

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Meeting Summary

December 13, 2023
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Microsoft Teams

Stakeholders Present:

Wendy Cabil, Dallian Carter, Racquel Decipeda, Erik Escareno, Alison Freeman, Yael Hagen, Aaron Icedo, Carol Kou, Oscar Lopez, Sujey Martinez, Mercedes Moreno, Sarah Murad, Junko Nagamatsu, Christian Ponciano, Lourdes Rabello, Hector Ramirez, Jennifer Stark, Maria Tan, Rosy Tellez, Ruth Wen

DMH Staff and Mental Health Commission Representative Present:

Jennifer Alquijay, Alex Elliott, Oliver Harris, Eron Johnson, Jenny Nguyen, Mirtala Parada-Ward, Tracy Tisino, Suyapa Umanzor, Elaine Waldman, Keith Wells

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 and reviewed the UsCC Code of Conduct.
Approval of Minutes	Junko Nagamatsu moved to approve the November meeting minutes, and Mercedes Moreno seconded the motion.
Co-Chairs' Report	Co-Chairs Hector Ramirez and Dr. Alison Freeman shared some thoughts for the New Year, including that this UsCC may want a hybrid (in-person and virtual) meeting. They also shared that this stakeholder

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Meeting Summary

December 13, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

	<p>group seeks to include all persons with disabilities, and the UsCC name and logo should not be limited to people who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, and/or have physical disabilities.</p> <p>The Co-Chairs recommended that meetings using a CART transcription have the link placed in the chat multiple times throughout the meeting, as a best practice. Furthermore, they shared that the MHSA process was not accessible due to having only in-person discussions and voting. People who have COVID, and must stay home, were excluded from participating. They asked that the list of MHSA priority recommendations generated during a series of Access for All meetings be shared with all members of this UsCC. There are ongoing challenges for community members with disabilities to access and use Microsoft Teams. Co-Chair Hector Ramirez remarked, "Access is love."</p> <p>They shared that elections for the third Co-Chair seat will take place in January, with a transparent process, and that a UsCC retreat may be held in May, with a facilitator who would be selected by this UsCC for this purpose. More discussion to come.</p>
DMH Updates and Group Discussion	<p>Alex Elliott, DMH ADA Coordinator, self-identified as a person with disabilities. He prepared a monthly update of community resources relevant to people with disabilities and the listing was emailed to the UsCC members. The Department of Public Health's COVID testing, EBT/Cal Fresh information, and the Friendship Line were highlighted. This list was also posted on the UsCC website: Access for All UsCC - Department of Mental Health (lacounty.gov)</p>

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Meeting Summary

December 13, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

Mirtala Parada-Ward shared that the first ASL interpreter is in the final stage of the hiring process; the process for DMH to bring on staff can take four months. The selected candidate has 23 years of experience. Mirtala shared that all DMH job bulletins now have a supplemental question focusing on ASL fluency, and candidates can receive extra points on their job application if they have experience or certification in ASL. Andrea Grimes, the DMH clinician who is fluent in ASL, will be evaluating candidates' fluency in ASL.

In response to Dr. Freeman's question about if DMH is actively recruiting a clinician fluent in ASL, Mirtala responded that one community-based ("legal entity") provider is experiencing challenges with logistics, and that DMH met with GLAAD (Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness) last month. Mirtala said that there is a shortage of clinicians locally and nationally, and the Department is increasing recruitment efforts.

Carol Kou shared that there is a significant problem of trust in the community. Co-Chair Dr. Alison Freeman emphasized that there is tension and a huge gap in services, since 2015 when St. John's in Santa Monica closed because Providence Hospital took over. Many clinicians do not accept Medi-Cal or Medicare. Mercedes Moreno shared that the salary is too low. Dr. Erik Escareno shared that the 2-Spirit, peer-led organization they lead see the frustration in the community that the County moves too slowly, and the lack of deaf-centric mental health services and lack of mental health professionals serving deaf clients is an emergency. They shared that other organizations want to contract

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Meeting Summary

December 13, 2023
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Microsoft Teams

	<p>with DMH, and that proposals to establish a pipeline for relevant programs are being ignored.</p> <p>Co-Chair Hector Ramirez shared that the only proposals submitted to MHSA from consumers and UsCC members were Dr. Escareno's and theirs, and they have not been addressed. Mirtala Parada-Ward said she would follow up on these proposals.</p>
Announcements	<p>New UsCC member Yael Hagen, with PASC-LA, shared that she chairs Access Services. Mercedes Moreno shared that the Latino physical disabilities group, comprised of people who experienced injuries during their immigration journey, meets every other Friday.</p> <p>Mirtala Parada-Ward introduced the new UsCC manager, Dr. Jennifer Alquijay. Dr. Alquijay will oversee the UsCCs, including Access for All. Jennifer Stark, of Disability Rights California, shared that for two years, her organization has been working on a settlement with the Department of Justice and a federal court in Northern California to stop the unnecessary institutionalization of people in Alameda County.</p> <p>Co-Chair Hector Ramirez expressed concerns that DMH management needs to listen to this UsCC and ensure the wellbeing of staff. Co-Chair Dr. Alison Freeman that this UsCC's recommendations are not taken seriously by DMH, given the deep, long-lasting impact of language deprivation on lack of community participation, lack of access to quality care, and lack of services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing in Los Angeles County.</p>

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Meeting Summary

December 13, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

	The Co-Chairs were thanked for their leadership and dedication throughout the year, and the staff liaison was thanked for her work.
Next Meeting	The next meeting will take place on Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 1/10/2024, 10 AM to 12 PM.