

**State of Connecticut**  
**State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services**  
**May 17, 2023**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Present online:** Chmn. John Hamilton, Craig Allen, Rebecca Allen, Thomas Burr, Angela Rae Duhaime, Jordan Fairchild, Allison Fulton, Giovanna Mozzo, Allyson Nadeau, Manuel Paris, Larry Pittinger, Brian Reignier, Kevin Sevarino, CTN

**DMHAS Staff:** Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Deputy Commr. Colleen Harrington, Cheryl Arora, Marilyn Duran, Mary Mason, Chris McClure, Arthur Mongillo, Kelly Ramsey-Fuhlbrigge, Sarju Shah, Elsa Ward

**Excused:** Sharon Castelli, Pamela Mautte

**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 April 19th meeting were reviewed and accepted.

**Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update**

**Legislation** – Kelly Ramsey-Fuhlbrigge gave an update on some of the legislative bills being tracked:

- HB 6729, which is the Commissioners bill, passed the House. It is noncontroversial, and is about our advisory boards, adding expertise and seats.
- SB 1067, an act concerning adequate and saving healthcare staffing. DMHAS is a part of a large coalition to help improve nurse staffing, which will enhance WFH.
- SB 9, and act concerning health and wellness for CT residents. This is also becoming quite the aircraft carrier. SB 6913 an act concerning opioids; SB-919, an act establishing a Task Force to study childhood and adult psychosis. These two bills are merged into SB 9 and there might be a couple more including some feasibility of licensing reciprocity agreements or licensing compacts for healthcare providers.
- SB 1082, an act implementing the recommendations of the Department of Transportation, regarding a reduction in blood alcohol limits for impaired driving and boating, and that will send more people to the pretrial alcohol and drug education program. This bill looks like it is still alive, and it is on the Senate calendar waiting for action.
- HB 6897, an act concerning the mobile narcotic treatment program. This bill is still alive.
- HB 6698, and at concerning drug policy, substance abuse and peer support services. This bill does not look like it is going to make it on the House calendar.
- SB 6914, an act concerning the use of funds in the opioid and tobacco settlement fund, and funds received by the state as part of any settlement agreement with the manufacturer of electronic nicotine delivery system in vapor products. This bill has been amended with an Attorney General's amendment, it is a joint amendment House and Republicans are all in favor to add the jewels of funding to the bill, which was in another bill which was in HB6898. These bills were merged.
- SB 972 and act concerning crisis intervention training for police officers and collaboration between police officers and social workers. This was the bill discussed at the last meeting and Brian Reignier was very kind enough to offer to send a letter to the Co-chairs of the of the committee to see if we can get it amended to make sure that CABLE is the educational component for this bill.

**Budget** – No new updates to report.

**Other** – Commr. Navarretta has been participating in a lot of events this May for Mental Health Month. She reported that Julienne Giard, Kim Karanda and herself, attended the SAMHSA Region One conference in-person, which for us is the New England states, also attended by other state agencies and commissioners. Connecticut is

the only New England state that has seen a slight decrease in overdose. It is not something that we are celebrating because we are still seeing a lot of deaths. The final report will probably come out this month with the final numbers. People were very complimentary of the work that we are doing on both mental health and substance use. So, it is nice to get the confirmation and it is from all the sectors of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, special populations. Compared to other states, we do have significant general fund dollars and things like supported employment, supportive housing, mobile crisis, peer supports, and less dependent on reimbursement than some other states are because of the general fund base that we have.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Prevention and Health Promotion – Sarju Shah, Director**

Sarju provided highlights of some of the projects and of the grant that they are currently working on within prevention. The first grant is the strategic prevention framework for prescription drugs, also known as a SPF-Rx 2021. This is a five-year SAMHSA award for a total of \$1.92 million. The goal is to reduce non-medical use of prescription drugs and prevent overdoses; to focus on student learning, increasing workforce development, data collection, and analysis and distribution. They also have collaborative partners including UCONN School of Pharmacy, UCONN Center for Prevention, Evaluation and Statistics, DCP and local health department. The goal for the Student Learning program is working on the curriculum and restructuring the curriculum to learn and expand their knowledge related to prevention to the different substances and to build capacity and implement prevention strategies as well as strengthening the workforce and identify gaps and needs.

The other grant fund is a state opioid response (SOR) a two-year funding cycle from SAMHSA and the current funding is ending in 9/2024 to reduce the opioid overdose related deaths. The focus is on education, awareness and outreach also training and workforce development.

The next grant is Partnerships for Success. It is a 5-year SAMSHA award for \$6.25 million to reduce underage drinking among 12- to 17-year-olds and the focus is on education, awareness, training, enforcement, and capacity building. The plan is administered by DMHAS Prevention and Health Promotion Division and its being evaluated by the Center for Prevention Evaluation and Statistics (CPES). The ADPC Prevention Subcommittee is the advisory group for all their prevention activities.

Projects on the horizon. One of them is the Prescription Drug Overdose (PDO) a 5-year grant for about \$4.25 million to reduce the number of prescription drug/opioid overdose related deaths and adverse events for those 18 and over; by educating and raising awareness and implementation of overdose prevention strategies and training of and the partnership with first responders.

And finally, they just received notice from SAMHSA that there is a Improve Local 980 Capacity grant award that came out, the application is due on June 26<sup>th</sup> and is approximately a three-million-dollar grant for a total of three years. Its focus is to improve state's response to 988 contacts. DMHAS as a state agency wil applying for it with the support of our other sister agencies as well.

#### **Agenda Item 5: RBHAO Report**

Angela Duhaime, Executive Director of SERAC did the update for the RBHAOs. Most of them are focusing on national prevention week so this has been a very big week for them, with a lot of social media. They have some vaping and education billboards happening around prevention and awareness for the local prevention councils. There is a lot of mental health awareness going on and so they have been hosting trainings, there are some billboards that have been going out. They have had some opioid radio ads, bus ads, billboards, information around Change The Script that they are making sure the community is getting that information. There are around five business the past month that are working towards their certification for a recovery friendly workplace.

Each region is in the process of planning their Attorney General meeting. Where they will discuss the opioid settlement dollars and just really trying to give communities and partners a little bit of guidance.

Some of them are onboarding and hiring in terms of problem gambling coordinators, so they are also increasing their education and awareness around gambling, addiction and intervention. And they have had some mental health first aid training. Some of their work is transitioning more to in person.

Priority reports have been submitted too. The behavioral Health Planning Council will be reviewing them and then once finalized they will be ready for dissemination.

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

Homeless Taskforce: Chrmn. John Hamilton spoke about the Homeless Taskforce group that comes out of this committee and has been meeting now monthly. John attended the 20th Annual training conference for the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness. It was very well attended with several 100 people there. DMHAS was a Co-sponsor of that as well as Bank of America. Through the committee meetings and Task force they were able to include a presentation on harm reduction. Mark Jenkins and Liz Evans spoke on harm reduction and low barrier care for the homeless population. That seems to be a real interest in those that run homeless shelters to be able to be better equipped in the mindset and in the strategies of how to deal with people that are needing harm reduction services. John thought it was a very successful conference and encourage people on this group in the future to attend these initiatives because it does overlap with those that we serve with DMHAS.

Marijuana Taskforce Subcommittee: Kevin stated that the subcommittee has not met and there are about four of them left on the subcommittee. The DCP is addressing a loophole where hemp products were able to have supplementation of THC into it and it appears to be legal. This is gaining traction in the House with a lot of pushbacks from hemp growers in Northcentral CT; in the federal level there is more traction in the House for an amendment to the Safe Banking Act that will allow banks to service cannabis establishments. So up till now they have not been able to do that and if that passes then it will greatly expand the business opportunities for the sale of cannabis. Dr. Allen added we should look at our recommendations for healthcare providers in regard to harm reduction in the use of cannabis. There is some information that we have and that we know and that has been published that we might want to share in a broader way. Kevin thinks that health care providers really are not sure what to do with cannabis use now and that is something the group can look at and see if there are recommendations already out there or come up with a list that they can disseminate.

CCAR: Rebecca Allen wanted to share with this group that Executive Director Phil Valentine is the recipient of the William White Lifetime Achievement Award by Faces and Voices of Recovery. This is a national award and he received it for his significant contributions to the recovery movement through advocacy research and policy changes. Former colleague Michael Askew just started his new role as Deputy Director of the SAMHSA Office of Recovery and that is quite an achievement.

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

- *DMHAS Facilities LMHAs Services*
- *Peer Support Certification*

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 21, 2023 beginning at 2:30 PM.