

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Minutes

May 13, 2026

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees: Hector Ramirez (co-chair), Fran Sereseres (co-chair), Amber Berteloot, Araceli Montoya, Bea Leung, Coach Afi G, Cody Hanable, Daneta Calderon-Vital, Darcy French-Myerson, Fran Sereseres, Gabriela Velasquez, Grace Leung, Irma Velasquez, Jo Freeman, Junko Nagamatsu, Lura Beaumont, Margaretann Mendenhall, Maria Elena Arauco, Maunda Jacksonstewart Ywap, Maya Thompson, Patricia Kusaba, Shelley Woods, Tracey Walters, Wendy Cabil

DMH staff: Alex Elliott, Dr. Anna Yaralyan, Dr. Carla Jaramillo, Cintia Huitzil, Dr. Jessica Wiechec, Martha Ortiz, Mirtala Parada Ward, Suyapa Umanzor, Tracy Tisino, Yailin Noriega

Interpreters and captioner: Alex (Spanish), Lucy (Spanish), Sharon (ASL), Darcy (ASL), Stephanie (CART)

Welcome and Disability Etiquette	Co-chair Ramirez opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. They provided the disability etiquette and encouraged participants to report any accessibility barriers so the meeting could pause and adjust as needed.
Community Agreements	Dr. Jessica Wiechec read the community agreements.
Land Acknowledgment	Co-chair Ramirez read the land acknowledgment .
Labor Acknowledgment	Dr. Jessica Wiechec read the labor acknowledgement .
Approval of Minutes	Minutes were presented and approved

DMH and BHSA Updates	Provided by Dr. Jessica Wiechec • California's transition from MHSA to BHSA begins July 1, 2026. Capacity Building Projects will conclude and be replaced by a new structure (details forthcoming) • The Behavioral Health Commission meeting is scheduled for May 14 at 11:00 AM, with in-person and virtual attendance options. • Mental Health Awareness Month events are ongoing; a full list is available online Additional remarks from Co-Chair: • Concerns were raised about ongoing accessibility failures at Commission meetings. • Hector encouraged reporting ADA violations when accommodations are not provided. • Hector referenced Board of Supervisors discussion regarding unspent money. • Stakeholders were encouraged to seek clarification and accountability regarding resource allocation. • Hector also noted their reappointment to state commission and affirmed continued advocacy for disability inclusion.
Co-Chair Elections	Requirements • Co-chair elections will occur before July 1. • Eligibility requires attending 5 of the last 9 meetings. • Co-chairs are required to attend at least 75% of meetings. • Co-chair stipends will be \$300/month under BHSA. Note that this can affect SSI Benefits. Current Candidates & Nominations • Fran officially announced she will run again. • Members may nominate themselves or others. • Hector Nominated: Junko (declined due to workload) and Carlos (not present; will be contacted). • Those interested can email Access for All Election Process & Timeline • We will hold the election at next month's meeting • Ballot will be distributed during the meeting.

	• Voting will remain open for one week to allow participation from those unable to attend live. • Dr. Wiechec will contact all eligible voting members to confirm interest in running. • A question was raised whether members can vote in more than one UsCC election. This will be confirmed by the next meeting.
Capacity Building Project Presentation: Preparing to Thrive by Tracey Walthers,	Tracey presented her project, Preparing to Thrive, an emergency preparedness program developed in response to the 2025 LA Wildfires, which disproportionately affected disabled residents. Program Overview • 10 structured sessions • 30 participants across multiple Service Planning Areas • Populations served included individuals with physical, developmental, and mental health disabilities; chronic health conditions; older adults; caregivers; and low-income residents Training Components • Red Cross activation sites • Emergency alert systems • Evacuation strategies • Creation of personalized emergency preparedness bags • Guest speakers: Red Cross, LA County Fire Department, clinical psychologist Outcomes • Initial assessment: 83% of participants were not prepared • Final assessment: 100% of participants completed preparedness training • Strong community interest in continued programming Tracey noted she received additional state funding to continue the project and will provide information, training materials, and resources to subcommittee.
In-Person June Meeting	The group is considering holding the June 10 meeting in-person, with a hybrid option for virtual attendance.

	Dr. Wiechec emphasized the need for a headcount to ensure appropriate space and accommodation. An email was sent out and will be sent out again to request accommodation. A question about whether the Department could support transportation if multiple members from the region attend. The department can follow up with that request but it is encouraged for members to coordinate with others in their region or arrange Access.
Community Announcements	Antelope Valley Mental Health Awareness Event • A May Mental Health Awareness Month celebration will be held in the Antelope Valley, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. GLAD Mental Health Forum – May 16 • Junko announced a Mental Health Forum hosted by GLAD (Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness) in Eagle Rock. • Date: Saturday, May 16 • Time: 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM (registration begins at 9:30 AM) • Cost: Free • Accessibility: Fully accessible; interpreters and accommodations provided Senior Prom – May 22 (Antelope Valley) • SALT 1 is co-sponsoring a Senior Prom at the Antelope Valley Senior Center on May 22. Reminders About Sharing Announcements • Members are encouraged to send flyers, event details, or announcements to the Access for All UsCC email address at any time. • Announcements will be distributed to all members. • Fran emphasized the importance of submitting items in advance so the group can help promote them.
Closing	Co-chair Ramirez offered closing remarks.
Next meeting	Access for All UsCC Meeting - June 10, 2026 - Department of Mental Health