

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Strategic Communications Division


Eastern-European / Middle Eastern (EE/ME) UsCC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
5/28/2025

2:00PM – 4:00PM via Teleconference

Present: Nane Avagyan, Mitra Shabani, David Arakelian, Sarkis Simonian, Nelly Ghukasyan, Jibril Hussen, Rhoda Addam, Magda Kirakosyan, Karima Sudan, Jamie Walker, Rubou Sous, Josephine, Seta Haig, Mastaneh Moghadam, Amal Ibrahim, Josephine McMahan, Sydney Sonnier, Jayme Walker, Wali Hanifzai, Yue Hua Xu.

DMH Admin: Dr. Anna Yaralyan, Dr. Jennifer Alquijay, Yailin Noriega,

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone introduced themselves. • Dr. Anna Yaralyan read the Board of Supervisors Land Acknowledgement.
Meeting Minutes Review and Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed & approved 4/30/2025 EE/ME Subcommittee meeting minutes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sarkis Simonian motioned to approve & Nelly Ghukasyan second. - Minutes were accepted by subcommittee members. There were no subcommittee member objections.
DMH Updates	<p>📌 Jamie Walker & Dr. Jennifer Alquijay provided the following DMH updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May is Mental Health month! At DMH we have two events planned for Pride Month in West Hollywood. Pride events are fun; Dr. Alquijay urged everyone to attend the Pride Parade. • Dr. Yaralyan in working on finalizing the Statements of Work for the EE/ME proposed projects. • We are in the transition period from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) in California, which became effective on January 1, 2025. • LACDMH continues to have Community Planning Meetings, and we still have space for community members. We urge community members to attend these meetings. • LACDMH is looking for Armenian, Farsi & Arabic speaking Mental Health Promotors, those who are interested may apply for this position.

EE/ME Subcommittee Capacity Building Proposals FY 2023-2024	<p style="text-align: center;"> The Arabic Speaking Poetry Night Mental Health Outreach Project – Dr. Heather Laird.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vendor completed the project. • Final project summary report has been submitted and approved by DMH. The final project invoice is currently being processed.
EE/ME Subcommittee Capacity Building Updates FY 2024 - 2025	<p>Project Vendors provided updates on their CBPs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support Group and Mental Health Educational Seminars for Afghan Refugees - Qazizada Multicultural Therapy Clinic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vendor reported that the Support Group and Mental Health Educational Seminars for Afghan Refugees are going well and according to timeline. • The last seminar will be on June 14, 20205, at 7323 Reseda Blvd., Reseda, CA, 91335. The title of the presentation will be “Qazizada Afghan Support Group, A Safe Space for Afghan Voices, Healing, and Community.” The presentation will be conducted in Pashto & Dari language dialects. • The seminars focus on variety of mental health topics pertaining to the Afghan Community, including trauma, intergenerational conflicts, immigration challenges, difficulties adjusting to a new country, & the trauma from the Afghan War. • Vendor reported that there has been positive feedback from the Afghan Community members about the presentations and it is a place for them to get out of isolation, meet, and interact with each other. • The final seminar will be given in the month of June. • The Vendor will complete & submit the Final Summary Report on the project. 2. Armenian Wellness Festival Project – Nuway Express Inc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armenian Wellness Festival Project was on May 4th, 2025, at Pacific Community Center & Park. The address of the venue is 501 South Pacific Ave., Glendale, CA, 91204. • The event was successful overall as 250 participated. • The Armenian Wellness Festival included 8 mental health presentations and 8 wellness & cultural activities. • The event also had various resource tables.

- As the event was held on a Sunday, typically a day of rest, attendance was lower in the morning, likely due to people sleeping in or attending religious services. Numbers increased in the afternoon and into the later part of the day.
- Some of the event highlights included, mental health seminars tailored towards the Armenian Community, wellness activities, traditional Armenian food, live music, DJ & Dance Group, children’s activities and more.
- There were various wellness activities that were popular & well attended. This included “Jingalov Hats,” baking class. This is stuffed flat bread with herbs. The yoga class, flower arrangement class, and the art therapy were other well attended wellness activities.
- Some of the popular & well attended seminars included, “Raising Resilient Children,” “Intergenerational Trauma from the Armenian Genocide,” “Domestic Violence within the Armenian Community,” & “Depression & Anxiety.”
- The Vendor will complete & submit the Final Summary Report on the project.
- The project is going within its timeline and will be completed by the end of June 2025.

3. Armenian Poetry Circles for Mental Health - Prolific Styles LLC, Sydney Sonnier.

- Vendor reported that in the month of May total of 5 Armenian Poetry Events were completed at different Armenian Adult Day Care Centers in LA County.
- Some of the venues where the Poetry Events were held included the Ararat Mission Center, with 70 participants.
- Another poetry event was at Healthy Solutions Adult Day Health Care, at 6711 Van Nuys Blvd. Van Nuys, CA 91405, which had over 100 participants.
- Mother's Day is celebrated on Sunday, May 11th, 2025, and special poems will be read on the honor of Armenian Mothers.
- Popular and loved classical poems have been read in the Armenian language. The poems have emotional components to them and a great connection to the Armenian History & Community.
- At the next event traditional Armenian instrument “Duduk” will be played.
- The last Armenian Poetry Event will be held on June 7th, & it will be for the entire community, an Armenian Traditional Dance Group might be performing for adults, children & families.
- Vendor continues to identify venues for the Armenian MH Poetry Events, such as Armenian Adult Daycare Centers, community public libraries, senior centers, and children’s day care centers.
- The project is going within its timeline and will be completed by the end of June 2025.

- The Vendor will complete & submit the Final Summary Report on the project.

4. The Arabic Coffee & Tea Project – Karima Sudan Organization.

- Vendor reported that they completed two events; May 18 & 25, and around 99 people participated.
- The event was held on May 25, 2025, 2pm – 6pm. Titled “Bridging Generations, Strengthening Emotional Bonds Between Moms & Teens.” The events focused on parenting & youth, intergenerational conflict & bridging generational gaps. There were children’s activities and entire families were present. Additionally, there was a mental presenter, who discussed good relationship patterns between mothers and their children. Coffee, tea & cultural pastries were served, as usual. This event will be held at 3376 Motor Ave. Los Angeles, CA, 90034.
- After all the events are completed, the project Vendor will complete & submit the Final Summary Report of the project. The Vendor will also complete & submit the Final Summary Report on the project.

5. Russian and Farsi Mental Health Film Project #2 – Cross Cultural Expressions, Mastaneh Moghadam, LCSW!

- Vendor reported that the project is going well & according to plan in terms of completing the films.
- The English premier of the movie was on May 22, 2025, at Harmony Gold Theater in Hollywood. It is a cinema offering shows, events, advance screenings, and festivals.
- Address: 7655 W Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90046. The movie premier was followed by a Q & A segment with the actors/actresses, screen writer, producer, mental health professional, and director of the films. Overall, the movie premier was very successful with a lot of participants. There was overwhelming positive feedback from the community members about the film and its review & analysis.
- The Russian Film premier will be on May 29th, in Encino & the Farsi Film will be on June 5th, 2025.
- The project is going within its timeline and will be completed by the end of June 2025.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vendor will complete & submit the Final Summary Report on the project.
Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Labor Acknowledgement ❖ Next meeting will be on Wednesday 6/25/2025, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm. ❖ EE/ME USCC Subcommittee meeting might go “Dark” for the month of July 2025. Subcommittee members will have the final vote on this at the June 2025 subcommittee meeting.
	<p><u>Join Microsoft Teams Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (323) 446-6996 United States, Los Angeles (Toll) Conference ID: 985 297 792#