

State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
January 20, 2021
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present online: Chmn. John Hamilton, Paul Acker, Craig Allen, Scott Allen, Michael Askew, James Baraja, Mike Botieri, Cameron Breen, Teodoro Anderson Diaz, Brian Dickerson, Kathy Cameron, Sharon Castelli, Maria Coubant-Skinner, Jennifer Dewitt, Annette Diaz, Deanna Doerr, Michael Doyle, Marcia DuFore, Alex Fernandez, Kelly Firesheets, Michaela Fissel, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Rebeca Garcia, Ingrid Gillespie, Carol Gregory, Jennifer Hale, Jennifer Henry, Lynn Kelley, Daniel Meloy, Pam Mautte, Thomas Miklas, Demetria Nelson, Manuel Paris, Larry Pittinger, Joe Qualter, Brian Reigner, Kevin Sevarino, Lt. Mike Stoke, Janine Sullivan-Wiley, Phil Valentine, Maggie Young

DMHAS Staff: Commr. Delphin-Rittmon, Deputy Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Yvonne Addo, Cheri Bragg, Marilyn Duran, Marlene Jacques Mary Kate Mason, Carol Meredith, Art Mongillo

Agenda Item 1: Call to order and introductions

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:30 PM by John Hamilton.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of previous meeting review and action

The minutes from the November 18, 2020 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

- **COVID-19** – Commr. Delphin-Rittmon stated that DMHAS continues to follow the quarantine and isolation protocol of both CDC and DPH. The protocols are listed on the DMHAS website. New hospital admissions are both tested and quarantined to make sure they are COVID free. Staff is also required to quarantine if they travel to high COVID areas. Health screening of all clients and staff are done every day. Staff are directed to stay home if they feel sick. DMHAS is now working with Quest on doing self-testing for COVID. Since the pandemic started there have been 127 patients cumulative that have tested positive and of that 113 have recovered. There have been 337 staff that tested positive and 299 have recovered. Six DMHAS facilities have started max vaccination testing on-site.
- **Legislative Session** - Mary Kate Mason stated the session has kicked off in a virtual manner. We anticipate the budget will be announced on February 10th with hearings on Appropriations to follow the following week. Additionally, DMHAS has proposed the same two bills of last year and the commissioner, along with Mary Kate, will talk with the chairs of Public Health Committee regarding them. There are some concepts bills being tracked right now and will be shared with everyone on a legislative update. There is a large interest in mental health and substance use this year. The Senate has raised a bill on it with no language associated with it yet. The Governor is putting forth a legalization of cannabis bill. The legislative bulletins for public health will come out five days before the meeting and will include information on how to sign up for the Zoom hearings.
- **Budget** – Commr. Delphin-Rittmon announced that the most current budget monthly projection for the State is 137.6-million-dollar surplus and the rainy day fund is up to about 3.5 billion. We will keep you posted with any new updates.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation & Discussion Topic: Social Justice Workgroup presentation on Operation 2 Save Lives: Mental Health and Addiction Diversion: Retired Chief of Police Lt. Scott Allen started the presentation by providing some background information on himself and shared some frontline experience. He is now the COO of Operation 2 Save Lives. Operation2 Save Lives is a public safety collaboration with public health. He talked about law enforcement engagement; understanding the problem and real-time actionable data. He also

talked about training, core competency curricula to meet client needs. Kelly Firesheets, of Cordata Healthcare, talked about the data aspect of the program. Data is critical, but the O2SL and Cordata technology systems are tools, reliant on the program. The platform of services is: Assessment and planning; mentoring and consulting; training across all sectors, LE, Fire/EMS, substance use and mental health; team creation and implementation; infrastructure support – staffing, train, hire, and support; technology platforms (PII, HIPPA).

Agenda Item 5: Presentation & Discussion Topic: Consumer Action Group – The Conscience of the Mental Health and Addiction Community Proposal: Principles and Action Steps Intended to Improve Psychiatric

Emergency Room Services and Hospitalizations: Janine Sullivan-Wiley talked about what CAG is and they have been around for about over 30 years. It is now a free standing community that represents folks in the community with mental health and addiction needs in the western part of Connecticut and it includes people in recovery, providers of mental health and addiction services, family members, and community members of all ages, background and cultures. Their mission statement is: We are a community of dedicated individuals who gather monthly to identify needs; facilitate DMHAS system change, advocate for a more inclusive & accessible network of care, provide resources, promote valued roles, provide hope & support, and celebrate recovery.

CAG Chair Jennifer Hale shared some fictional narratives of what an ideal ER visit and/or hospital stay should be. CAG developed a needs assessment check-off list. The check-off list is not a comprehensive list, but one that comes from the personal experiences of CAG members and should promote other ideas and discussion for future action steps to be implemented.

Agenda Item 6: General updates and announcements

- Paul Acker announced that AU has the application process open for the next recovery support specialist program starting in January via Zoom. The application is on the AU website under recovery support specialist.
- Commr. Delphin-Rittmon gave an update regarding the PACCT program, since it was brought up in the last meeting. The program was eliminated due to budget cuts. The Department does apply for SAMHSA grants and other sources of funding to look for and implement innovations or bring back other programs and put trainings in place.
- Commr. Delphin-Rittmon announced that DMHAS is implementing the SAMHSA FEMA Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) grant and have hired crisis counselors that have been able to work with faith communities and have increased support to 211.
- Ingrid Gillespie shared that there is a very good panel discussion tonight on racial health disparities and it is hosted by the Greenwich YWCA and the panelist are from Yale, CT Health Foundation, and Albert Einstein College. There is also an organization called Wheel It Forward (www.wheelitforwardusa.org) which makes it easy to borrow for free and donate medical equipment.

Agenda Item 7: Potential Future Topics (need for Presenters):

- Hidden in Plain Sight (Pam Mautte working on Presenter)
- Comprehensive Homeless Plan Report/Update (DMHAS)
- Update on Sober Housing
- HealthCare: Access to Specialty Services
- Alcohol Awareness

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 17th beginning at 2:30 PM.