

State of Connecticut
State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
September 15, 2021
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present online: Chmn. John Hamilton, J. Craig Allen, Rebecca Allen, Sharon Castelli, Michele Devine, Kathy Flaherty, Allison Fulton, Ingrid Gillespie, Jennifer Henry, Elizabeth Kerrigan, Joe Lindbeck, Joanne Montgomery, Giovanna Mozzo, Allyson Nadeau, Manuel Paris, Sandrine Pirard, Larry Pittinger, Brian Reignier, Kevin Sevarino

Excused: Kevin Sevarino

DMHAS Staff: Acting Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Yvonne Addo, Jose Crego, Marilyn Duran, Marlene Jacques, Mary Mason, Carol Meredith, Art Mongillo

Agenda Item 1: Welcome Elizabeth F. Kerrigan and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:30 PM by John Hamilton. Elizabeth (Beth) Kerrigan was introduced to the Board.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of previous meeting review and action

The minutes from June 16, 2021 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update

- **COVID-19** — Acting Commr. Navarretta provided the update on COVID-19. DMHAS continues to follow all COVID-19 protocols: Approximately 70% of all staff are vaccinated and a similar percentage of in-patient clients are vaccinated across all state operated facilities. We encourage staff and clients to be vaccinated. DMHAS is working with the DPH mobile vaccination units and, when called, DPH mobile vaccination units come on-site to DMHAS state-operated facilities. This makes it easy and accessible to staff and clients. With the new Governor's Executive Orders on vaccination mandates, we expect more staff will get vaccinated. Weekly testing is done on all our patient care facilities including CVH and unvaccinated staff. Contact tracing is done when someone tests positive. Even with the Delta variant, our positivity rate is very low for our staff and clients. Since the beginning of August, only one patient was tested positive across our state operated in-patient settings.
- **Legislative Session** – Mary Kate Mason provided the update. DMHAS is convening a group to look at the health benefits of Psilocybin and the first TEAMS meeting is on 9/22. DMHAS has been moving forward on securing electronic health records and have solicited proposals from vendors. The CVH and Whiting Task Force is finishing their deliberations and will provide a report soon. A survey from the State will be coming out soon asking board members to provide information related to their race and ethnicity. This data is necessary so the boards and commissions may reflect the diverse population in CT (Public Act-49). The DMHAS legislative "wish list" letter was sent to all. If you have items that you would like to see included in the legislative package please submit your ideas to Mary.mason@ct.gov.
- **Budget** – Tabled
- **Other** – Acting Commr. Navarretta shared information on some of the projects that DMHAS has been working on. The 988 Mental Health Crisis Response is federal legislation that is requiring all states to bring up 988 as we have 911 and this has to be implemented by July 2022. DMHAS received \$130K for a planning grant and 211. United Way also participated in the planning, and they do the DMHAS's Action Line and many other services for the state. Essentially, this will replace the national suicide prevention line. DMHAS will also be doing a prevention media campaign on cannabis and amplifying our OUD messaging and reinvigorating an AUD campaign. The DMHAS Opioid Response is ongoing and the rate is less than last year. There is an opioid settlement with the pharmaceutical companies and CT is part of this. DMHAS is working

closely with OPM to provide DMHAS PNP's funding from the American Rescue Relief Act grant, for \$50M over the course of 2yrs. for salaries and capital improvements.

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

Weekly soft testing continues which is mandatory for all staff members that are not fully vaccinated. A good number of staff have been fully vaccinated and we continue to encourage those that are not to do so. Eighty-seven (87) staff members have tested positive since the pandemic started, 85 have returned to work, and two are out on quarantine. A total of 18 positive cases for patients and there has been no positive cases since March 26, 2021. Over 64% of patients have been vaccinated and vaccination for patients continues. The Middletown health department is working closely with WFH to assist with vaccinations for all newly admitted patients that have not been fully vaccinated and those who are partially vaccinated. The capacity at the hospital remains unchanged at 229.

Regarding risk management and trending for the 4th quarter ending June 30, 2021, there were three (3) allegations down from 14 for the previous quarter. There were four (4) restraints in the Whiting building on a monthly average, which was down from 11 for the previous quarter. The total time for someone restrained was .96 hours down from 1 hour for the previous quarter. The Dutcher building had an increase in restraints on a monthly average from three (3) to seven (7). The average time in restraints increased from one to 1.13 hours. Seclusion in the Whiting building went up to 8.33 from five (5) for the previous month. The total time in seclusion went from 1.24 to 1.31 hours. There were no seclusions in the Dutcher building for the last 2 quarters. Emergency room visits were down from the last quarter from 23 to 19.

All processes and procedures are in place to accommodate PA-21-75, which allows patients in Whiting building to be present during room searches. Changes to programming continues to allow for more co-occurring and trauma informed treatment on all units. During the last quarter, monthly programming meetings have started on all units geared to the patients in all units. The Cultural and Diversity Committee and the Bridge Conversations continue and are more robust and going very well. The Recovering Citizens and Learning Collaboration continues and all steering committees are in place. The RSS training continues and there were two (2) patients that graduated from the Recovery University through Advocacy Unlimited. The Technology Committee continues to look at ways to incorporate technology safely to expand programming and other opportunities for patients within the hospital.

Agenda Item 5: Presentation: A Best Practice Approach for Meeting People Where They Are - Liberation Programs, Inc. - Joanne Montgomery

Liberation Programs' mission is to provide prevention, treatment, and recovery services to help individuals and their families impacted by substance use and mental health conditions to foster hope and maintain wellness. Founded in 1971, Liberation is one of Fairfield County's premier behavioral health service providers specializing in treating substance misuse and mental health disorders. Liberation assists people struggling with opiates, alcohol, depressants, and/or stimulants, and provides services for adults, families, and youth via inpatient and outpatient treatment, treatment and resources for adolescents and their families, community efforts focused on education, prevention, and wellness, and permanent supportive housing for families.

Perhaps Liberation's boldest step forward since the Families in Recovery Program opened in 1994, the Pelletier Wellness Center provides an open and welcoming space free of stigma for our Recoverees. Currently this program serves over 850 Recoverees weekly and includes new services, including primary care through a partnership with Southwest Community Health Center, to make the recovery process simpler, easier, and more accessible to those who need help the most.

Funded in part by DMHAS, Liberation's Mobile Wellness Van Program offers outreach services to help Recoverees where they are. With services offered in Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk, and Bridgeport, the Vans offer referrals to care, a Recovery Coach, harm reduction supplies, NARCAN for overdose reversal, and more.

A grant-funded effort in partnership with DMHAS and the McCall Center for Behavioral Health in Torrington, the Community and Law Enforcement for Addiction Recovery (CLEAR) Program was created to develop and enhance local law enforcement and first responder-led diversion and outreach efforts and expand the availability of Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR) and peer support recovery services.

Some upcoming initiatives are 1.) Mobile Wellness Van expansion into Greenwich on 9/14/2021. 2.) A mental Health Program in Stamford in partnership with Stamford Health, Liberation provides services onsite at Stamford Health's Long Ridge Road location to patients identified by Stamford Health medical providers. 3.) Police and Community Wellness Services in Bridgeport – A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in place for Liberation to provide ongoing health and wellness services to the Bridgeport Police Department and the community.

Agenda Item 6: Workgroup Updates/General Updates/Announcements

- Giovana Mozzo of Region 1, announced the CAC meeting tomorrow from 2:30-4pm and the Regional Suicide Advisory Board Meeting from 12-2pm on Friday the 17th. <https://www.thehubct.org/events>
- Carol Meredith from DHMAS, extended an invitation to those interested in joining the Marijuana Workgroup that has been established as part of the ADPC and as required by legislation.
- Ingrid Gillespie of Liberation Programs announced that on 9/27 the 8th Annual Recovery Celebration will be held at the Sacred Heart University Community Theater in Fairfield. You can attend in person or livestream. To watch the live stream event online, go to <https://youtu.be/RWb7rguFS4E>
- Rebecca Allen of CCAR, announced that they are holding a Recovery Festival on Saturday the 18th at Quassy Amusement Park. This will be a fun filled event. The entrance to the park is free and parking with a pass from CCAR. <https://ccar.us/ccar-events/recovery-fest/>
- Allison Fulton of Western CT Coalition, announced the kick off a Quarterly Peer Supports and Recovery Coaches Subcommittee meeting that will be held via Zoom and peers and colleagues are all welcome. To get the Zoom link and suggest topics e-mail: jdewitt@waterburyct.org
- Jennifer Henry of Advocacy Unlimited, shared with everyone that she is working on a project making Care Packages that she started last year and was successful. She is making Care Packages for 300 clients at CVH and hopes to get this to them by the end of this year. If you would like to support please contact Jennifer at jhenry@advocacyunlimited.org

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

- Crisis Response – [Julienne Giard, DMHAS CSD Director & Dana Begin, Manager]
- Update on Housing Gaps and Challenges [Alice Minervino, DMHAS & Steve DiLella, DOH]
- RBHAO's State Wide Priority Report – [Jenn Sussman]
- Psilocybin and Ketamine [Dr. Dike]
- Peer Bridger Program – AU staff [Dana Smith, Program Manager & Jennifer Henry, Advocacy Engagement Specialist]
- Olmstead Initiative – AU Staff
- Alcohol Awareness

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 20th beginning at 2:30 PM.