

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Minutes

October 8, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees: Héctor Manuel Ramírez (co-chair), Olina Rose Bishop, Wendy Cabil, Coach Afi G, Amy Kay, Bea Leung, Grace Leung, MargaretAnn Mendenhall, Gabriela Velasquez, Irma Velasquez, Junko Nagamatsu, Racquel Decipeda, Guillermo Medina Jr., Bea Leung, Perla Pelayo, Rudolph Perez III, Isbella Ramirez, Maria Tan

DMH staff: Alex Elliott, Christina Barnes-Matthews, Keianna Crenshaw, riKu Matsuda, Tracy Tisino, Andrea Grimes, Darlesh K. Horn, Cintia Huitzil, Carla Jaramillo, Keith Wells, Chiyah Lawrence, Mirtala Parada Ward, Melissa Pantoja, John Palacio, Regina Ramirez, Jamie Walker, Jessica Wiechec, Yue Hua Xu

Interpreters and captioner: Alex (Spanish), Lucy (Spanish), Sharon (ASL), Andrea (ASL), Sara (CART)

Agenda Items	Discussion and Recommendations
Welcome and Disability Etiquette	Co-chair Héctor Manuel Ramírez welcomed participants, provided a visual description, and shared the disability etiquette. This includes the importance of visual descriptions, pronoun usage, and reviewing communication options for questions and participation.
Land Acknowledgment	Héctor Manuel Ramírez read the land acknowledgment .
Labor Acknowledgment	riKu Matsuda read the labor acknowledgement .
Presentation: Chair Victor Manalo, Behavioral Health Commission	Dr. Victor Manalo, Chair of the LA County Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) expressed gratitude for community members' involvement in the stakeholder groups. He emphasized that the UsCCs and the Commission share the purpose of advising DMH on community needs. The BHC uniquely advises the Board of Supervisors and the Department of Mental Health. Dr. Manalo opened communication lines for UsCC concerns to reach the Commission and Board of Supervisors. He is visiting all UsCCs by end of calendar year and will ensure issues are reported to the Commission. The Commission can write board letters to Supervisors based on UsCC input.

	Commissioner Manalo shared his email for direct communication and offline meetings- victor@victormanalo.com Community Response: Members emphasized that the absence of information about disability community needs is not from lack of trying. The community has been advocating for decades in and outside of Access for All. Highlighted the huge gap in services for deaf and hard of hearing populations (one in SPA 3, one in SPA 8). There is a disability data desert, and the census undercounts people with disabilities.
DMH Updates	Mirtala Parada Ward shared the following updates: - Starting July 1, 2026, prevention funding will move from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to the state level, causing budget uncertainty, especially for UsCC projects, which currently have no funding. The department expects a 35% funding cut due to the BHSA. Internal meetings are ongoing to clarify the UsCC budget, with more information expected by December 2025. Prevention programs will end completely, and early intervention funds will be cut significantly. There will be a greater focus on housing for homeless individuals and an expansion of specialized Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs. - UsCCs have two voting seats in Community Planning Team (CPT) meetings, which are important for BHSA planning. Access for All UsCC has not had representation in these meetings over the past year, creating a need for a co-chair or alternate to represent the disability community. We need to identify a voting member to attend CPT meetings. - Starting in November 2025, UsCC will be on the agenda at Behavioral Health Commission meetings each month. One co-chair will present a report covering issues and advocacy from UsCCs and SALTs. Hector has been invited to volunteer as a co-chair. - DMH has hired two permanent ASL interpreters for the first time. Clinical services will now include ASL interpreter support in therapy sessions and other appointments. The budget for the Language Assistance Program has tripled in the past two years. However, there is still a shortage of ASL-proficient clinicians, making it hard to recruit qualified individuals due to California's high living costs. Community Response: - MHSA workforce development historically ignored deaf and hard of hearing community for 10+ years - No outreach to ASL-proficient individuals about career opportunities

	• Need to inform deaf individuals in college about mental health career paths • Support existing interpreters interested in becoming clinicians • Focus on deaf studies programs and colleges to create career pipeline Proposal: • Orange County's mental health training program recently closed due to funding loss • Deaf mental health trainees now have no place to complete supervised clinical hours • Proposal: Create capacity building project for in-house training facility • Facility would provide: supervised clinical hours, mentorship, pathways to licensure • LA County opportunity to address statewide shortage of ASL-proficient mental health clinicians Action Item: Schedule meeting with DMH management and interested community members to discuss training facility proposal Community Planning Team Meetings: Accessibility concerns at recent BHSA stakeholder meetings were raised, highlighting issues such as the overwhelming size of virtual meetings, lack of ASL interpreters in breakout sessions, and difficulty focusing on specific topics. Recommendations included ensuring ASL interpreters are available in all breakout sessions, providing advance notice of topics, and offering pre-meeting accommodation. DMH Language Assistance confirmed that four ASL interpreters would be provided for in-person breakout sessions and plans to investigate the discrepancies in virtual meeting support.
Approval of August minutes	Minutes were corrected and approved with no objection by a motion from Olina Rose Bishop, seconded by MargaretAnn Mendenhall.
Closing	riKu thanked everyone for joining including community members, panelists, captioner, interpreters, co-chair, and support staff.
Next meeting	Access for All UsCC Meeting – November 12, 2025