



PUBLIC COMMENT TO ADDRESS THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION  
 April 25, 2024, Mental Health Commission Regular Meeting and SA8 Townhall  
 (IN PERSON AND BY PHONE) TRANSCRIPT AND EMAIL ATTACHMENTS

The following individuals addressed the Commission either in person or by phone during this meeting. Emailed communication is attached separately.				
Agenda #	Name	Method used to address the Commission (e.g., By phone, in-person, or email)	Type of Public Comment (e.g., General or Stakeholder Report)	Comments
Public Comment				
	John	In Person	General	Thank you! We go way back. I started out with the County as a client. I was in community services for about 8 years, and I got better, and they hired me. And that's how it all started. The thing is, over the years, I realized that our self-help, our peers, that's where the recovery actually starts. I started off with as a mental health advocate, went to community worker, senior community worker and that's where it stops. I would like to advocate for a career path for us, so we can move on. I work at the [] Hall, and we do need other resource centers. Our area is big. We should start with 2, then 4, and I do know that groups are the main focus of what we do. Well, not the main focus, but what we noticed lately, there's a high population of clients that are coming in, and we're limited in the size of our clinic group-wise. We're having to turn people away from our groups, and that really affects me personally. I am not sure how we can address that, but if there's a way, I appreciate it. Thank you very much.
	Martin	In person	General	Nice to meet you. I am happy. I started from the bottom, and I have taken medication, and I am in group therapy, and it is very important. And it is my support, my wellbeing, and my hope, and we have to pass it. And we have to go to people. Don't be afraid to get help, the help is there. Look for the resources. I had to do that, too. I did that at 20. And that was search years ago, and it is very fortunate for me and for my mental illnesses, and I became a worker, And I made my way up. If I can make it up higher, good. If not, we need more resources and groups and to teach them the

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				<p>right thing. And they are there to help them out, and our agenda, and we're there to take them, support them, and we want to do it together and do the process the right way. What I want to accomplish, it can be good, but I want people to realize, the help and more resources, therapists, and to be there and help and support us. And making sure we have the right trainings, the right people doing the job, and making sure that they want to go back to the groups. That's what we want to focus on. You guys are doing a really good job, and things that can be fixed. I am not the person to tell you, and we need more resources and people coming to groups. And resources, get there, and it is a hard thing to do. I want to become a yellow badge, not green.</p>
	Victor	In Person	General	<p>My name is Victor, and I came to the group that, and I am confusing names, Martin, John, and I have known them a long time. Ten years at the old clinic. It helped my self-esteem, my bipolar, and I won't take much time. I am glad to be with you today. Thank you very much.</p>
	Shirley Jones	In person	General	<p>I would like to bring something to your attention, and that's the diagnoses of seniors, 60 and older. This is what I have been dealing with for the last 20 years. Previously, it has been depression, but I have run into quite a few barriers, low-income, and receiving adequate help with people with ADH D. I have physical and mental condition. Physical is no problem. I have been a type I for 42 years, rheumaty arthritis, 22 years, and this is more of a problem. And ADHD is quite different than younger people. This has messed with managing my daily life and I have yet to find help for it. I am talking a different language. ADHD experts know all about it, but the mental health, it is a foreign language. This is all I have been going through, trying to make people understand. ADHD and older people. How much time do I have left? Okay. I have a crack cocaine history and medication and staying away from stimulants. That's the treatment for ADHD. I have lost weight, and some of</p>

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				them have intensified my emotions. The CDC, their number one problem with everybody is loneliness. I isolate myself because people do not understand this. Not only family members, but the mental health agency, also. I keep trying and I am a long-term care advocate for seniors at nursing homes. And that's what keeps me going, advocating for myself.
	Maria Meon	In Person	General	[Speaking Spanish]. Hello. My name is Maria Meon. South Bay. First of all, I want to thank God and all of our coordinators at South Bay. I wanted to thank each one of you for your help, and our directors. And thank you to everyone for making it possible for the resources provided so we can be the way we are. Coming from a mother of a child with mental health, I understand, and I wanted to say thank you very much.
	Anonymous	In Person	General	Good afternoon, commissioners, stakeholders, elected officials, if they are here, and to the local advocates. The first thing I wanted to address, something I heard when DDH was doing their presentation, and the statement of mental health, and they made a statement with the connection of the phone on the mental health services and the call back. When someone is in a crisis situation, they are suicidal, you want them to call you back? There should be some type of mechanism put in place, if there's some kind of disconnect for the provider to be able to reach back out to them and call them. There's no way that I can have someone who is suicidal, acting their right mind. Let me call them back. I need someone to talk to. It is an oversight, but a very detrimental one. Stakeholder engagement. Talking about stakeholder engagement, what do we mean? Talking about engaging our service providers, local advocates and peer review partners. What's the plan of engagement? Do we have a system of training put in place, not only for the providers, but the advocates? Do we have a training program put into place for peer advocates, and I want to make sure

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				for public engagement. When a commissioner speaks about community engagement, what does that mean? What's the definition, the processes, and what do we have to do to get the community in line to support the Commission as you support us? We need clear, standard operations for community engagement, thank you very much.
	Rick	In person	General	Thank you, Honorable Chairman, Commissioners, staff and stakeholders. And I want to say thank you for taking the show on the road here. We would like to remind you, everything you said with Dr. Wong, and make sure you look at us stakeholders when you are starting the implementation, and we have a lot of lived experience. I work with families now in Norwalk's office and attorneys, and now it is a peer court, good kept secret. There's a question about BMH and MH, Behavioral Health. Mental Health. Why not call it Behavioral and Mental Health? BMH, a family. And I went out to the harbor, and Brittney knows what I am talking about. We used to have all of those bulletin boards. I would like to bring those back, all through L.A. County, and especially in UCLA, our brand-new facility campus. I talked to all of the chiefs here, little chief Rick, here, and have a Powwow, you heard it loudly today. We do want that to be brought to the UCLA campus and bring it with Honorable Hahn. Mary Bass will be there at the walk, and so will some of the congressman will honor the congressman in [Spanish], and throughout the country, and please, come out on May 4th. God bless you. Please, come to my talk, Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. at the Diana restaurant. Thank you.
	Brooke	In person	General	>> Hello. My name is Brooke. I am an alumni, so to speak, with San Pedro Mental Health. I have been with NAMI since 2017, active participant of LGBTQIA+2-S. I am a recipient of medical, and about to lose my services-based on cost. They want me to pay

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				<p>\$1732 a month, based on the cost -- or the fee, income, determined in 1989 of \$600 a month, based on the minimum wage at that time of \$4.25. Obviously, that's ludicrous. It is supposed to change come January 1, 2025. However, I am left in the dust. And I am being seen currently by 14 providers and have 18 different appointments already scheduled. I have a surgery scheduled for April 30. What am I supposed to do? I am a Social Security and disability recipient. And I have autism and ADHD, and there are no services for me as an individual. Where do I go? That's ridiculous! And nothing is being done about it in all of these years. I have never seen legislation, anything brought up. With that \$600, it is just ridiculous. That's all I have to say.</p>
	Anonymous	In person	General	<p>I just want to bring this to your attention. Our first responders and the lack of their mental health care. Not only our police, fire department, medical staffs and are recently affected my family, and the one individual that just recently died by suicide was in the facility, and []. We need to not only take care of our peers, family members, we also need to look at taking care of the first responder, people taking care and looking out for our lives.</p>
	Anonymous	In person	General	<p>Thank you so much, Commissioner, for inviting us and giving us necessary information. I also want to thank Service Area Team 8 and your mission, mental health, of course, and also CEOs and county departments and giving information for topics that are relevant like care and self-help, and of course, the Southern California Black Chamber of Commerce, and other facilities, too. Very important. I am glad I got the information for community members. I believe this event is very, very, very relevant to Service Area Leadership Team 5 because we see exactly what they do and hopefully, we can grow. We can grow just like them. As a Co-Chair, of course. I have fought for many different events, and bless Black History Month, Juneteenth, and I was told it was a no-go, and I want to make sure about this Juneteenth. African American people</p>

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				are reluctant, and I don't know, due to that particular communication that we don't receive when we speak up and speak out. It is important that we get data and statistics from that particular audience, and make it so that those numbers go down, as far as mental health, but everyone is invited to our event, and hopefully, we'll have an event on Juneteenth. I am fighting for that. Everyone is welcome.
	Joanne Freeman	In person	General	Hello, everyone. My name is Joanne Freeman, and I will be really quick because I have been known to talk -- I don't know. The thing is, I have been clean and sober. And I say that not to brag. I say that because I was a Department of Mental Health, will be mental health, and I did my treatment program as safe refuge, used to be called substance abuse foundation. I needed both. And at least I cannot have one without the original. You see when Prop 1 came about, it's like this here. When I was traumatized at a young age, and next thing you know, young people I hung out with. And mental condition, and I self-medicated. It's like this here. How in the world can you put more money into one and not put more into the other. The two go hand in hand, in my opinion. I provide feedback and program and services, community mental health promoter, worked for the Department of Mental Health for three years, and I thank them so much, and thank you Susan Shea. She helped me so much and awesome, and I had her for 14 years, and she always told me. "That little kid is going to come out." Giving self-care. You understand how important it is to have self-care, self-love. I have been doing that for since I was 13 and promoted for 3 years to part-time. Part-time for 3 years. Has this been a part-time career? And I haven't been promoted yet, but like the person before me, I, too, am behind on my represent. I, too, my credit is being messed up. I need help to be promoted.

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	Santa Marios	In Person	General	<p>Thank you to all of you. My name is Santa Marios, Director of Parents Without Partners, Parents Anonymous. It is awesome that you heard what we had to say, and we still have yet to be spoken with regarding our proposal submitted. Another thing I wanted to say, being a part of CPP, I felt like an object in the room. That's another thing I think that needs to be addressed when brought to the table. Another thing I want to throw out quickly. Getting here. How many people are having a hard time to get here? How many people who have problems with their children, how many are here? I don't know. And I am a parent struggling with mental health. And talking about male or female. I don't have a behavioral problem, but a mental health issue. And when that's not addressed, you have an individual with three months in recovery, being amazing, and I am thriving with amazing children. Talking about mental health, I want to bring up my brother-in-law who passed. Not only from mental health, but a heart attack. And when his mental health was not addressed, the addiction took over, and the disrespect received in the streets, it is -- everything by their side is taken. That's ugliness. Where's their support? The other thing because the Parents Anonymous, the kid is at school because of that help line.</p>
	Mario Lopez	In Person	General	<p>Hello, my name is Mario Lopez, and thank you to the Commissioners and thank you to the students. I was very touched with her frustration and everything we need. I also welcome you guys. This is my hometown, and I am proud to have all of you for the first time in 45 years that I am here. I am also an employee for the Department of Mental Health for the past 20 years, working with the Wellness Center, and I was nominated the community worker. Here from Carson. And also, the waterworks for the area for the year, for the whole county, that's Guerra. I have come a long way, and I come from the university, and also my son, 26 years</p>

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				old. A very educated guy, an adult now, but I started as a single mom, and I want to share, everything is possible with the help with the Department of Mental Health, with the peers, and I started as a peer, a volunteer, and always here. And my fellow workers said, we need more help to start growing up. We deserve more than we have.
	Sue	In Person	General	<p>Good afternoon. My name is Sue -- it is a new name, after the Covid. [Laughing] And I come here, and I could -- not many people today, but I used to be in the [ ] field, and the daughter -- don't laugh, but some people passed away during Covid, and this is a very sad situation.</p> <p>&gt;&gt; MICHAEL MOLINA: Ma'am, could you put the microphone closer?</p> <p>&gt;&gt; I will. And that is not to -- person to person, and that's very important for the mental health community. And the food, and you know, to see each other, that's very essential. Also, the presentation, 988, and that also people have a -- like a TV, you know, the screen to person to person, and that's the next topic for the category. I hope you are doing good and thank you for this opportunity. And God bless you.</p>
	Kas	In person	General	<p>Hello, I am KAS, and Regional Manager at Parents Anonymous, I am also at ACPP and SPP stakeholder. I want to appreciate the fact last time we met, we were really disappointed there were no people in the room, and today, the room is really full.</p> <p>[Applause] I am really glad to hear that, but I also want to mention the concerns I have for the community planning process for MHSA, and we have actively participated in this process and expressed concerns there were parents and caregivers, who are constituents and lived these things, and not adequately represented due to holding all meetings during the weekday, and one in the week, and</p>

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				people are working and dropping their kids off to school.
	Katina Davis	In person	General	Hello, my name is Katina Davis, I'm sorry I am a little horse. I work for project return. I am the coordinator for SA8. You know we are having problems and I want us to address it. Where people are hurting the homeless. I understand they are free to sleep wherever they want. But on people's lawns, they are putting hot water on them throwing things. We can not have that. You know because they are suffering, I want us to go out and get a team to reach out to the non-verbal, the ones that are afraid of people, don't want to be in the shelter, don't want to be touched, or want to stay dirty because they want to be ignored. We need to walk up to them and let them know that they are human and their existence matters. It just bothers me, a lot of them are committing suicide. My son did that 2 years ago and he was homeless. He was schizophrenic, and I want us to really reach out to them and let them know we love them, know, just like I love all of you. That's what I do, everyday on zoom. I go to boarding cares I wash their face, I let them know that I love them and their existence matters to me and from this day forth I will always reach out to them. So you know help me get a team, help me.
	Anonymous	In person	General	Hey everybody. I'm glad you all came out to this MH commission meeting. I organically didn't know what I was going to say but I live in Commerce, I finally went to my city council and said what I have been doing for 7 years. And that's with, I started off with project return. I took their certificate. I eventually was able to do 2 groups that I am currently having. I finally announced because my boss said ok you 1 group you can no longer do phone calls, covid is over. I said where am I going to do this? He said McDonalds, Starbucks. That day that it was election time and I was ready for my exercise class, I go: oh my god they re not here. Why? Because the machines were not in there. So I go: what am I going to do for an hour? I walked passed the parking lot and there was my uh, uh, uh, senior center. So I walked in and they go hey Ivonne where have you been? And I go: Oh my god, this is where I am going to do my second group right? So its been on since the first Wednesday of April. So

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				Now I just want to also share, but what I first want to really say is, I want you guys to come to the council meetings. Come to mines, city of Commerce. Support me, bring out the, to de-stigmatize Mental Health. I have open up my mouth now, so you have the door open. They know me so they are going to know you guys. Somebody needs to come maybe the next time I just went to the meeting on Tuesday, you can come to the last meeting of the month. And uh I have 14 seconds. I appreciate uh I didn't know what my kind of diagnosis was until I took peer to peer and family to family with NAMI. I forgot to mention NAMI last Tuesday. I mentioned project return and that I'm mentioned I'm a co-chair sa7 but that was hard.
	Sydney	In Person	General	Hi, I'm Sydney [] the new cochair for SALT 7. Hello, all new to me so I've only had my first meeting since the January, but still, it's all new to me. This will be my first event that I've attended. I just wanted to say I'm a dialysis patient. 7 years going on 8. Anyone want to give a kidney? Just kidding. I thought id throw that in there. Luckily, I'm not in a dark place. But if anyone is in a dark place, VIDEO CUT OFF NO RECORDING AVAILBLE FOR END OF COMMENT>
	Anonymous	Phone	General	.... What I am trying to find is a way to expedite the process of getting a voucher and move out of assisted living and out of congregate living and get on the transplant list and keep my benefits That pay for the surgery post op care, including the transplant rejection medicine. So, because of the medical necessity I just urge someone from the council or someone in some ethics committee to expedite the process. I am looking into this, I realize there is no response, but I just want to make that comment. Thank you for this matter.
	Osbee Sangster	Phone and Email	General	Good day my name is Osbee Sangster. Los Angeles County Mental Health Commissioners, staff, and guest. Speaking on behalf of the Black Los Angeles County Client Coalition INC. We are urging you to contact your members of congress. Asking to extend funding for the affordable connectivity program. Challenging termination, which is anticipated April 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2024. This would not only increase

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				<p>internet services cost, and row for people disproportionately impacted communities of color and those under 200 percent of the [] property line. Once again, we urge you to contact your congressional member. Be aware that congress has a role that ensuring highspeed and reliable broadband is accessible. Urge congress to include full funding for affordable connectivity program and government appropriation still. To ensure people can access broadband they desperately need. The Black Los Angeles County Client Coalition invasions a county, a country in which all people have access to broadband. Connectivity for work, school, health care advancement and build communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is critical for people in Los Angels County California, and the nation to have universal internet accessibility. The program provides individuals and families with financial assistance for broadband access to help bridge the digital divide. Congress has a role in ensuring highspeed and reliable broadband is accessible for everyone. We urge congressman Adam shift, congress member Judy Choo's offices and staff to challenge and extend ACP program as well. We implore the La County Commissioners, Staff and SALTS. If you fail to demonstrate the concern the care, if Americans cultivate, surplus passion. Our children won't be without food, shelter, quality of health care. They will REALLY cherish our babies.</p>
	Barbara Wilson	Phone	Stakeholder Report	<p>We did have our meetings and we had a very unusual topic, which was religion, spirituality and mental health. We had um a robust discussion. It seemed to go over much better than we were sort of nervous about having this. And be with the fact that there were three major religions that have special holidays during this time. That is how we reached this conclusion. Taking off that hat and put on my other hat please. I'd like to support a previous caller. Dr. Cohen that is caught between conflicting um, requirement. So, the department of mental health has a set of requirements, social security has sets of requirements. Unfortunately, this gentleman cannot even have his name be put on the list to have a transplant due to his living circumstances. Even though he has now a private room. I would</p>

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				hope and am requesting any and all assistance in collaborating and coordinating these different departments that are involved because as we know from past history, many times different departments within the county don't talk to each other. I appreciate any help we can get. I will be submitting an email.
	Andrea McPhearson	In person	Stakeholder	Hello again. My name is Andrea McPherson, fellow co-chair of SA5. During our meeting we spoke about important information about CBO's and how they gave back to the community. Relevant information about homelessness and different things like that but I will keep it nice and short due to time. We have an event coming up next. We have an event basically May 9 <sup>th</sup> . It's called "Dia de las Madres" excuse me I'm trying. A celebration and it is a dinner we are having Thursday May 9 <sup>th</sup> 6:30 to 9:30 and it's at San Clemente church. That's 3102-3rd street in Santa Monica. Every single one of you guys are welcomed to that event. We are trying to give back and give proper outreach, peer to peer and eye to eye support.

**Commissioners by Supervisorial District**

District	1 <sup>st</sup>	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Hilda L. Solis</b>	<b>Holly J. Mitchell</b>	<b>Lindsey P. Horvath</b>	<b>Janice Hahn</b>	<b>Kathryn Barger</b>
<b>Commissioners</b>	Susan Friedman	Kathleen Austria	Stacy Dalglish	Victor Manalo	Judy Cooperberg
	Bennett W. Root, Jr.	Reba Stevens	Thomas Roache	Michael Molina	Lawrence Schallert
	Imelda Padilla-Frausto	Vacant	Jaqueline Sandoval-Valenzuela	Marilyn Sanabria	Brittney Weissman

Member from LAC Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Represented by Anders Corey

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