanabria (P), Commissioner Cooperberg (P), Commissioner Weissman (P), Commissioner Schallert (P)

**Nay (0)**

### 3. General Public Comment

- a. **Telephonic Public Comment: Agenda & Non-Agenda Items**

**Hector Ramirez:** Buenos Dias. Good morning commissioners. My name is Hector Ramirez. I'm a consumer of Los Angeles County Department of Mental health. I'm one of the co-chairs for the Access For All UsCC. I live in the City of Chatsworth, which is in SPA 2, and I get my services at a great clinic called West Valley Mental Health Clinic, which is the largest county-accredited clinic, and sort of the largest number of clients in the county, which is like over 4,000 of which the majority are Hispanics.

And I wanted to talk about the MHSA process for which the deadline is today. This process for the county started and has been driven it for since September has been very difficult. The information oftentimes is not accessible or even in Spanish or Korean. This week we had our last meeting to go over proposals in the material that we were presented with literally a couple of newspapers, 7:00 in the morning.

The material had a lot of errors, particularly since we were supposed to be at facility to provide comments. The deadline for that process is today, but even the notice that the department sent out has both the wrong day of the week and day of the month of which the deadline is sent out. And I'm asking to be aware of this to please give consumers, particularly consumers, which is over 250,000 consumers, an opportunity to participate. Out of all the proposals that were put forward, even though the company engaged our CLT members, only one consumer submitted proposals. Out of 250,000 consumers, only one person was able to submit proposals because the process was so inaccessible, confusing, and inaccurate. That person was me, of course, but I just really want to highlight that 249,000 people, you know, that shouldn't have been able to participate in this, really get into it.

And so, there's a significant problem with this MHSA processing consultant and we have been making both the commission and the department aware of it and it really shows up as I mentioned. So, it's a deadline and our consumers even don't have the correct information on what the deadline is. The material wasn't available in Spanish, which is unacceptable. It was a decision that the department made particularly in the process, and it really left out a lot of our residents here in Los Angeles County and their consumers.

So, I just leave you with that as you deliberate and think when you are asked to sign this and how equitable and appropriately it follows the specific requirements of law and even the requirements and submissions that this commission has made to the department. Thank you.

**Richard Hilton:** This is Richard Hilton from Santa Monica. I'm calling as a 54-year consumer of LA County DMH. For over 25 years, I've been a consumer at the directly operated Edelman clinic in West Los Angeles. Separately, I've worked in case management, facilitated medical support groups, and for over five years I completed clinical soap notes at a contract agency. My call is about staffing and cultural competency at both the Service Area 5 District Office and Edelman Clinic. As a consumer, I've experienced staff hostility and patient dumping. I called, shared my concerns with Downtown administrators. I have their names and the dates I've called and there's been a lack of follow through.

My first suggestion would be an independent audit of the Service Area 5 budget. The administrative office on West Washington Boulevard has what appears to be excessive staff who are present but not working in a social work for consumer capacity. The Edelman Clinic needs an additional more responsive and respectful staff who can support and work directly with our mental health community. Over 60 percent of Edelman consumers travel to the clinic from the City of Santa Monica.

My final second suggestion here on the far West side, Malibu to Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, our residents contribute disproportionately to the Mental Health Services Act tax. Yet for many decades now, there's been a limited number and choice of outpatient adult clinics. We deserve our fair share of MHSA funding for a replacement Santa Monica West Clinic. Thank you.

**Anonymous Speaker:** Good morning. One thing I had to accept was that this journey of having a loved one with bipolar schizoaffective disorder was going to be a struggle. There are many families on the same journey, but I never imagined my situation would be so dire. My daughter is in danger of losing her life on the Skid Row of Los Angeles. I need your mercy and intervention from any DMH provider, program, a person. I have spent many Sundays starting in June of '22 finding and providing a location of my daughter to DMH, along with a written description and photographs of her physical and mental deterioration. To meet the requirements to address the urgent need for her lifesaving physical and mental illness treatment.

The departments that were providing outreach were AOT and FSP teams at their discretion. Social workers from FSP teams recognize urgent needs and arrange for entry into the Recovery Center Redgate.

My husband I drove from the Antelope Valley to Redgate -- to pick her up and take her to Redgate one Tuesday morning because she had agreed to go from the counselors. Even though we pleaded for her to go, she wouldn't go with us. And our hopes were smashed once again because there was no counselor there with us to help us get her into Redgate. Without the necessary and significant interventions, right now, my daughter's suffering, may end in the deaths in the streets of Los Angeles. As stated in Star Wars, Obi-Wan "Kenobi, You're My Only Hope." Please help me save my daughter's life. Thank you.

**Osbee Sangster** obo Los Angeles County Black Client Coalition Inc.

Good day! Speaking on behalf of the Black Los Angeles County Client Coalition, Inc.

BLACCC's advocacy effort as part of our vision to live our value of continuous improvement.

A generous (donor) in support of BLACCC's digital literacy effort: to help the greatest number of people.

Are you in need of access to the digital world? The Black Los Angeles County Client Coalition's Literacy Project - has launched and providing technology to communities in Los Angeles County needy stakeholders / Give-Away H/P Chromebook computers to help provide access to digital inclusion that includes Free self-paced online course where individuals can learn basic computer skills, one full year of I/T support, a full year computer warranty and or replacement.

In addition, we can help you apply for low-cost internet through the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) along with BLACCC's H/P Chromebook Intake Interview and Enrollment.

To determine if you're a LA County stakeholder eligible, for the ACP Connectivity Program?

Let's Check your eligibility.

Currently, we have a limited supply; however, expecting more digital devices in the future to assist with technology, digital literacy, and internet resources ongoing.

"I would like to Echo the same concern and sentiment that Hector Ramirez stated about: the Feedback for MHSA Annual Update Proposals."

I would be remised today; not to mention "Black History Month" and in close with a motivational quote:

"IF YOU CAN'T FLY, THEN RUN,  
IF YOU CAN'T RUN, THEN WALK,  
IF YOU CAN'T WALK, THEN CRAWL,  
BUT BY ALL MEANS, KEEP MOVING"  
- Martin Luther King Jr.

#### **4. Updates/Action Items**

##### **a. Committee/Ad Hoc Proposals**

###### **i. Established**

1. AOT - No update

###### **ii. Under Consideration**

1. MHSA – No update
2. Data Notebook/Commission Annual Report – Nothing to report
3. Retreat Planning – Motion made to establish the retreat planning committee: Moved by Commissioner Molina, second by Commissioner Friedman

Ayes: Commissioners Austria, Commissioner Dalglish, Commissioner Root  
Commissioner Weissman, Commissioner Cooperberg, Commissioner Barbour,  
Commissioner Friedman, Commissioner Stevens, Commissioner Sanabria,  
Commissioner Molina, Commissioner Schallert

Motion carries to establish retreat planning committee

4. Community Engagement - Motion made to create outreach committee, moved by Commissioner Sanabria, second by Commissioner Cooperberg  
Ayes: Commissioner Root, Commissioner Friedman, Commissioner Barbour  
Commissioner Austria, Commissioner Stevens, Commissioner Dalglish  
Commissioner Sanabria, Commissioner Cooperberg, Commissioner Schallert  
Motion carries to create outreach committee

- b. Commissioner update - No report
- c. MHC Bylaws – Commissioner Molina and Commissioner Dalglish will resume the bylaws ad hoc committee. The bylaws will remain an action item on the March 23 agenda to bring back in April 2023.
- d. MHC Roles - No update

## 5. Presentations/Reports

- a. **MHSA Presentation (Kalene Gilbert, LAC-DMH MHSA Administration and Oversight Division) ([link](#))**

Ms. Gilbert provided an update on the following MHSA topics:

- i. MHSA Plan Approval Process, Current Adjustments, Update and Plan Forward
- ii. Redesigning Stakeholder Engagement Strategies and the Community Planning Process
- iii. Innovations Proposals

- b. **DMH Update (Connie D. Draxler, Acting Chief Deputy Director) ([link](#))**

Ms. Draxler provided updates on the following topics:

- i. DMH Hiring Efforts to Date FY 2021-22
- ii. DMH Hiring Efforts: Leadership Positions – January 2023
- iii. Local Emergency for Homelessness: Declarations & Proclamations
- iv. Local Emergency for Homelessness: Directives
- v. Local Emergency for Homelessness: Strategic Missions
- vi. Local Emergency for Homelessness: Hiring
- vii. Local Emergency for Homelessness: Spending

- c. **DMH Finance Report (Kimberly Nall, Administrative Deputy III) (agenda item tabled to 3/23/2023)**

- d. **DMH Legislative Updates (Cynthia Wheaton, Legislative Analyst) (agenda item tabled to 3/23/2023)**

- e. **Stakeholder Groups (SALTs/UsCCs/CCC Reports)**

**Sophia Rodriguez, SALT 3 Co-Chair (report received via email – 2/23/2023)**

### **Meeting Overview**

SALT 3 Members were welcomed back. The meeting was started with a moment of silence for the victims of the Monterey Shooting. SALT 3 members were also given the opportunity to share a few words. SALT 3 received update information for Dept. of Mental Health, Healthy Neighborhood, and the stakeholders. Members were provided updates on upcoming SALT 3 events for the 2023 year including Mental Health Awareness Month. SALT 3 was provided with a budget update. A plan to form a committee for a Juneteenth celebration was identified. Members provided feedback on upcoming 2023 events and meetings. SALT Members learned about community resources.

### **Meeting Presentations**

Our SALT members received information from Hillside, including information on the resource center offering numerous community-based programs and services that provide parenting classes, mental health support, and additional crucial resources for vulnerable children and families throughout Los Angeles County, including the San Gabriel Valley and Pasadena. They also shared about the emotional or behavioral challenges, can thrive. Youth Moving On, with support from The

Every Child Foundation, provides youth formerly in foster care with affordable quality housing and numerous support services to help them become responsible, self-sufficient adults. They provided information on the referral process. This organization will collaborate with the members and stakeholders of SALT 3. We also had a presenter from the YWCA of San Gabriel Social Change & Equity Program present on Black History Month, he shared information on the African American Community within the San Gabriel Valley and discussed Mental Health in the African American Community.

### **Goals Achieve**

In last month's meeting SALT 3 members identified that they would like SALT 3 meeting to share resources specific to different cultures. In honor of Black History Month, we invited a resource to discuss Mental Health in the African American Community and specific factors related to the San Gabriel Valley. We also discussed speakers for the upcoming month.

### **Group Questions or Concerns**

No group questions or concerns listed in the report.

### **Additional Comments**

No additional comments listed in the report.

### **Paul Stansbury, SALT 8 Co-Chair (report received via email – 2/23/2023)**

#### **Meeting Overview**

SALT 8 met on February 3, 2023. At the meeting the African American and Black History month was acknowledged, and resources provided to members and participants to learn more about it and to celebrate the month. Mental health resources were reviewed and made available for those impacted by recent mass shooting incidents in Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay including "mental Health and Stress after an Emergency" and "Supporting Through Recovery Booklet from DMH. Resources were provided in a variety of languages.

The Children's Institute submit proposal for a new school based mental health site and was approved by the SALT.

The SALT was briefed on the current planning process and the CLT planning sessions for the MHSA Mid-Year Adjustment, FY 23-24 plan and the and the FY 24-27 Three Year Plan and encouraged to provide comments and participate in the various meetings in the process. The Co-chairs indicated that the process was an important opportunity to provide input as stakeholders and information had been sent and was available. The Co-Chairs in the CLT meetings were responding based on the SALT priorities that had been developed over the preceding meetings. The SALT 8 priorities were review and the members were asked to respond to survey regarding the themes in the priority discussions.

At the SALT 8 meeting Scott Hanada announced his retirement as Service Area 8 chief and was thanked for these many years of service and contributions of service to DMH, the community, and persons with mental health conditions and their families. Jennifer Bailey Hernandez will be acting in his place and was introduced. Dr. Lori Willis is continuing as the other Service Area Chief for Service Area 8.

#### **Meeting Presentations**

Dr. Liliana Hernandez from the Children's Institute presented their proposal for a new school based mental health site.

**Goals Achieve**

SALT 8 in the previous couple of meetings has been able to compile survey results, have breakout discussions, receive input on priorities and identify the top priorities. Resources and materials on the MHSA process have been distributed to members and participants. Members have been encouraged to participate and provide input.

**Group Questions or 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 are going concerns 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 is discussing possibility of having in person meetings and possibly the May meeting would be in person. Attendance has been very good at meetings but has been considerable interest in having some in person meetings.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Dagleish moved to adjourn, Commissioner Cooperberg second, meeting adjourned. (Meeting adjourned 1:27 PM)