

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Minutes

November 8, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Stakeholders Present:

Maria Arauco, Carol Chung, Angela Davis, Racquel Decipeda, Erik Escareno, Cody Hanable, Norio Iwahori, Amy Kay, Angy Kaufman, Natalia Magana, Junko Nagamatsu, Christian Ponciano, Alex Reynoso, Hector Ramirez, Richer San, Maria Tan, Gabriela Velasquez, Irma Velasquez, Ann-Marie Yamada

DMH Staff and Mental Health Commission Representative Present:

Angel Baker, Robert Byrd, Stacy Dalgleish, Alex Elliott, Cary Grier, Oliver Harris, Laura Kerr, Martha Ortiz, Tracy Tisino, Elaine Waldman

ASL Interpreters:

Desiree and Sharon, Translations4all, Inc.

Spanish Language Interpreters:

Alex and Lucy, Translations4all, Inc.

CART Transcriber:

Richard Farrell, Total Recall Captioning, Inc.

Agenda Item	Discussion and Recommendation
Welcome	Co-Chairs Hector Ramirez and Dr. Alison Freeman welcomed the group; Dr. Freeman led a moment of silence in memory of the four deaf people who recently died in the mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine, and for all the people killed by violence. She noted that in Maine, there are robust, responsive services and programs for deaf community members. Hector

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	<p>noted that people with disabilities are often left behind in community disasters.</p> <p>Hector gave a brief overview of meeting etiquette. Speaking slowly and turning on the camera if using a computer help to create an inclusive meeting environment.</p>
Approval of Minutes	<p>Richer San motioned to approve the October meeting minutes, and Dr. Alison Freeman seconded the motion.</p>
Community Accessibility Resources	<p>Alex Elliott updated the group on his new responsibilities as ADA Coordinator for the Department. He shared that he is working with the Public Information Office staff to increase access for people with disabilities to the website using specialized tools. He is working with a DMH team to develop clear guidance on ADA accommodations for in-person meetings, activities, and events.</p> <p>Alex shared his curated selection of community accessibility resources for the month (also posted on the UsCC webpage: Access for All UsCC - Department of Mental Health (lacounty.gov))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BenefitsCal https://benefitscal.com/ A new, improved experience to apply for and manage your benefits. BenefitsCal is a one-stop-shop to apply for: Medi-Cal CalFresh

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	<p>CalWORKs CMSP (County Medical Services Program) Disaster CalFresh GA/GR (General Assistance and General Relief)</p> <p>You can log into your account to make sure Medi-Cal has your current: Address Phone number Email address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/senior-and-disabled.html This page includes information on Los Angeles County DPSS services tailored to support our senior population and persons with disabilities.• American Community Survey 2025 Content Changes Federal Register Notice – Bureau of the Census - Comments Due Date: Dec 19, 2023 https://www.regulations.gov/document/USBC-2023-0009-0001 “The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment on the proposed revision of the American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey, prior to the submission of the information collection request (ICR) to OMB for approval.”
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Disability—The series of six disability questions are being revised to capture information on functioning in a manner that reflects advances in the measurement of disability and is conceptually consistent with the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) disability framework (World Health Organization, 2001). Changes include using graded response categories to reflect the continuum of functional abilities (the current questions use a dichotomous yes or no response), reordering the questions, and modifying question text. Additionally, a new question will ask about difficulties related to psychosocial and cognitive disability in addition to problems with speech.”

- **Together for Wellness - Resources**

<https://www.togetherca.org/>

Everyone needs some support sometimes. Together for Wellness is a collaborative effort to connect Californians to the best resources available for emotional health and wellness.

We've partnered to help put together digital resources (like apps, websites, articles, and videos) that can help people through stressors they are facing in their daily lives.

This site is always growing, so come back soon for updates!

- **Fact Sheet: President Biden Issues Executive Order on Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence**

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements->

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[releases/2023/10/30/fact-sheet-president-biden-issues-executive-order-on-safe-secure-and-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence/](#)

On 10/30/23, President Biden is issued an Executive Order to establish new standards for Artificial Intelligence safety and security, privacy, equity and civil rights.

- **Accessibility tools for Microsoft Teams**

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/accessibility-tools-for-microsoft-teams-2d4009e7-1300-4766-87e8-7a217496c3d5>

This page contains an overview of the accessibility tools and features available in Microsoft Teams.

- **Microsoft Accessibility Checker**

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f>

This page contains an overview of how to use the Accessibility Checker for various types of documents

- **LACDMH Accessibility Resources Page**

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/resources/accessibility-resources/>

LACDMH supports the well-being of our County residents and communities of all abilities. We have compiled a collection of resources, please feel free to explore and share them with your loved ones and communities.

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Co-Chairs' Perspectives	Hector highlighted the importance of recognizing disability culture and ADA accommodations for meetings and services, and shared that County, State, and federal policies vary.
Cody Hanable, MHSA Community Planning Team Representative	<p>Cody gave an update on the MHSA planning process and on his efforts to have DMH prioritize accessibility in its programs and communications. He shared that the DMH-funded UCLA wellbeing training-related emails have not included a link to request ADA accommodations, for example, and that this lack of access is an underlying issue that needs to be addressed for equitable, quality services and programs.</p> <p>Cody shared that parenting and home visitation were discussed during recent sessions of the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) planning. He emphasized the importance of lived experiences in these efforts. Also, Cody shared that the location of the MHSA Community Planning Team meetings is St. Anne's, which previously had a vibrant deaf services program which was not continued.</p>
Group Discussion	Angy K suggested that each program have its own ADA coordinator. Hector shared that it is exhausting and frustrating to experience lack of ADA access in meetings. He shared his appreciation for everyone attending the Access for All meetings, to advance shared goals.
DMH Managers' Updates	Angel Baker presented an update on DMH staffing. One more staff member is joining the ADA group, to focus on resolving ADA complaints. DMH managers are contemplating hiring a consultant to support ADA efforts, and the team will be tasked with implementing many of ASL infrastructure development recommendations made by Access for All Co-Chairs.

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	<p>Angel shared that the work of her team is progressing, and that she will be making monthly updates at the Access for All meetings.</p> <p>In response, Dr. Freeman thanked Angel for the update and highlighted the critical impact of language deprivation that further disenfranchises people who are deaf and hard of hearing. She emphasized the importance of hiring clinicians who are deaf or hard of hearing at DMH. Hector shared that systemic change is needed. Richer San, who co-chairs the Asian, Pacific Islander UsCC, expressed solidarity with co-chairs Hector and Dr. Freeman.</p>
UsCC Co-Chair Elections	<p>The UsCC is going to hold an election to select a Co-Chair to fill Cody Hanable's seat. Racquel Decipeda shared that she is interested in presenting as a candidate. Racquel co-founded the Hearts for Sight Foundation. Dr. Erik Escareno shared that he would be willing to present as a candidate as well. The DMH UsCC bylaws include eligibility rules for serving as a Co-Chair and for voting, and these bylaws are in process of revision by the members of the combined group of Co-Chairs from across all DMH UsCCs.</p>
Discussion on Unmet Needs of People who are Blind or Visually Impaired in Los Angeles County	<p>Concluding the series of brainstorming sessions for MHSA community planning held during three Access for All meetings, the group offered the following input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical need to address the mental health impact on people who are adjusting to changes in vision• Critical need to recruit people with disabilities, including people who are blind and low vision• Critical need for incentives to retain staff with disabilities

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to coordinate with physicians who are serving patients at risk of blindness and living with low vision• Need to partner with faith-based organizations in diverse communities• Need to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, including strengths and needs of people with diverse disabilities• Need to identify good clinical placements for social workers with diverse disabilities who are completing their training• Need to create a certification program for training people with disabilities in social work
ASL Interpreter Service Utilization Overview	<p>Mirtala Parada-Ward presented a brief overview of preliminary ASL interpreter service utilization data across both Directly Operated (DO) and the Legal Entity (LE), community-based providers. She noted that the number of requests for ASL interpreters for clients' clinical appointments is increasing significantly, and that she is promoting awareness of the procedures for accessing ASL services with contracted ASL interpretation providers.</p> <p>Angy asked about the time frame for accessing services, including in emergencies, and Junko asked about cancellation policies. More information will be provided in upcoming Access for All meetings.</p> <p>Dr. Freeman shared that working with contracted ASL interpreters and having data are not as important as having an ASL fluent clinician who can serve DMH clients. Amy Kay also emphasized that it is cost-effective to have a clinician who works in ASL, rather than having to pay for both a clinician and an interpreter for each client appointment.</p>

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	<p>Mirtala shared that the proposed plan that the managers are advancing includes hiring a clinician who is ASL fluent; preferably who is deaf/hard of hearing. At this time, an ASL interpreter is being hired full-time at DMH, and this staff person will report to Dr. Sandra Chang. In the coming budget year, the plan is to bring on another full-time ASL interpreter.</p>
Next Meeting	<p>The next meeting will take place on Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 12/13/2023, 10 AM to 12 PM.</p>