

State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
June 17, 2020
Microsoft TEAMS Meeting

Present online: Chmn. John Hamilton, Paul Acker, Dr. J. Craig Allen, Sharon Castelli, Michele Devine, Marcia DuFore, Dr. Duvi, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Ingrid Gillespie, Jennifer Henry, Pam Mautte, Manuel Paris, Brian Reignier, Thomas Russo, Kevin Sevarino, Margaret Watt

DMHAS Staff: Commr. Delphin-Rittmon, Deputy Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Yvonne Addo, Cheri Bragg, Marilyn Duran, Brenda Earle, Ana Florence, Marlene Jacques, Carol Meredith

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 May 20, 2020 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

- COVID-19 – Commr. Delphin-Rittmon identified critical areas that DMHAS has been working on:
 - Aggregate data across DMHAS for both patients and staff: We are pleased to see a down turn on the number of positive diagnosis. We have not had a positive diagnosis for COVID-19 for both patients and staff for over two weeks.
 - The Isolation Unit is now empty.
 - COVID-19 Testing: WFH is now testing all staff. There were two positive diagnoses within the last week and both were asymptomatic. It is helpful to be able to do the testing and know what our patterns and trends are. Testing is an on-going priority.
 - We did have to decrease some of our capacity at our Addictions Services Division (ASD) and are now looking to gradually and slowly increase that capacity.
 - DMHAS is now focusing on re-opening and this is also on a gradual basis as staff continue to telework. We have right now over a thousand staff teleworking. We are looking to not exceed fifty percent capacity at our facilities. We are also looking to do screenings at the Hartford office for people entering. Each facility has a re-opening/planning group that will work on things such as looking at space and spreading people out.
 - PPE is an on-going area of focus for DMHAS. A request of PPE is submitted every two weeks. We are continuing to let our community private not-for profit providers know that as they need PPE to submit those requests and as soon as we get the PPE we will give them as needed.

There was some discussion on the increase in numbers of people who have experienced trauma/anxiety caused by COVID-19 and the need for services. In terms of trauma, it may increase, due to the increase on the use of alcohol and substance use. Telehealth is being done in a lot of facilities now.

- **Legislative Session-** We are anticipating a summer special session.
- **Budget-** It is not clear yet, if there is a special session this summer. We will keep you posted.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation & Discussions - Topic: Social Justice & Health Equity

DMHAS Director of the Office of Multicultural Health Equity (OMHE), Ellen Boynton, presented on social justice and health equity. The goal of OMHE is to assure that cultural competence/responsiveness is an integral quality of all services that DMHAS provides for people of every ethnic/cultural group. Ellen talked about 7 Values of Community – Guidelines; Know who we are and who we want to be – Cycle of Socialization; Oppression and Privilege - Micro-aggressions; Skilled Agents of Change - Multicultural Change Process; Understanding Bias and the Impact of Bias.

OMHE assists our State Operated and DMHAS funded behavioral healthcare agencies, to address Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon's priority to implement culturally responsive and culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) in the provision of effective person-centered quality services in an effort to reduce disparities.

Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon stated that DMHAS has a Health Equity Plan. We have been able to have continuity, in terms of evolving our vision and approach to addressing cultural competence and health disparities. We take a multi-dimensional approach. We address things from an individual training perspective. We look at and disaggregate our data based on race, ethnicity, gender and age. Some of those outcomes then help to inform some of our intervention and approaches. We have also developed an organizational measure of cultural competence; that is actually in publication. What that allows us to do is to look at cultural competence from an organizational level. We will be continuing our work here at DMHAS to address these issues and continue to implement meaningful change on an on-going basis. For more information contact Ellen Boynton at ellen.boynton@ct.gov.

Agenda Item 5: Summer schedules & possible workgroups

- Summer subcommittee workgroups:
 - Marijuana (Kevin Sevarino, Craig Allen, and others)
 - Social Justice and Health Equity (Chairman John Hamilton, Paul Acker, Jennifer Henry, Liberations Recovery Support Specialist Wendy)

Each group should have a Chairperson and have some follow-up maybe during the months of July and August and/or updates for the next meeting in September. John Hamilton volunteered to Chair the Social Justice and Health Equity workgroup.

Agenda Item 6: General Updates and Announcements -

- Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon announced that during the past three months DMHAS has been fortunate to apply for and get federal grants. One of the SAMHSA grants received will allow DMHAS to fund and expand some of the crisis calling hours. A grant from FEMA was received for crisis counseling and this will allow us to hire four additional staff to provide crisis counseling as part of 211 and twenty additional crisis counselors that will be able to provide crisis work and counseling associated with individuals that are currently connected to some of the hotels as a function of decompressing shelters. Five individual counselors will be hired to help connect the aging population that DMHAS serves and are connected with LMHAs and living in the community or assisted living facilities or nursing homes. DMHAS is also funding, with state dollars, the Suicide Prevention Life-line.
- Dr. Craig Allen announced a data waiver training on Medications for Addiction Treatment: MAT 8-Hour Waiver Training with Charles Atkins, MD, Craig Allen, MD & Lori Sobel, MD on July 20th, 2020 8am - 5pm. This training will now be offered virtually and its free.
- Chairman John Hamilton announced that the Liberations program was the only program selected in Connecticut by NIDA for a multi-site clinical trial on medication-assisted treatment in recovery. It is a partnership with Yale University.

- Marcia Dufore, of Region 4, announced that a virtual series is coming up on Healing through COVID and Racism and Bridging Behavioral Health Gaps to Healthy Communities for June 24th and July 1st. Both Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon and Ellen Boynton will be part of the panel on the virtual series.
- Margaret Watt, of Region 1, announced that Region 1 will have their annual meeting Friday, June 19, 2020. There will also be a rollout of the regional suicide post-intervention planning training for the community. This will be a three-day online training. A flyer will come out today and the training will be in July.

Agenda Item 7: Ideas for future meeting topics and presenters –

Some ideas that were brought up were to have presentations on:

- The impact of COVID on mental health issues during this pandemic.
- “Death and Despair” as a topic of presentation that address the increase of suicide and interweaves with COVID and isolation, social distancing as opposed to physical distancing in safe socializing.
- Have Alternatives to Suicide, a peer run support group, do a presentation.
- Have Billy Bromage, of the Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health (PRCH), do a presentation. He is a founding member of Focus Act Connect Every-day (FACE) to talk about community and recovery. He has formed a group that is resewing the fabric of a community and making sure that people who have been excluded from the community are part of the weaving of it. FACE takes part in community events and issues.

Agenda Item 8: Next Microsoft Team Meeting September 16, 2020

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 beginning at 2:30 PM.