

State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
February 21, 2024
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present online: Chmn. John Hamilton, Rebecca Allen, Jennifer Buckley, Thomas Burr, Sharon Castelli, Angela Duhaime, Kathy Flaherty, Samantha Forbes, Allison Fulton, Holly Hacket, Pamela Mautte, Allyson Nadeau, Denise Paley, Manuel Paris, Judith Stronger

DMHAS Staff: Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Deputy Commr. Colleen Harrington, Lakisha Hyatt, Cheryl Arora, Marilyn Duran, Chris McClure, Lady Mendoza, Shah Sarju, Kelly Sinko

Excused: Manuel Paris

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Call to Order

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

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of previous meeting review and action

The minutes from the January 17th meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

Budget – The governor's proposed budget has been released. DMHAS will meet in front of Appropriations on Monday and the public hearing is on Monday as well. There's a focus on some housing initiatives and some expansion on evidence-based practices. DMHAS is adding just under 1.3 million to permanent supportive housing and this will allow DMHAS to provide this wrap around services and supports for 140 federal housing vouchers that will be available from the Department of Housing. The second housing related item adds 1.2 million to expand homeless outreach community teams in our urban hubs and engaging high risk unsheltered clients in our service system with complex needs. The third item add 400,000 to increase SOAR capacity, which is SSDI, SSI, outreach, access, and recovery. So that initiative is an evidence-based model that helps individuals apply for and access social security disability benefit. And lastly, this year DMHAS has just over 2.5% funding out to private nonprofits that was put out initially by the Office of Policy and Management as one-time bonuses for providers. The governor's budget continues those dollars into fiscal year 25 as a cost-of-living adjustment.

Legislation – Welcome Lady Mendoza, Senior Legislative Advisor

Commr. Navarretta introduced Lady Mendoza who will be working closely with DMHAS Chief of Policy and Government Affairs Kelly Sinko. This is a short session and ends on May 8th. There's a new chief of staff for the Senate Majority Caucus, so that means there will be new people running the floor deciding what bills go up. There is a new Senate Minority Leader. Other things the governor is pushing is paid sick leave days; the adoption of nursing licensing compact; more affordable child care; there is a focus on nursing home quality of life; and there is more oversight and healthcare affordability, including prescription drugs as well as DPH now can oversee emergency department diversion policies.

Right now, the committee processes are in full swing, and committees are still voting to raise and draft concepts, and those committees that have an earlier deadline to vote out their bills are starting to have public hearings. The Senate Democratic Caucus is having a series of press conferences this week where they're announcing their major priorities, and they're the whole gamut from AI protections to prescription drugs to home health care worker safety. Senate bill one is going to be an aircraft carrier, which means there's going to be multiple concepts within that bill. The press conference today was focused around one of those bills, so this bill would include the various provisions for safety, which would include different components of training and having escorts covered by Medicaid. And there's various other things that are included in that bill in addition to providing funding to DMHAS, to improve comprehensive care of individuals. There's a lot of legislation around housing and that's anywhere from funding programs to address and prevent homelessness, around housing affordability, availability as well as tenant protections and the housing committee had a public hearing yesterday. All the expansions that have been passed are set to sunset on June 30th of this year.

Other – Since our last meeting Commr. Navarretta participated in an event at Norwich along with Mary Kate Mason to present to seniors on our mental health and substance use resources. The DMHAS team at OCC, CMHC, and Yale kicked off a relaunch of Mind Map, which is a campaign that focuses on first episode psychosis, and DMHAS now has statewide resources that are implemented.

There is a new Interagency Council on Homelessness. Those meetings have started at the Capital and the Commissioner will be participating in that as will Alice Minervino when she can attend.

The Alcohol and Drug Policy Council met yesterday, and Maria Skinner presented. The co-chair has changed from Vanessa Dorantes to Jody Hill Lily.

Yesterday was also the Wyndham Recovery Center's 20th anniversary. They were one of the first recovery centers in Connecticut, the first one that see CCAR brought up.

Commr. Navarretta is going to Bridgeport to visit Bridge House, which is a social club, and she is looking forward to getting to hear more about what they're doing down in region one.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation – Connecticut Valley Hospital – Lakisha Hyatt, CEO

CVH is a 361-bed facility with approximately 1100 employees. Over 150 years, CVH has served individuals with persistent and pervasive mental health challenges, as well as individuals who are in recovery from substance use. CVH has a few specialty programs for example, in the general psychiatry division they have young adult service, a traumatic brain injury service, as well as a 45-bed geriatric service. In addition, they have two withdrawal management units as well as four rehabilitation units. Not only do they serve individuals out of our Middletown campus, but also in Hartford. There is also a full dialysis service center, physical therapy, and a dental suite all on site in their commitment to mental health services. 16 of their 17 inpatient units are open again, meeting the services needed.

One of the things done since Lakisha came on board is to remove from restraint beds to restraint chairs because they're less traumatic. In the month of January, they saw a total of 10 restraint hours for the month across the entire campus, and that's about an 80% decrease over time. It's all around continuing active engagement and treatment and keeping individuals engaged in the services. For example, they have increased their Page Mall services and have increased even more to offer individuals to come together in their centralized treatment mall; so that individuals can participate in vocational services, recovery-oriented services, come over for their physical therapy, occupational treatment, and engage. In addition, they have enhanced their engagement track by creating a mechanism so that individuals struggling to participate in service keep engaged and are met where they are in their recovery process. They have a new recovery director, Elena Lasnier, who is hosting and facilitating recovering citizenship programs on the inpatient units as well as in the treatment mall.

CVH has five steering committees. They continue to expand their leadership rounds and have expanded it to celebrating the employees. Because they really need a campus engagement component. So in addition to identifying areas for improvement, leadership is going through and identifying areas of success and making sure that before the leader leaves they're able to articulate the success that they have observed during their time.

There is one steering committee that is a multidiscipline steering committee that is working on the relaunch of Sisters Together Achieving Recovery Program and that's their star program. The rehab program that is specific to women in recovery and through collaboration with the director of Women's Services at OOC as well as the Women's Consortium and the number of clinical leaders, they are planning for a June 30th relaunch of their star program.

CVH continues to deal with COVID and opening/closing that unit when needed. Right now, it's open and there are 12 individuals.

Regarding recruitment, they are very excited to bring on an excellent candidate for Division Director for Addiction Services. They have a new Chief of Nursing Officer who is coming on board. Recruitment is also going well and over the past two months they have 46 individuals.

Agenda Item 5: RBHAO Report – Pam Mautte:

Region 1 The Hub

Ok to Talk About It Spanish Focus Groups - 2/6/24 & 2/20/24, Spanish-speaking community members & stakeholders. Focus is to survey mental health in Spanish-speaking communities and identify strengths and gaps for responding to the community in mental health needs. This will inform our efforts as well as our anti-stigma campaign, Ok to Talk About It.

Problem Gambling Month - Event with Guest Speaker Saul Malek: March 25th, 2024, 6:30pm to 8:00pm, Via zoom, all are welcome, Why Risk Your Life? Live it Saul Malek will talk about his past gambling addiction and his road to recovery.

<https://www.thehubct.org/event-info/why-risk-your-life-live-it-with-saul-malek/form>

Community Conversations: March 8th, 2024, 12pm to 1:30pm, Burroughs Community Center, all are welcome, A Community Conversation About Gambling. <https://www.thehubct.org/event-info/a-community-conversation-about-gambling-lunch-learn/form>

Gambling Awareness Campaign to potentially roll out in March Suicide Awareness

Statewide Conference: May 2nd Statewide Conference (in person at the Rocky Hill Sheraton Hartford Hotel) *Keynote Speaker:* Brandon Johnson, Branch Chief, Suicide Prevention Branch, Division of Community Behavioral Health (DCBH), SAMHSA, Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS).

Breakout sessions: Health Equity and suicide prevention, suicide prevention with the LGBTQ+ population, loss survivor/motivational speaker, National Veterinarians Association, suicide in the Veteran population, lived experiences in suicide (healthcare perspective). *Afternoon sessions:* data and lived experience panel. CEUs (Continuing Education Units) pending approval right now

RFW Lunch & Learn for RYASAP Starting a campaign about RFW; New full time staff member to assist with SOR and RFW initiatives; Meeting with local churches, potential providing Narcan and QPR trainings in partnership with Blackrock Church in Fairfield

May 31 & June 1: Trainings and other trainings that are to be determined to clergy members from across the state.

Prevention Corps member started with the Hub to focus on opioid awareness

The Hub in collaboration with HIA are carrying out a new Mental Health First Aid grant that would certify two adult trainers and two Spanish speaking trainers for MHFA

The Hub will be participating in the legislative session with written testimonies

The Hub in collaboration with The Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition will be hosting an event for the region in relation to a Harm Reduction 101 training

Region 2 APW

- Provided Drug trends training to New Haven Public School Administrators
- Provided MHFA and YMHA to New Haven Public School and BOE staff through our MHAT grant
- Held Cannabis Summit on 1/23/24 in Wallingford with speaker from National Drug Endangered Children
- Hired prevention specialist for Cannabis prevention
- Hired prevention specialist for general prevention
- Planning for National Prevention Week and May is Mental Health Month
- Continue to host Naloxone trainings
- Continue to recruit businesses for Recovery Friendly Workplace
- Began new needs assessment in progress to identify strategies to address alcohol use in the identified towns of Ansonia, Derby and East Haven.
- Continue to implement the Partnership for Success on Underage Drinking
- Problem Gambling Month - Hosting Gambling Workshop on Sports Betting with 2 national speakers: Daniel Trolaro & Saul Malek on March 11th, Register here: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/nk5ftqt/lp/1750d97e-e342-4900-b79d-1d5e730d7fde> – see attached flyer
- Suicide Awareness: Continue to hold regular QPR trainings and work with communities on building post-vention response.,
- Statewide Conference: May 2nd Statewide Conference (in person at the Rocky Hill Sheraton Hartford Hotel)

Region 3 SERAC

State projects:

- New needs assessment in progress to identify strategies for the region to address co-occurring issues of alcohol use, depression, and trauma across rural communities with a focus on veterans/military and older adults.
- Providing TIPS University Training in March at Quinebaug Community College a program designed to provide students the skills they need to intervene with their peers in social situations to prevent alcohol-related accidents.

- QPR & Narcan training for Nursing Staff at Norwich Free Academy, Willington Town Staff, open session to Community on 2/28.
- Planning with Southeastern Regional Mental Health Authority to plan for advisory council meetings and CAC meetings.
- Vaping Presentation at Brooklyn Middle School
- Heather McClelland and her K-9 partner Chase from the Groton Town Police Department met with the RSAB in February to discuss the importance of comfort dogs and trauma supports.
- Virtual hour-long presentation entitled: Supporting Asian Clients in MH Setting Training in February
- Community Conversation to be had on problem Gambling held at the Salem Senior Center
- Youth Mental Health First Aid held in person in Plainfield.
- Planning Community Conversations. First to be held with NL Youth Affairs.

Federal projects:

- Killingly, Windham and Canterbury are scheduled to collect youth survey data in February
- Launching a community survey in March for the northeast region
- Host youth leadership groups in East Lyme and Griswold (middle and high school).

Region 4 Amplify

- Amplify was part of the Somers tragedy response with town leads/Human Services and numerous entities in support of multiple families, the schools impacted, and community members. Amplify assisted in the deployment of K9 First Responders team to the elementary schools most impacted in addition to mobile crisis collaboration, etc.
- Supported the first annual teen day of prevention at CREC Academy of computer science and engineering, engaging with approx. 500 youth
- Added 10 new members to the Regional Gambling Awareness Team (RGAT) since the start of the new year.
- Veterans Gambling Event for Problem Gambling Awareness month (PGAM) is scheduled for March 26th at Amplify 9am-12pm.
- AAPI flyers and brochures are now being distributed to RGAT team members and various community partners.
- Hosted in-person Regional Suicide Advisory Board meeting, focusing on problem gambling and its comorbidity with suicide behaviors.
- Conducted LPC Survey with all Region 4 LPCs to take a deeper dive into the Regional Priority Needs Report and to identify needs that Amplify can meet to support them.
- Conference Planning - Collaborated with the VA on planning a veterans/military specific breakout group for the May conference
- Amplify our Advocacy on Friday 2/23/24
- Amplify our Mental Health (Save the Date) – 05/16/24

Region 5 WCC

- Hired new office manager.
- Conducted a coalition visioning process in Newtown.
- Reorganized 3 LPCs that were dormant since COVID.
- Delivered 100 Backpacks with opioid harm reduction items and treatment resource lists through Apex van in Danbury.
- We are coordinating a number of different events at Western CT State University.
- Trained 28 School Social Workers in SBIRT in partnership with EdAdvance (the RESC in Region 5).
- Trained Waterbury youth in Teen Mental Health First Aid.

Agenda Item 6: Other Workgroup Updates/General Updates/Announcements

Naloxone recommendations from the ADPC Prevention Sub-committee – Judith Stronger, Vice President of Prevention, Wellness and Recovery Wheeler Clinic/CT Clearing House

Judith Stronger is also a past chairperson of the ADPC Prevention Subcommittee. The workgroup recommendation was approved in October of 2022, with a total of 23 members and met monthly. The changing environment in terms of starting where they were and then suddenly there was FDA application and then approval of over-the-counter naloxone in late March

of 2023. The recommendations were completed at around the middle of last year and they've been modified. Some of them are kind of general best practices, some are more actionable and have been already undertaken by the ADPC Prevention Subcommittee, and others may no longer be needed.

The workgroup goals were to research and develop policies and programs recommendations that increase public awareness of naloxone as a lifesaving medication, establish minimum training requirements, eliminate barriers, and improve access to naloxone statewide. Review current policies and practices to determine their effectiveness; and identify and recommend new policies and strategies.

Recommendations:

1. Naloxone should be available wherever there's emergency supplies.
2. Connecticut should investigate, pilot, and evaluate the effectiveness of placing naloxone vending machines and naloxo-boxes in various locations.
3. CT municipalities should utilize a portion of their Opioid Settlement funds to purchase and ensure naloxone availability in ALL public and private buildings, locations, facilities, and modes of transport within their community.
4. CT should facilitate the shipment of free naloxone to residents' homes statewide through the implementation of an online naloxone request website.
5. CT should continue and expand the practice of disseminating or prescribing naloxone to ALL individuals or family members using opioids or experiencing an overdose.
6. CT should continue and expand the practice of disseminating or prescribing naloxone to All individuals or family members upon release from a correctional facility.
7. All CT emergency service personnel should carry and have immediate access to naloxone to respond to an opioid overdose in a timely manner.
8. CT should continue and expand the practice of post-overdose "How Can We Help" visits and "Leave Behind" efforts that include providing naloxone to the individual and/or family.
9. CT should continue and expand the dissemination of free naloxone through its prevention, harm reduction, and healthcare efforts statewide.
10. CT should develop and disseminate brief informational videos to train individuals on the administration of naloxone.
11. Opioid overdose education and naloxone administration instructions should be included and integrated into all existing trainings and health curricula.
12. CT should leverage its current opioid prevention and public awareness campaigns and websites to include additional messaging on the risks of using opioids alone and the importance of including naloxone in all emergency supply locations.
13. Existing CT legislation should be amended to recommend, but no longer require, education on naloxone prior to obtaining or administering naloxone.
14. Existing CT legislation should be reviewed to ensure that current laws are in alignment with the availability of naloxone nasal spray as an over-the-counter product.
15. CT should maintain Medicaid coverage for the purchase of naloxone and advocate for insurance coverage by private insurers.
16. CT pharmacies and other stores should be proactive in ensuring that naloxone can be easily accessed and purchased in the least stigmatizing manner.
17. CT pharmacies and other stores selling naloxone should clearly indicate its availability through signage and stickers.
18. CT's rural and less populated communities that lack pharmacies should encourage eligible stores to take the necessary steps to stock and sell naloxone.
19. CT should increase efforts to eradicate stigma, discrimination, and bias that continues to be pervasive regarding substance misuse and mental health challenges.

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

- Mental Health Incarceration – Denise Paley
- Access to Beds or Lack of for Mental Health and Substance Use – Denise Paley
- Cannabis recommendations – Allison Fulton

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, beginning at 2:30 PM.