

State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
June 15, 2022
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present online: Chmn. John Hamilton, Janice Andersen, Sharon Castelli, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Pamela Mautte, Giovanna Mozzo, Denise Paley, Larry Pittinger, Brian Reignier, Joseph Riter, Kevin Sevarino, CTN

DMHAS Staff: Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Cheryl Arora, Marilyn Duran, Colleen Harrington, Marlene Jacques, Chris McClure, Arthur Mongillo, Elsa Ward

Excused: Dr. J Craig Allen, Ingrid Gillespie

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Call to Order

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 18th meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

- **COVID-19** — Commr. Navarretta reported as of yesterday, in terms of COVID, only six in-patient individuals are COVID positive and eight staff who work on inpatient units are positive. There are six units on quarantine out of 31. Most of the activity, unfortunately, was at Whiting Forensic Hospital, although people are a lot less sick than previously. They were not incapacitated, but since they were positive they were separate them from the general population.
- **Budget** – Commr. Navarretta stated that in terms of budget essentially DMHAS is wrapping up fiscal year 22 and preparing for July 1st; with the focus on some of the ARPA dollars that were allocated specifically using a similar algorithm as last year to get mobile crisis dollars out to our mobile crisis teams.
- **Legislation** – Commr. Navarretta announced in terms of legislation, Chief of Staff Chris McClure is taking the lead on making sure everyone has his or her assignments because of the legislative session. So he will be making sure to close all those loops and he is going to be tracking on what we are responsible for over the next year. Chris added that undoubtedly there is a lot of interest in the various work groups and task forces and committees that are newly established or have new memberships. If you have people, you would like to steer his way, who have expressed interest, please do so.
- **Other** – Commr. Navarretta reported that workforce recruitment is an ongoing struggle. It is something we are putting a lot of time and energy into and our HR partners through DAS are working as fast as they can. DAS is also short staffed to bring people in whether they are social workers, nurses, doctors and support staff on all fronts and as fast as we bring people in people are retiring and moving along.

Agenda Item 4: Workgroup Updates/General Updates/Announcements

- **Marijuana/Cannabis Workgroup:** Kevin Sevarino announced that the work he is doing is part of the ADPC subcommittee cannabis workgroup. They are now making recommendations in eight different areas of policy to the state. However, the area he was involved with was packaging and potency it does look like the recommendation is going to be potency limits of 30% for the cannabis flower and 60% for concentrates, which would make Connecticut only the second state to have those limits. The division of Drug Control is concerned that potency limits would be ineffective because with the flower people would just smoke more and that would drive more people into the black market and it would drive more people over state lines to buy the unrestricted products in Massachusetts. All of which are valid points. Most of us on the small subcommittee felt

like we should not throw in the towel and have potency limits and at least be able to study it for a year or two, and then if they are ineffective, maybe get rid of them and if they are effective, modify them.

- **Region 1:** Janice Andersen announced they are doing a lot of work in the in the Bridgeport public schools around finding those young kids who got lost in COVID and we are doing a lot of work within the streets of Bridgeport around the violence issue. QPR and Narcan training will continue in the region through the summer.
- **Region 2:** Pamela Mautte reported some of the local prevention councils are going to be hosting some community movies on both mental health and substance use at the North Haven cinemas. The region is also doing a lot of Narcan trainings and suicide training.
- **Region 5:** Allison Fulton reported that region five most recently has been working with communities and getting surveys coming back. So now, they are going through all the data from the youth services from this past spring. In addition, helping to coordinate how they are going to present this data to their communities going forward. A staff person attended a vaping program done by a woman at Southern Connecticut State University and she learned how to put together vaping quit kits. Kits have been assembled and taken to a couple of the schools and one of the universities and now they are being offered to the rest of our local prevention councils to distribute in their communities. Therefore, anybody who wants to quit has a kit with guidelines and advice on how to maintain distance from their vape.

Agenda Item 5: Potential Future Topics (need for Presenters):

- Alcohol Awareness
- Coordinated Access Networks with DOH/211
- Ketamine for Depression – Dr. Charles Dike

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 21st beginning at 2:30 PM.