LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Strategic Communications Division

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

1/28/2026

2:00PM - 4:00PM **In-person Potluck meeting.**

Present: Nane Avagyan, Mitra Shabani, Rhonda Leier, Nelly Ghukasyan, Rima Safaryan, Sarkis Simonian, Rhoda Addam, Dewayne Hervey, Mastaneh Moghadam, Amal Ibrahim, Rubou Sous, Samantha Crisanto, Dr. Carla Jaramillo, Dr. Chiyah Lawrence Benjamin McKinnon, Yecica Ventura, and Nancy Quevedo, Dr. Haydeh Fakhrabadi, Sydney Soonier, Ben McKinnon, LCSW, Soolmaz Zamanpoor, Peyman Malaz, Pars Equality Center.

DMH Admin: Dr. Anna Yaralyan, Jamie Walker, Mirtala Parada Ward, Dr. Jessica Wiechec.

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions
Introductions	• EE/ME USCC Subcommittee members brought cultural foods for the EE/ME USCC Potluck Luncheon for all to enjoy. • Everyone introduced themselves. • Anna Yaralyan read the Board of Supervisors Land Acknowledgement. • There were also online participants at this meeting.
Meeting Minutes Review and Approval	• Reviewed & approved **11/26/2025** EE/ME Subcommittee meeting minutes with minor adjustments. - Sarkis Simonian motioned to approve & Mastaneh Moghadam second. - Minutes were accepted by subcommittee members. There were no subcommittee member objections.
DMH Updates	**Mirtala Parada Ward provided the following DMH updates:** • We are in the process of transferring from MHSA to BHSA and it is important for all USCC's, including the EE/ME USCC, to be involved with mental health and discuss their community's mental health and social needs because we are transitioning into a new era of different funding sources and different programming. All prevention programs are going away, and this will have an impact on our communities. It is important for community members to be fully involved and raise their voice at different platforms, including the Stakeholder Group Report to the

	Behavioral Health Commission (BHC). This report will be submitted to the commission on monthly basis. It is an opportunity for community members to raise their concerns about funding, prevention programs, and community mental health needs. Also, talk about linguistic access, cultural needs, immigration challenges, and accessibility in the report. Inform the commission on how they could help your community. You can complete the report as a group in your monthly meetings as well and advocate for your communities. • Please ensure that your community's needs are represented. In LACDMH we have 13 threshold languages represented, and Armenian, Arabic, Farsi speaking and Russian communities are under the white categories, therefore additional allocations of funds might not be given to these cultural groups in the new BHSA program. For this reason, we are currently writing a proposal for the BHSA program and including the importance of cultural sensitivity. Unfortunately, the prevention programs are going away, as a result, it is important to know what services our communities need if the prevention funds are removed. We encourage all community members to attend CPT meetings, lift your voices, and state how your commission can help you.

EE/ME USCC Capacity Building updates **2025 – 2026!**	Updates on the following Capacity Building Projects were provided: - Armenian Kids Wellness Festival. - Russian & Farsi Wellness Circles - Russian, Farsi & Arabic MH PSA project. - Arabic Family Events. - Armenian LGBTQ Podcast Project! For the EE/ME USCC Subcommittee, Capacity Building Projects, CPTs, the Armenian LGBTQ Podcast Project was awarded Addison Rose Vincent, from Break The Binary, LLC. Agency. Congratulations!
Next Meeting	❖ **Labor Acknowledgement** ❖ **Next meeting will be on Wednesday 2/25/26, from 2:00pm - 4:00pm.**

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