

State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
October 21, 2020
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present online: Chmn. John Hamilton, Allison Abramson, Kai Belton, Sharon Castelli, Sandy Cole, Bonnie Daley, Michele Devine, Mary Dineen-Elovich, Marcia DuFore, Michaela Fissel, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Ingrid Gil-lespie, Jennifer Henry, Rebecca Lemanski, Pam Mautte, Katie McMullan, Manuel Paris, Larry Pittinger, Brian Reigner, Graziela Reis, Kevin Sevarino

DMHAS Staff: Commr. Delphhin-Rittmon, Deputy Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Yvonne Addo, Cheri Bragg, Erica Cruz, Marilyn Duran, Ana Florence, Marlene Jacques Mary Kate Mason, Art Mongillo

Agenda Item 1: Call to order and introductions

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:30 PM by John Hamilton. Commr. Delphphin-Rittmon introduced Art Mongillo, DMHAS Public Information Officer

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of previous meeting review and action

The minutes from the September 16, 2020 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

- **COVID-19** - Commr. Delphphin-Rittmon reported that DMHAS along with DPH and other HHS agencies are in conversation regarding what the State approach is to mass vaccinations. A vaccination committee has been formed and lead by DPH along with other community providers. Some initial thinking is that direct care workers, state staff and private non-profit workers would be the possible phase 1 of the vaccination process. There may be a 2 phased vaccination process. As related, DPH is looking into the vaccination data and science and will keep us informed. On October 8th, Phase 3 reopening started but could change depending on number of COVID cases. DMHAS never closed and much of the direct care continues. DMHAS continues to implement the hybrid model with some services done via telehealth. About a third of DMHAS workforce is teleworking. DMHAS has a robust contact tracing system in place that will help during COVID and is continually practicing safety measures at all the facilities.

In terms of testing, there are some new testing opportunities out there and DMHAS has been in discussion with the Office of the State Comptrollers; for example, Quest Diagnostic now has take-home kits available and will pilot the program at Dept. of Corrections. SAMHSA also offered to give tests as well so DMHAS is looking at all opportunities.

Commr. Delphphin-Rittmon continues to attend the Governor's Unified Command Center calls and there is quite a bit of work there such as with food supplies and making sure that food sites are well stocked; finding space for people who are unable to quarantine or isolate at home and assist people with any additional wrap-around services.

- **ADPC** – Commr. Delphphin-Rittmon announced ADPC met on 10/20/2020 and it was well attended with two great presentations from the Bristol and New Britain Mayors. Both towns are recovery friendly and are implementing the toolkit from the prevention subcommittee. They shared a lot of information that you can find on their website. There was a data presentation and unfortunately we are still seeing significant increases in terms of opioid overdose deaths. Many of the critical areas we are continuing to implement are the Mobile MATs, recovery coaches in ERs, prevention initiatives; Narcan and other harm reduction supplies.
- **Legislative Session** - Mary Kate Mason gave an update on the session. DMHAS has been working on the legislative package and is submitting the same bills as in the last session due to the curtailed session we had

and no bills got through. As soon as we have more information we will let you know. There is a lot of interest in behavioral health with our elected officials. The commissioner has a call every Wednesday with the chairs and ranking members of the Appropriations, Human Services and Public Health Committees. She shares updates on what the department is doing and had good opportunities to advocate for the behavioral health community.

- **Budget** – Commr. Delphin-Rittmon announced that for the current session there are going to be negotiations on the biennium budget. There is a slow-down in terms of hiring but we are able to submit positions that are needed, while being mindful.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation and Discussion: Using ACEs Science to Promote Resilience

(Rebecca Lemanski, MSW/Founder, Community Resilience Collaborative of Middlesex County;
Mary Dinsen-Elovich, LCSW/ Executive Director Intentions Counseling and Clinical Training Center, LLC)

- An overview of the Community Resilience Collaborative (CRC) was done. It's an open group made up of individuals that are passionate about collaboration and sharing resources and have a working knowledge of preventing trauma and promoting resiliency. Their efforts are informed by ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Science, which include the research on resilience. Their vision is that all people will live, work and play in resilient and trauma informed communities. Their mission is to identify, create and support trauma resiliency focused education, awareness, and capacity building for families, groups and organizations with a focus on Middlesex County but for the entire state.
- There was some talk on the current state of mental health due to the impact of current events which cause increased anxiety, worry, sadness, isolation, depression and disconnection.
- ACEs comes in three different Sections: Abuse and neglect, both physical and emotional, and household dysfunction.
- Resources and ways to engage – register for free at AcesConnection.com. For more information email at resiliencemovement@gmail.com. Also see <https://vimeo.com/139998006>

Agenda Item 5: Work Group Update

- **Marijuana Task Force:** Kevin Sevarino work group is still defining their mission and have not met this last quarter.
- **DMHAS Social Justice:** John Hamilton announced that the group was able to convene on 10/13/2020. The group consists of John Hamilton, Paul Acker, Jennifer Henry, Marie Skinner, CEO of McCall Foundation; Art Jenkins, HHRC; and Maggie Young, CRO of the Liberations Program. A primary recommendation the group made was to, with the support of the State Board, set up a support mechanism or an ability to cross-train law enforcement through all the State in three areas: Mental Health, Substance Misuse, and Domestic Violence and Race Relations. In each area there would be liaisons to the police officers and will help respond to calls in these three areas. The committee is still working on developing this. Marie Skinner mentioned a model called Operation to Save Lives in Litchfield County, which is a successful model with data already, that we would like to use. Scott Allen, of Operation to Save Lives, will be invited to do a presentation.

There was some discussion that there are other areas that are working on the same issues specifically harm reduction in Hartford and New Haven. Deputy Commr. Navarretta announced that there is some non-DMHAS funds flowing to mobile crisis services related to CCBHCs as well as some short term funds being invested through the SAMHSA COVID dollars, which can last for a few years.

Agenda Item 6: General Updates and Announcements -

- Kevin Sevarino announced there is a film that PBS is sponsoring this month to watch called Bedlam on <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/film>. Half of the film is devoted to the intersection of mental health and corrections.

SOR funds have been renewed for two years at \$16 million a year the Opioid Response Network. How it works is all the states and territories can put in a request to the ORN if your particular agency/group wants to have training pertaining to opioids use disorders.

- John Hamilton announced that Liberations met with the new police commissioner from Bridgeport and showed the data on the first two months using the outreach van and recovery workers and how they were able to divert 200 individuals that would have otherwise got arrested and moved them away from the criminal system and got them services.
- Pam Mautte, of Region 2, has been attending the monthly meeting on harm reduction that the New Haven mayor holds and at the next State Board meeting will provide us with more information. Also, multiple communities in the region are doing the drug take-back events.
- Michele Devine, of Region 3, announced that the RBHAOs are working diligently this weekend since it is National Drug Take-back Day. In the eastern CT region there are around fifteen locations doing drug take-back and supplemental information was also given.
- Marcia DuFore, of Region 4, announced the region had multiple red ribbon events and drug take-back events. An anxiety study was just finished in the midst of COVID and shared with a number of partners. More information is listed on the Amplify, Inc. website.
- Allison Fulton, of Region 5, announced the region is also hosting drug take-back events. Next week is red ribbon week which is a substance misuse prevention week. Lots of events going on regarding red ribbon week.

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

- A look at Emergency Depts.: from the perspective of a person living with mental illness (Brian Reignier to get Presenter)
- Hidden in Plain Sight
- Update on Sober Housing
- HealthCare: Access to Specialty Services
- Alcohol Awareness
- Share findings and recommendations of peer support services (Michaela Fissel and group)

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 beginning at 2:30 PM.