



**Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Black & African Heritage Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC)
Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2025 10am-12pm**

Welcome

Introductions/Check-In

Co-Chairs: Romalis Taylor and Sade Richardson

Attendees: Blanca E. Watson, Dr. Brenda Ingram, Carlton Roberts, Charlene Logan, Charline Nunez, Chaunise Johnson, Crystal Whiteaker, Danna Jane, Erica Jones, Gabby, Irene Ratliff, Joann Reeder, Mrs. Jonnie Muckelroy, Joyce Sales, Kirsten Pannell, Leon Maultsby, Lesley Washington, Luis Navarro, Maryam Dorsey, Mastaneh Moghadam, Monalisa Okojie, Miss Nancy Steward, Patricia Kusaba, Prince Martin, Queen Chela Demuir, Richard (Captioner) Ross Canning, Selam Alem, Shanadral King, Susana Ascencion, Virginia Alvizo, Wendy Cabil

DMH Admin and Staff: Dr. Barbara Meyer, Dr. Darlesh K. Horn, Dr. Chiyah Lawrence, Dr. Christina Barnes-Matthews, Donnise Vonner, Jamie Walker, Kevin Collins, Kalila Houston, Kinyah Robbins-Harrold, Lashawn Vaughn, Dr. Marianne Klee, Mirtala Parada Ward, riKu Matsuda, Theion Perkins

Land Acknowledgment

- LA County Land Acknowledgment:
<https://lacounty.gov/government/about-la-county/land-acknowledgment/>

Community Group Agreements

- Community Agreements for Stakeholder Groups
- https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dmh/1192442_CommunityAgreementsforStakeholderEngagement-English.pdf

Presentation on California Senate Bill 43 (SB 43)

Theion Perkins, LACDMH Senior Deputy Director for Outpatient Care Services, provided an overview of SB 43, the background of the LPS Act (1967) and how Grave Disability is being expanded under SB 43.

- Highlights of the discussion included: concerns about civil liberties and potential overreach, clarification that the expansion does not drastically increase the number of holds; limited to severe cases, the importance of care coordination for unhoused individuals and connecting them to field-based teams after a 72-hour hold, and emphasis on follow-up and continuity of care, including hospital liaison communication.
- Questions and concerns discussed included: challenges in hospitals: staff interactions may deter patients from seeking care, lack of allocated funding for SB 43 implementation, and DMH emphasizing leveraging existing programs, care coordination, and field teams to maximize available resources.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve by Wendy Cabil, seconded by Dr. Brenda Ingram. Minutes approved unanimously with no corrections.

DMH Updates:

Mirtala Parada Ward provided the following DMH Updates:

- DMH is actively preparing for the transition from MHSA to BHSA, with the USCC continuing to play a key role in stakeholder engagement, though subcommittees may shift to align with new funding and departmental planning requirements.
- A draft BHSA integrated plan is due to the state in March, with final approval by June 30, 2026, and several upcoming meetings, including a critical virtual budget session on November 14, will provide opportunities for questions and input. DMH is also exploring alternative funding sources to support stakeholder activities, as some prevention funds are currently on hold pending state guidance expected by January.
- Going forward, USCCs and SALTs will report monthly to the Behavioral Health Commission, using a standardized format to ensure consistent feedback on how BHSA initiatives impact the communities they represent.

Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Updates

Dr. Darlesh Horn provided the following MHSA/BHSA updates:

- The BHSA integrated plan draft is due to the state in March, with final approval expected by June 30, 2026.
 - There are three upcoming meetings: a virtual budget-focused session on November 14, and in-person meetings on November 18 and December 9 at Saint Anne's Conference Center.
 - A 30-day public comment period will begin January 31, allowing stakeholders to provide additional feedback before the final plan is submitted. Moving into 2026, monthly meetings are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month (starting February), focusing on program implementation and ongoing plan updates.
- UsCCs and SALTs will provide structured monthly reports to the Behavioral Health Commission, using a standardized format to ensure feedback reflects the impact of BHSA programs on the communities they represent.
 - BAH UsCC Subcommittee members will be given the opportunity to share their concerns in a format that aligns with the monthly report template.
 - Romalis and Sade will bring updates from BHSA meetings, CPT meetings, and the Behavioral Health Commission back to the group to create a communication loop and ensure stakeholder input is shared. The department will collect input from all USCCs and present a brief, high-level summary at executive committee and commission meetings, though the time allows only limited detail.
 - While formal feedback from the commission is minimal, CPT meetings and public comment opportunities provide avenues for stakeholders to raise concerns and have their voices considered, even if not all input can immediately be integrated into BHSA plans.

Capacity Building Project

Carlton Roberts, Community Engagement and Entertainment Director for Project Pit, presented on the Outreach and Engagement Project for Black and African Communities.

- Project Pit provides event production and community outreach support for local councils, mayoral events, and larger organizations like California Department of Public Health and Essence Festival.

- Project Pit's approach focuses on community engagement, collaboration, data-informed planning, and cultural competence to increase awareness, reduce stigma, and improve access to mental health resources.
- The team proposed shifting one of their three signature events—originally scheduled for MLK Day, Black History Month, or Juneteenth—to align with Mental Health Awareness Month in May while maintaining a cultural component for each event.
- Each event will include a mental health focus, such as volunteer-led activities, educational components, and wellness resources, ensuring attendees walk away with tangible mental health information.
- Additional “pop-up” events and community activations throughout the year, including suicide prevention initiatives and Black Men’s Mental Health programming, will expand engagement beyond the signature events.
- The overarching goal is to ensure mental health outreach is culturally grounded, community-driven, and consistent across the calendar, while creating opportunities for committee input, collaboration, and resource sharing.

Life Links Update

For the sake of time, Dr. Brenda Ingram’s Life Links update was postponed until the December BAH UsCC Meeting.

Community Engagement/ Community Events and Announcements

- BAH UsCC meeting attendees were asked to post any upcoming events in the chat so they can be shared with the group.

Labor Acknowledgment

Dr. Chiyah Lawrence read the Labor Acknowledgment

Upcoming Meeting: Thursday December 4, 2025 (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/>