

**Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Black & African Heritage Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC)
Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
September 5, 2024 10am-12pm**

WELCOME

Land Acknowledgement

Introductions/Check-In

Co-Chairs: Romalis Taylor and Queen Nina Womack

Attendees: Leyne Eatman, Alica Forneret, Blanca E. Watson, Renda Ingram, Candace Walker, David Piller,, Dewayne Harvey, Donnise Vonner, Erica Melbourne, Eron Johnson, Felipe Ocampo Jr., Hajar Muqtasid, Irene Ratliff, Jamie Walker, Janet Kelly, Jasmine Harris, Jasmine Sampson, Joy Ellington, Joyce Sales, Juanita Randle, Kristen Pannell, Pharoah Mitchell, Philip, Queen Nina Womack, Richard Farell, Rickie Collins, Romalis Taylor, Seun Adebowale, Tatiana Turner, Tina Beam, Wendy Cabil

DMH Admin: Dr. Chiyah A. Lawrence, Dr. Evelyn Espinoza Dr. Jennifer Alquijay, Mirtala Parada Ward

Approval of Minutes

- The August 2024 meeting minutes were approved.
 - Motion by Wendy Cabil to approve minutes and seconded by Queen Nina Womack
 - BAH UsCC Subcommittee approved June 2024 meeting minutes
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DMH Updates

Dr Jennifer Alquijay provided the following DMH Updates:

- BAH UsCC has the three projects going out to internal services division. The Homeless Outreach project is out for solicitation; the other two were pending reference quotes and are now ready for submission. The MHSA Life Links project is also out for solicitation.
- We will let the subcommittee know when the other two projects are out for solicitation

Mirtala Parada Ward provided the following update:

- The ARDI division has changed its name to ARISE (AntiRacism, Inclusion, Solidarity, and Equity). The main reason for this change is the confusion in the county due to there being a DMH ARDI division and the CEO ARDI division.
- Stakeholders are encouraged to attend listening sessions re: MHSA being replaced by BHSA to gather information.
 - BHSA will be implemented July 1, 2026
 - Prevention dollars will no longer be with DMH and will be allocated at the state level.

- DMH will be losing roughly 30% of funding for prevention programs which is important for underserved communities to understand because research says a lot of marginalized communities benefit from prevention programs.
- it is going to affect the service delivery and I want to empower community to read up and go to the BHSA website at the state level and start to pay attention on how that will impact us in LA county.
 - It is going to affect service delivery and Mirtala wants to empower the community to read up and go to the BHSA website on the state level and start to pay attention on how this change will impact us in LA county.

Jamie Walker provided an update re: MHSA Life Links Project

- The Life Links project which was started with the BAH UsCC around 8 or 10 years ago. Solicitation for the project, specifically for the BAH community, is open.
- DMH likes to look at equity and make sure that whatever we do for one group we also roll out for the other groups so that the needs of all groups are being met. Jamie is working with Dr. Horn and we will be rolling out Life Links to the other six USCC groups; we will be creating a booklet like Life Links but in other languages. It will be rolled out in phases due to staffing limitations.
- This is an MHSA project, not a BAH UsCC project. The hope is that the vendor will be an active member of the BAH UsCC, and will consult with and provide feedback to BAH UsCC whenever there is a need. The vendor ought to also be invited to present at BAH UsCC meetings and gather feedback from the subcommittee.

Capacity Building Project Proposals 25-26

Dr. Brenda Ingram presented proposals for two capacity building projects for fiscal year 2025-2026

Technical Assistance for Black Led of Black Empowering Organizations/CEOs

- Conceptualized this project to look at a training for a leadership training for organizations with a Black CEO/leadership within the Black community. One of the goals is come up with an outreach plan and I want to focus on building that capacity in the program.
- 25 Black led organizational leaders will attend a two-day summit to participate in the BLOL project.
- Will bring together experts in business to discuss financial management, community engagement and fund development including presentations by and connections with philanthropic entities and grant makers.
- Research has shown that many Black led organizations get left out of the loop in terms of money and it is not enough to just train leadership or Black leadership on how to be good leaders if there are no avenues to funding. This is a bit of doing both of those things with the ultimate outcome being using this knowledge to develop an outreach program in the community.
- The goals of the project are to develop antiracist and trauma informed Black leaders of community based organizations and increase the knowledge base of organizational

structures and operations of those who participate as well as to provide space for Black leaders to reflect innovate and create visions that transfer Black communities and connect Black led organizations with potential funding sources.

- After completing the initial summit, leaders will be able to articulate a deep understanding of the impact of racism on the community's wellbeing and strategies to mitigate the impacts through resilience activities. 65% will demonstrate knowledge about antiracist and trauma informed leadership skills. 70% percent will be able to develop an organizational plan for sustainability and 70% percent will develop an outreach plan to the Black community regarding mental health initiatives and their outcomes.
- At the end of the project year 40% of participants receive additional funding for organizations and ongoing relationships with funding entities; 45% percent are vendors for then county; 70 percent will have conducted their own community needs assessment. 70% conducted some type of strategic planning.

Questions/Discussion:

- How open is the scale - are we looking at bigger organizations or can small business owners be included in this as well?
 - We should look at organizations that are more mom and pop/we should put some parameters on who can participate so there aren't conglomerates that are applying for this workshop.
 - Dr. Ingram – I think everyone would benefit if they lead an organization regardless of their size to go through the training.
- Should the organizations have interest in background or mental health?
 - Dr. Ingram – don't think they necessarily have to be mental health focused agencies and when we are looking at the community there are a lot of nonmental health organizations that support the Black community; people need to recognize the need to how their business plan is going to incorporate mental health initiatives. We should look at all social service and human service agencies and not just mental health.
- Is it a two-day summit or a yearlong program?
 - It is a yearlong project that includes a summit and monthly coaching.
 - The summit will be in the beginning of the contract year (first month, 1 ½ months)

Black Youth Empowering Summit

- Addressing how to cope with living while Black as a teen in LA and build coping skills through social engagement (e.g., via graffiti art, teen entrepreneurship in business, wellness and holistic activities or youth boys and girls, etc.)
- Project description: the Black youth empowerment summit day is a gathering of Black en community leaders and Black youth leaders to pass on the collective wisdom and lived experiences to other Black youth to support holistic and healthy living.
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- We want this to be both community leaders: adults and any Black youth who are leading different organizations or other initiatives/projects that are out there
- One day summit
 - Human services, health care, education, arts, music industry, etc.
 - Will meet with, laugh with, eat with and build community with Black youth from: the greater Los Angeles community.
 - Opening keynote panel and they set the context for the day: to elevate the voice of Black youth in Los Angeles
- Each youth is to attend 2 1-hour workshop panels in the morning and 2 1-hour workshop panels in the afternoon
 - Youth are to complete an evaluation at the end of each of the workshops and when the evaluations are complete, receive a \$25 stipend
 - Each youth can walk away with \$100 in total for their participation in the summit
- Goal:
 - Introduce Black youth to diverse group of Black leaders and providers
 - Reduce stigma about discussing mental health illness
 - Increase knowledge for holistic health for Black youth
 - Engage black youth in positive developmental experiences increase knowledge and access to businesses and services in Los Angeles
- Outreach to Black youth through schools and after school programs, youth development programs and faith-based organizations etc.
- Recruit 100 Black youth to attend the summit
- Outcomes:
 - 60% of participants will report an understanding of mental wellness and resilience. 60% of participants report a positive experience. 50% of participants report having made three new connections from the byes day and that is the social engagement and social connections
 - ~1 month after the summit is participants report greater awareness about psychosocial stressors and participants report greater knowledge about potential careers and pathways to achieve them; participants will report greater knowledge about building healthy and positive relationships.

Alzheimer's in the Black Community

Kacie Deters gave presentation on Alzheimer's disease in the Black community

- Alzheimer's disease is a form of dementia and often there is confusion about dementia and these types of dementia and we consider it an umbrella term and a number of different types falls under
- Vascular health is one of the risk factors in black individuals
- Black individuals who is are living in America do have the highest rates of dementia relative to other ethnic or racialized group
- Deters' research lab is looking at overall genetic risk factors and what is important for risk for Black individuals
- Social conditions are important to health

- Up to 60 percent of the risk for dementia is modifiable; all of these things are modifiable if we have equal access to health care
- Your risk would be reduced and modifiable; we need policy change and equity
- People who face lifetime discrimination have worse cognition later in life
- Wellbeing - there are a number of habits we can do for the overall health
 - SUDOKU
 - Movement
- Deters lab is partnering with other researchers to build the black ageing cohort

Community Engagement

- Concerns re: budgetary impact of Prop 1
 - Stakeholders are invited to participate in the community planning team meetings for the mental health commission and the community planning team meetings
 - Questions re: budget impact of Prop 1 and transition from MHSA to BHSA will likely be answered at the public information sessions. Dr. Lawrence will send information re: BHSA webinars to subcommittee
 - It is Dr. Alquiay's understanding that the county does see the UsCCs as important and they want to prioritize making sure that budget stays in place as much possible

Community Events and Announcements

- Queen Nina Womack shared information re: an emergency town hall meeting to address California reparations (SB 1403)
 - We as black people part of the healing and mental wellbeing is to be able to feel that we have the proper restitution from the pain and suffering that our ancestors that we still carry to this day with systemic racism.
 - Thursday, September 5th at 6pm in Leimert Park (3423 W 43rd PI LA, CA 90008

Labor Acknowledgment

Upcoming Meeting: September 5, 2024 (10:00am – 12:00pm)

For more information about the BAH UsCC, please see its website:
<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/black-african-heritage-uscc/>