



**Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health  
Black & African Heritage Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC)  
Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
April 2, 2026 10am-12pm**

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## **Welcome**

### **Introductions/Check-In**

**Co-Chairs:** Romalis Taylor and Sade Richardson

**Attendees:** Latisha Johnson, Aamour Delus, Aleyne Eatman, Blanca E. Watson, Charline Nunez, Coach Afi G., Donald Grant, Dr. Brenda Ingram, Dr. Crystal Adams, Dr. Karen Gunn, Dr. Lafawn Brito, Erica Kusaba, Erica Robinson, Irene Ratliff, Jasmine Harris, Joelle Daniel, Joy Ellington, Joyce Sales, Kirsten Pannell, Kyoni Cummings, Linda Hodge, Margot Taylor, Mario Maldonado, Maunda Jackson-Stewart, Miss Nancy Stewart, Mrs. Jonnie Muckelroy, Patricia Kusaba, Pauline Giscombe, Rhoda Addam, Romalis Taylor, Sade Richardson, Saron Mehari, Senait Admassu, Von Simmons, Wendy Cabil | Sara Hill (Captioner)

**DMH Admin and Staff:** Dr. Anna Yaralyan, Dr. Carla Jaramillo, Dr. Chiyah Lawrence, Dr. Darlesh K. Horn, David Snell, Dewayne Hervey, Dr. Jessica Wiechec, Keenan Withers, Keianna Crenshaw, Kevin Collins, Kinyah Robbins-Harrod, MC Harris, Yailin Noriega

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## **Land Acknowledgment**

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

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## **Welcome & Introductions**

Several first-time attendees introduced themselves, including Margot Taylor (Planned Parenthood), Saron Mehari (Ahmad Institute), Mario Maldonado (Parents Anonymous), David Snell (DMH Advocate), and Linda Hodge (Living for Purpose).

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## **Approval of Minutes**

- Wendy Cabil motioned to approve the February 2026 minutes; Maunda Jackson-Stewart seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously with no corrections.

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## **DMH Updates:**

Dr. Jessica Wiechec provided the following DMH Updates:

- The Multicultural Conference had a successful turnout of approximately 600 attendees on March 17–18. Thank everyone who attended the conference, made presentations, volunteered, etc.
- During the recent pause in meetings, DMH upgraded Microsoft Teams licenses and provided staff training to better manage meeting disruptions and ensure community safety due to recurring incidents at recent stakeholder meetings, including hate speech, racist remarks, and inappropriate or lewd content.
  - Dr. Ingram suggested using registration-based links (similar to Zoom) to increase accountability. Dr. Wiechec clarified that as public meetings, the links must remain accessible, but the new Teams features allow for better participant management.

- The April 9 BHC Commission Meeting meeting will be dedicated entirely to the BHSA Integrated Plan; no subcommittee reports will be heard verbally.
- Wendy Cabil raised a concern around "Black erasure" she experienced at a SALT 1 meeting. Dr. Wiechec and Dr. Lawrence invited her to email details for a formal follow-up.

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## **BHSA Updates**

Dr. Darlesh Horn shared the following BHSA Updates:

### **Review of Bylaws & Co-Chair Elections**

- The bylaws outline meeting conduct, safety protocols, and the duties of Co-Chairs. They are currently being updated and the finalized bylaws will be distributed for review by community stakeholder group.
- All stakeholder groups must elect new leadership by June 30, 2026. Romalis Taylor and Sade Richardson's co-chair terms will end in June. An overview of co-chair responsibilities and requirements was provided. Voting eligible members may be nominated/self-nominated for co-chair. To be eligible to vote, you must attend 5 of the last 9 BAH UsCC Subcommittee meetings.

### **BHSA Transition & Capacity Building Shift**

- Dr. Horn explained that outreach and engagement will now be tied to clinical enrollment outcomes (e.g., housing, FSP). Stakeholder groups will return to their core purpose: community education and advocacy. Stakeholders are not expected to track clinical data but will receive data from clinical programs to identify and advocate for closing gaps in service.

### **Life Link Resource Directory Status**

- Dr. Horn reported the project missed the March 31 deadline and has been granted an extension to mid-April. She warned that if the project is not complete and vetted by June 30, 2026, the funding expires and the project will not be released.
- Romalis Taylor emphasized the importance of the completion of this project to the BAH UsCC community.

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## **BHC Commission Report Out**

- Sade Richardson discussed challenges in providing a verbal report to the BHC on behalf of BAH UsCC due to technical difficulties and shifting deadline for monthly stakeholder group report submission.
- Sade Richardson led a discussion on reporting to the Behavioral Health Commission:
  - Irene Ratliff challenged the subcommittee to address systemic trauma and "freedom" as it relates to mental health.
  - Dr. Brenda Ingram inquired about a "dual agenda" conflict for Co-Chairs - balancing Department rules with the need to advocate.
  - Wendy Cabil noted the difficulty in obtaining budget transparency and procurement schedules, and Maunda Jackson-Stewart offered peer support to ensure community needs are met.

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## **Capacity Building Project (CBP) Updates**

- Black Teen Empowerment Summit: Dr. Crystal Adams reported a 96% satisfaction rate from 150 student participants representing 50 zip codes. The day long event took place at Palisades high school and featured financial literacy and wellness workshops. Dr.

Adams highlighted the "passport" stipend system and the power of providing a safe space for Black youth.

- BRIDGE Workshops for Foster Youth: Dr. Donald Grant reported recruitment challenges for the upcoming series starting April 27. Dr. Grant requested recruitment assistance from the subcommittee. The subcommittee made such suggestions as targeting the DCFS TAY program and considering providing transportation for youth in Service Area 1.

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### **Community Announcements**

- Sade Richardson requested that any announcements, event flyers, etc. be sent to Dr. Lawrence for distribution to the BAH UsCC.

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### **Labor Acknowledgment**

Dr. Chiyah Lawrence read the Labor Acknowledgment.

**Upcoming Meeting: Thursday June 4, 2025 (10:00am – 12:00pm)**

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