

**State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
April 17, 2024
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Present online: Janice Andersen, Jennifer Buckley, Thomas Burr, Sharon Castelli, Angela Duhaime, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Holly Hackett, Pamela Mautte, Allyson Nadeau, Denise Paley, Manuel Paris, Bryana Torres-Martinez

DMHAS Staff: Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Deputy Commr. Colleen Harrington, Jose Crego, Marilyn Duran, Reena Kapoor, Mary Mason, Chris McClure, Sarju Shah, Kelly Sinko, Elsa Ward

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 March 20th meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

Legislation – Mary Kate Mason gave an update. There's a lot of pressure right now at the Capitol related to bills that have any fiscal notes whatsoever. There is no appropriations budget out right now. The house is committing money to nonprofit providers, children's mental health and higher education. They say they have around \$300 to \$400 million to play with. Bills are dying and legislators are reaching out, saying how can you save this bill by getting rid of any cost? There is a bill that is looking at emergency room crowding. It doesn't name DMHAS specifically. However, there's been a lot of discussion about individuals with substance use or mental health disorders in the emergency room. DMHAS is included in the conversation but not directly impacted by the bill.

Other – Commr. Navarretta stated legislators did not put forward a budget after the governor's proposed budget. She met with the psych fellows at Yale this morning. The Interagency Council on Homelessness meets monthly and is a set of Commissioners along with the office of the governor brainstorming and listening to proposals from constituents and stakeholders around what might work to ease the situation that is upon us, not only Connecticut, but elsewhere as well. Commr. Navarretta attended The Governor's Prevention Partnership's event at the governor's residence last week along with Commr. Russell Tucker. The ADPC and the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee (OSAC) continue to vet recommendations from the public and basically from anyone, if anyone from this group has a recommendation as to what might help with remediation of opioid deaths, then send it our way. Right now, DMHAS is circling around a couple of recommendations. One recommendation is to continue the program that started with a time limited funds called Treatment Pathways Program (TPP). That's an arrest diversion program and looking at bringing up the last few DOC facilities with dosing equipment and space to be able to deliver methadone and other forms of MAT and looking at public access to naloxone. In terms of the DMHAS service system and the state-operated services they are still on track to bring up the final Addiction Services Division unit, the STAR program at CVH.

Agenda Item 4: Quarterly Report – Whiting Forensic Hospital – Jose Crego, CEO

From a COVID perspective, they've been doing very good at the hospital. The very few cases that gotten covid have all been very mild flu like cases. There has been a little bit of an uptick of the aging patients with some more increased medical issues and WFH is working very hard as some of these patients are within their transitional leave process, to ensuring that we're giving them all the support that they need through their illness and being able to maintain the discharge process.

This year is where they were last year seeing an uptick in their census. They are seeing a greater number of folks coming to them from the of the court system as per competency restoration. WFH is monitoring their influx of folks coming through the door very cautiously and ensuring that they are moving folks through the hospital as quickly as possible and getting them restored to competency and back out to the community as soon and as clinically appropriate as possible.

WFH is entering the completion phase of the building study. Out of the task force and some legislature, WFH was tasked to bring in a group of architects to do a study for Whiting Farms at hospital. The study was tasked to look at three different possibilities. One of those possibilities was a new structure housing for all the Whiting max patients and an expanded treatment facility for all their patients and leaving Dutcher as a standalone facility. The other was to have a standalone facility with all the Whiting hospital patients under one roof having two separate sides of treatment for both the maximum security and en-

hanced security side with along with greater treatment for both of those groups of patients. And the third possibility incorporated just the one building and building up the Dutcher building by enhancing it and bringing it to newer standards. They have completed that study and are finalizing points to present to the Commissioner, and it can be continued to be presented on.

They continue to do ongoing work within the WFH itself, for instance Whiting unit 5, which was utilized for a bit of time as the office space is actually turning into a swing space so that they are able to do some needed work on some of the other units within the hospital to continue to improve upon the patient living units there at the hospital and also some of the treatment space that's much needed there within the hospital.

The latter part of last year they achieved the Joint Commission accreditation and in the process of ongoing improvement and ensuring service or accreditation they put into place a couple of different programs, one of which is a monthly ongoing audit of a unit. They choose a unit randomly and go on to that unit and do a full mock survey that Joint Commission would provide and whatever findings they find on that mock survey, they extrapolate that throughout the hospital. It gives them a good idea of what's falling behind, what areas need improvement, what areas are doing well, and they are able to spot check that throughout the rest of the units, whether they incorporate new audits to make sure that certain things are getting done and they are continuously improving or we're able to shift our attention into other newer areas for increased improvement and it's really become a good tool.

Another area of focus for them is treatment that's focused on patients' specific needs and what they'll be needing for discharge. So that readies them in a faster fashion for discharge and really increases their success once they get ready for discharge. They are doing more of that type of treatment based on what their clinical needs are. And they are also doing a lot more of a vocational rehabilitation program. At a community farm where patients are earning a living wage rather than a training for the work that they're doing out there this may be growing to six positions. It's really something that the patients enjoy greatly. The partner that they have in the community is really enjoying having the patients there and it's serving as a great model to give the other patients an opportunity to strive for this type of opportunity.

WFH continues to work with our Connecticut State College partners to have them come on campus to provide some level of college courses. The goal is to provide an associate degree to the patients so they could at least start working towards that as they work towards discharge.

Agenda Item 5: Forensic Services Update - Dr. Reena Kapoor

Dr. Kapoor started the conversation by sharing what "forensic" means in DMHAS; which is that all of the people that we work with have a mental illness or substance use disorder. Most of the time they have both and then they either are involved with the criminal legal system, or there are some people who aren't involved with the criminal legal system but who otherwise pose an elevated risk of violence. When people get involved with the criminal legal system, there's a very predictable sequence of events that happens. And it's really worth investing the time in making sure that that transition goes smoothly, and that people have the resources they need to not repeat this cycle again. The goal is at each of those stages of the process of the criminal legal system, that there's an opportunity to divert or to intercept individuals with mental illness and try to give them treatment as an alternative to incarceration or other kinds of supports that they might need in the community to remain out and safe and successful and healthy. The Forensic Unit also has a lot of different kinds of jail diversion programs that operate mostly at the time of arraignment. So when the person is arrested for misdemeanor charges or low level felonies, they will go to the court to get charged with that crime, and many of them will have an evaluation by a DMHAS clinician. Whether that's for a mental illness-based program, substance use disorders, there are special programs for veterans and for women. There's also a competency to stand trial evaluations and restoration that serve as an off ramp from the system for a few people with mental illness. That happens both at Whiting and in the community and through the Office of Forensic Evaluations. They have a transitional case management program that helps folks with substance use disorders. And then once you get to the community, they have specialized teams and community forensic services that not only have expertise in treating mental illness, but also in managing that liaison between the patient and sometimes their probation officer, their parole officer, their court mandated supervision, and trying to get everything from treatment, medication, therapy to housing supports, and vocational things that people would need.

Right now, Forensic Services is trying to get their enhanced forensic respite bed program up and running and at full capacity. It was started as a pilot program in 2022 with 3 beds in Bridgeport as a place to divert individuals with mental illness from the competency to stand trial system. Since December of 2023 they have opened an additional 4 beds in New Haven and are working for later this year to open an additional 8 beds, for a total of 15 that will be split between New Haven and Bridgeport, and the goal is that any courthouse in the state can say I have a defendant who I think could benefit from this residential wrap

around treatment service in lieu of being sent to Whiting for competency restoration or as for outpatient rather than inpatient restoration.

There is a huge statewide initiative to really transform and reinvigorate the way that we do reentry services for people with mental illness and substance use disorders who are coming out of incarceration. The programs that Forensic got going on for people who aren't necessarily involved with the criminal justice system but are nonetheless kind of at a high risk of violence. They do have some civil patients at Whiting and those are not arrested for anything necessarily but have committed acts of violence or are too dangerous to treat in general psychiatry settings. They also have consulting forensic psychiatrists who do risk consultation around the state. And lastly, they also, in the division of forensic services, do get notifications about people who are prohibited from having a firearm because of our red flag law process. They also do have two new beds at Sequoia House that are specifically dedicated, meant to be for forensic patients, and particularly for insanity equities. They also got a DMHAS-wide training initiative going on right now, led by their consulting forensic psychiatrists, and this is aimed at frontline staff, clinicians, case managers working in the community about how to think about risk issues, how to communicate with your supervisors, how not to put yourself, if it's avoidable, in dangerous situations. That just started this month as well and has several trainings rolled out throughout the summer. And Forensics also had some additional staff brought on board to handle what has been a huge influx of risk protection orders.

Agenda Item 6: RBHAO Report – Pam Mautte:

Region 1 - Hub Updates March-April

Suicide Awareness

- * The Hub will be posting 988 "101" train platform ads (including basic information and commonly asked questions) at the South Norwalk, East Norwalk, Fairfield, Greenwich and Westport train stops.
- * 2024 QPR & Talk Saves Lives trainings so far (Jan 1 - March 31): We have conducted 16 trainings & trained 229 people
- * Ongoing Regional Suicide Advisory Board subcommittee efforts are creating an inventory of suicide trainings, services & resources to identify current gaps.
- * Upcoming suicide postvention training for statewide Regional Suicide Advisory Board leads
- * Upcoming Statewide Suicide Conference in May created by suicide leads

Recovery Friendly Workplace

- * Jacqueline has joined The Hub as a fulltime RFW & SOR Coordinator
- * 15 employers have begun the process of becoming RFW-certified:
- * Eight treatment providers: Positive Directions, Turnbridge, Silver Hill Hospital, High Focus Treatment Centers, CT Renaissance, CT Counseling, Recovery Network of Programs, Progressive Institute
- * Five non-profit service providers: Kids in Crisis, Restore Massage, Community Mindfulness Project, Move to Heal, Laurel House
- * One small business: Daydream Communications
- * One retailer: Richards/Mitchells
- * We've done RFW Outreach with close to 30 additional treatment providers, small businesses, non-profit organizations and retailers

New General Funds Initiative

- * Thamarlande has joined The Hub to lead our new general funds workplan. This initiative is funded through the state funding provided from legislators to allow The Hub the capacity to address behavioral health gaps as identified by our 2022 priority report.
- * After a comprehensive assessment process, Thamarlande will be focusing on alcohol use disorder and co-occurring disorders in adult males in Bridgeport and Stratford.

State Opioid Response (SOR)/OTHER

- * Narcan & QPR trainings for Bridgeport community health workers in an all-day professional development event
- * Youth Mental Health First Aid training for Stratford partners
- * Provided Narcan training to over 30 Stratford bar and restaurant staff, in collaboration with Stratford Partnership for Youth and Families
- * We have given out 760 backpacks with vaping and mental health resources to youth throughout Bridgeport & Weston
- * We have launched our vaping prevention awareness postcards throughout Bridgeport & Weston neighborhoods

Problem Gambling

March was problem gambling awareness month, The Region 1 Gambling Awareness Team celebrated in many ways. Attending PGAM kick off events

Hosting a community lunch & learn on Community Conversations About Gambling

Provided gambling presentations and hosted Community Conversations About Gambling for 4 organizations.

Shared resources, giveaways, and materials to community partners.

Attended local prevention council meetings to provide updates on problem gambling education

Launched an awareness campaign on responsible gambling

Guest spot on a Greenwich radio station

Hosted a zoom presentation with Saul Malek on gambling education and tips for parents to look out for.

Tabling event at Fairfield University

Cannabis

- * The Hub finally received their regional cannabis grant.

- * The Hub is partnering with Daydream Communications & the statewide educational campaign, *Be in the Know* for 420 awareness

- * We have given out over 300 cannabis lockboxes so far

Region 2 – Alliance for Prevention & Wellness

Gambling – In Region 2, we were able to host Saul Malek and talk with educators, prevention professionals, and experts in the field about the current landscape and dangers of youth gambling. We also had the opportunity to speak with high school students in their health classes, people in recovery from gambling problems, and college students regarding their gambling behaviors. It was a wonderful month of raising awareness and spreading the word! Also, the next Gambling Awareness Team meeting is April 18th from 10:30-12 via Zoom.

General Funds – Nicole Mason is working on the general funds and will allow APW address identified gaps from the 2022 priority report. It was determined based on the data we will be focusing on alcohol use disorder and co-occurring disorders in adults in the communities of Ansonia, Derby and East Haven.

Suicide – Regional Suicide Advisory Board

- * The RSAB created a mental health training brochure to promote within schools, starting in Fall. The brochure includes Gizmo, SOS, QPR, MHFA and the C-SSRS screener. They'll be printed by May.

- * The RSAB is working on a self-care calendar for Mental Health Awareness month, which will be shared with all our networks.

- * On Friday, May 3rd, we'll be tabling at Francis T. Maloney High School in Meriden for their annual Mental Health Day.

- * We have a virtual community QPR training on Wednesday, May 8th at 11am, and have a few available spots if anyone is interested in attending. Please reach out to Taylor for registration information.

- * On Monday, May 13th, the NVHD will be hosting a free in-person MHFA training from 8am-4pm, held at their office (98 Bank St. Seymour, CT). Flyer attached in email.

- * Link to share in chat: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BJBNQFP>

- * On Thursday, May 16th at 11:30am, we'll be partnering with East Haddam Youth Service Bureau to host an in-person QPR training. Please contact Taylor Setzler for registration.

- * We will be hosting a webinar on "Social Media & Youth Mental Health" with Dr. Erin Belfort, a Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Expert from Maine Medical Center, and Tufts University School of Medicine. Date: Thursday, May 23rd - **see attached flyer**

- * Time: 12pm-1pm, CEU credit available

- * Flyer attached in email

- * Link to share in chat: <https://bhcare-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwufuGsrzwvGtMaDynIXD64FPCXPVFQXSXZ#/registration>

- * If anyone is interested in bringing Gizmo to your community, please contact Lorrie or Taylor to schedule a date/time.

- * Next RSAB meeting is Tuesday, June 4th at 10:30am via Zoom.

SOR

Narcan trainings continue throughout the region To date more than 744 kits have been distributed in the past 9 months. Continue to recruit for Recovery Friendly Workplaces

Cannabis

Samantha has been hired as our prevention specialist working on cannabis prevention. She is working on needs assessment and building a workplan. As part of the statewide [BelIntheKnowCT.org](https://www.belintheknow.org) campaign APW will be posting the educational awareness on social media. We continue to distribute cannabis safe storage bags with more than 500 distributed to date.

Region 3 –

See attached flyer for upcoming prevention conference!

SERAC is hosting a 2 part series on Fentanyl & Xylazine 101 Training for community 4/16/2024, and Stimulants 101 Training offered to community 4/23/2024

On April 24th, the annual presentation on the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale, will be provided by Adam Lesser, from the Lighthouse Project.

On April 30th, Dr. Danielle Busby, will discuss suicide prevention and mental promotion within the BIPOC community.

Biggest thing: Annual Prevention Conference May 17th 2024

Flyer is attached if you share it with the group please !

Region 4 –

- Very successful PGAM Event in March that focused on Veterans – Senator Blumenthal attended (Amplify and WCTC co-hosted at Amplify in Glastonbury)
- Save the date for “Amplify our Mental Health 2024” on May 16, 2024
- Multiple Gizmo read-alongs being planned.
- Multiple Narcan trainings continue
- Continue to recruit for Recovery Friendly Workplaces
- Samantha Forbes has been hired as a Program Manager
- As part of the statewide [BelIntheKnowCT.org](https://www.belintheknow.org) campaign Amplify will be posting the educational awareness on social media.
- We continue to distribute cannabis safe storage bags.
- General Funds: Amplify is working on the general funds and will allow Amplify to address identified gaps from the 2022 priority report. It was determined based on the data we will be focusing on alcohol use disorder among adults with a possible focus on first responders and other subgroups to be identified.

Region 5 –

On 4/24/24 Western CT Coalition is holding an in-person “Connecting- Right Here, Right Now conference at WCSU in partnership with the CT Healthy Campus Initiative.

RSAB - RSAB meeting on March 27 featured two speakers, one on aging and mental health and one on the LGBTQIA+ population. Afterwards both subcommittees met: the youth mental health subcommittee is coordinating 6-7 Gizmo read-alongs throughout the region for May/Mental Health month and the lethal means subcommittee produced a flyer promoting DEA drug take back day on April 27 as a means of suicide prevention/lethal means restriction. We have an upcoming What is Post-vention? training on April 30 at EdAdvance in Litchfield and our next RSAB meeting is in person on May 22 at the Heritage.

Opioid Workgroup - Last month's meeting highlighted Recovery Friendly Workplaces and Employment Services at Ability Beyond. This month's meeting will be Jim Duffy from Smoke Works out of Boston to talk about stimulants and harm reduction. We will meet in person at Wheeler in Waterbury in May.

Problem Gambling Awareness Team

3 Community Conversation on Gambling presentations scheduled with senior centers within our region, Elmwood Hall, Sherman Senior Center, Newtown Senior Center. We are in the process of disseminating gambling awareness resources through Latino/Hispanic community outreach. Running a poll during our next meeting so members can assess which role they desire the most in the time and how much time they can commit to starting/working on a project for our region's community. Disseminating Care Packages with gambling awareness and senior wellness resources to **11 different senior centers**:

CACs-CAC 20 is coordinating a survey about loneliness, CAC 21 and 22 are both going through a restructuring process with new leadership and community outreach to all communities within their catchment areas.

RFW: Statewide RFW coordinators presented to the ADPC Prevention Sub-committee. Collaborative efforts with groups like Ability Beyond and the Waterbury Opioid Workgroup have focused on integrating recovery and employment into local opioid response strategies. Despite some barriers with prospective agency engagement, on-

going workforce development activities are strengthening the framework for more effective onboarding and resource sharing among RFW coordinators. Coordinator is currently in the process of working with Apex Community Cares for their RFW declaration.

R5SAB Youth Mental Health: Looking ahead to International Mental Health Month the R5SAB Youth Mental Health Subcommittee (AKA Gizmo Subcommittee) is coordinating read-alongs in 11 towns. There is a call for young artists to submit artworks reflecting mental wellness and resilience by June 1st, 2024 in an art expose titled "Youth Mental Health: Visions of Resilience" initiative.

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

- 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, May 15, 2024, beginning at 2:30 PM.