

State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
May 18, 2022
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present online: Chmn. John Hamilton, Sharon Castelli, Jordan Fairchild, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Ingrid Gillespie, Pamela Mautte, Giovanna Mozzo, Allyson Nadeau, Denise Paley, Manuel Paris, Larry Pittinger, Brian Reignier, CTN

DMHAS Staff: Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Cheryl Arora, Marilyn Duran, Colleen Harrington, Marlene Jacques, Mary Mason, Chris McClure, Carol Meredith, Arthur Mongillo, Elsa Ward, Jose Crego

Excused: Kevin Sevarino

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 April 20th meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

- **COVID-19** – Commr. Navarretta reported that in terms of our statewide system of care we have seventeen (17) patients and thirty-three (33) staff that are COVID positive. We continue to follow all CDC protocols.
- **Budget** – Commr. Navarretta stated that overall DMHAS did very well with the budget and maintained infrastructure. Regarding the SUD 1115 project implemented with DMHAS in collaboration with DCF and DSS, there is some money coming out of the DMHAS GA account to pay claims. DMHAS will no longer pay claims. DSS will pay claims. There is money that goes into our grant account to continue to support organizations for the unentitled and for things not covered by Medicaid.

Hospital Discharges and Housing Services - Some good news around hospital discharges and housing services is 2.25 million dollars to expand supportive housing services that match up with the rental assistance program through DOH. There are some additional dollars to support hospital discharges with wrap around services and YAS caseload growth. That is great news! We want to support people to be successful and good neighbors and maintain wellness while being housed.

Military Support Program- There is a small amount of money for the military support program, which has been running successfully for years now.

DMHAS Mobile Crisis- There is three million dollars for DMHAS PNP mobile crisis services providers. In terms of ARPA there is money for the increase of COLA for PNPs. There is also money in OPM that we have not received additional guidance on how this will roll out. There are little grants for infrastructure supports related to COVID. There is some money for Bridge services from mobile and mental health peer supports in hospital EDs. DMHAS received money for EHR and public awareness campaign.

- **Legislation** – Mary Kate Mason provided an update on the legislative session. Many bills got tucked into other bills to ensure their passage. A few highlights that make a big difference are the two opioid bills that we worked on and are pleased that passed. One is the Governor's bill related to the opioids settlement that will set up a member's council appointed by various people to oversee all of the opioid settlement money that is coming into the state; so that it can go toward evidence-based practices and the mitigation of the opioid crisis. DMHAS is charged with setting up the council and staffing it. The second opioid bill that passed is HB 5430, which allows methadone to be dispensed from mobile treatment vans. The bill also legalizes fentanyl test strips.

Whiting Forensic Hospital -The WFH bill includes suggested changes made by the taskforce to include a working group to review the PSRB to see if any changes need to be made. DMHAS is charged with coming up with a written plan for the construction of a new Whiting Max building. It allows patients under the jurisdiction of PSRB to apply to the PSRB for temporary leave and it also allows DMHAS to transfer patients from Whiting Max and the Dutcher building without a hearing by the PSRB. It requires DMHAS to work with DAS to review salaries of professionals to address salary gaps between the public and private sectors. It changes the WFH Advisory Board to an oversight council and gives them additional powers and requirements to review.

RBHAOs-The bill regarding RBHAOs now has new language regarding the State Board membership.

- **Other** – Commr. Navarretta announced that Mary Kate Mason, Director of Government Relations is retiring May 31st this is her last official meeting with the Board. Carol Meredith, Director of Prevention and Health Promotion is retiring as well and this her last meeting. Elsa Ward, Director of Recovery Community Affairs is making her way out to programs across the state and she is more than happy to accept invitations to any social clubs, workshops or community events. Please feel free to contact her at Elsa.Ward@ct.gov

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

Jose reported that currently there are 13 patients and 18 staff members that are tested positive for COVID-19 at WFH. We continue to have one (1) large isolation unit to monitor and take care of our patients. The patients that are COVID-19 positive are asymptomatic.

Precaution Protocol- Masks continue to be mandated throughout the hospital. N95 masks and face shields are available for all staff and remain available for all patients should they wish to use them. Our continued relationship with the Middletown Department of Public Health is a fruitful one. Since March 2021, they provided our patients with 126 initial vaccines, 150 boosters and 32 second booster shots. We continue to work with them as units come on and off quarantine in order to meet the patients' demands and needs to be boosted for COVID-19. On daily calls throughout the hospital, we continue to remind folks of best practices for both inside and outside of the hospital in order to keep our COVID-19 positive numbers low.

Risk Management Trending Report: Overall, restraints in WFH were decreased to 21 and Dutcher to five (5). There were a total of 198 incidents; 3 critical incident reviews; 39 aggressive acts to self and patients.

Mr. Crego reported that the Safewords Milieu Management model is now fully implemented. "Our work to bring college level classes to the hospital continues and we are working with our partners at Middlesex Community College to have on campus classes brought to the hospital for our patients so they can work towards an associate degree. We have a robust in-house educational program where our state schoolteacher does a lot of work with patients for literacy as well as high school diploma equivalency testing. We will continue to expand on this and our vocational opportunities for patients and enhance their ability to a greater sense of self and success once discharged from the hospital so they may enter the community with actual marketable skills. As far clinical programming we continue to enhance our robust co-occurring disorders programming for all of our groups both on the units and off the hospital".

Agenda Item 5: Workgroup Updates/General Updates/Announcements

- **Marijuana/Cannabis Workgroup:** Carol Meredith gave an update. This workgroup is part of the ADPC and continues to meet monthly. Two (2) big initiatives that the group has been tackling are 1.) The O'Donnell Group to help with the development of the statewide campaign. Currently they are conducting these expert interviews and focus groups with target populations to help inform the messages. We hope that by September we can start to see the campaign taking shape. We still have the statewide billboards up in CT. 2.) We are also tackling policy recommendations around Youth consumption that we'll be making to the governor and

general assembly at the beginning of next year. So, we have filtered into small groups that are taking on various policy sections and presenting them to the full group. Our plan is to draft something to be able to share with the ADPC for their review and approval.

- Chmn. John Hamilton will work on a survey examining the composition of state board membership as well as the skillset and knowledge base that people bring in and some guidelines along those lines. This will be distributed to the state board. John announced that there is a statewide conference on Harm Reduction this Friday in partnership with the Women's Consortium.
- Region 1: Giovanna Mozzo announced that May is Mental Health Awareness month. Many activities are happening throughout the state and especially in region 1. There is something going on every day multiple times a day. We have had Mental Health Proclamations and several events including MPW. Several upcoming events have been coordinated on behalf of the HUB. The first virtual event is *Understanding the Elderly and Suicide* and also the White House will be presenting on their suicide screening tool the CSSRS and we will have a presentation on the LGBTQI Plus – *How to be an ally*. The HUB will now co-chair the Greenwich CHIP and the Bridgeport CHIP Behavioral Health Taskforces. We will be working with many providers in our community. This information is on our weekly newsletter and social media and our website. We also have a 2x a month Naloxone and QPR training. Open to all. You can register via <https://www.thehubct.org/events>
- Region 5: Allison Fulton reported that this month Region 5 has participated with Post University, WCSU and Joe Barlow High School supporting their fresh check days for mental health. We also do a monthly newsletter. Last night we hosted our second showing of a documentary by Greg Williams, *Tipping the Pain Scale*. We have Gizmo readings for young people, related to suicide. For more information go to our website www.wctcoalition.org
- Region 2: Pamela Mautte reported that it has been busy in Region 2. There are a bunch of mental health first aid trainings coming up as part of Mental Health Awareness month. We continue with our ongoing Narcan and QPR trainings bi-weekly. We have been very engaged in our communities through their prevention week or mental health promotion. We have an upcoming de-escalation training that will be held on June 6. More information are posted on www.apw-ct.org

Agenda Item 6: Potential Future Topics (need for Presenters):

- Alcohol Awareness
- Coordinated Access Networks with DOH/211

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 15th beginning at 2:30 PM.