



Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council

Child/Adolescent Quality, Access & Policy Committee

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Co-Chairs: Steve Girelli & Jeff Vanderploeg

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Next Committee Meeting Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 2:00 PM via Zoom

Attendees: *Dr. Steve Girelli (Co-Chair), Dr. Jeff Vanderploeg (Co-Chair), Corey Atanda, Dr. David Aversa (Beacon), Dr. Lois Berkowitz (DCF), Carrie Bourdon (Beacon), Maria Brereton, Kim Davis (OHA), Melissa Deasy, Tammy Freeberg, Bet Gailor, Elizabeth Garrigan (Beacon), Yvonne Jones (Beacon), Beth Klink, Mickey Kramer (OCA), Valerie Lilley (OCA), Maureen O'Neil Davis, Kelly Phenix, Donyale Pina (DCF), Kathy Schiessl, Erika Sharillo (Beacon), Ann Smith, Howard Sovronsky, Dr. Stephney Springer (DCF), Janessa Stawitz (Jud), and Rod Winstead (DSS)*

Introductions

Co-Chair Steve Girelli called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and reminded participants that the meeting was being recorded. Following that, all participants introduced themselves.

Comments and Discussion from the May 2020 Meeting

There were no questions or further discussion from the Committee's last meeting in May 2020.

BHPOC Ad Hoc Committee on Health Equity and Social Justice in Behavioral Health

Girelli noted that the BHPOC and many of its subcommittees had raised health equity and racial justice as desired areas of focus for a long time but had struggled to concretize that desire. Girelli noted that the recent killings of African Americans and the resulting racial and social unrest and advocacy had spurred the Executive Committee to take action by forming an ad hoc committee on racial justice ("ad hoc committee") as part of the BHPOC structure. Girelli noted that the first meeting took place in mid-October, and that they plan to pursue additional consumer and family participation in the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee decided that a thorough review of Beacon's most recent health equity report would form the basis for their initial meeting/s. Girelli also noted that the ad hoc committee would meet monthly in order to generate motivation and energy.

Co-Chair Jeff Vanderploeg noted that a challenge of the structure of an ad hoc committee is that

it may sequester the issues of health and racial equity within that committee only, rather than ensuring that the BHPOC and its subcommittees actively and intentionally focus their work on health equity and racial justice. One member suggested that a primary goal of the ad hoc committee should be to determine how they can support the BHPOC and its subcommittees to ensure they incorporate racial equity into their work. Another member endorsed this idea and pointed out that the ad hoc committee's ability to ensure bi-directional communication with BHPOC subcommittees would be critical. Another member raised the idea of having a member of the ad hoc committee attend all subcommittees. Multiple participants noted that consumer participation, potentially from CFAC, would be critical to the success of this committee.

Vanderploeg invited participants to brainstorm objectives that we would like the ad hoc committee to consider. One member suggested that the ad hoc committee ensure that racial justice as well as inclusion and diversity be incorporated into all we do, particularly provider policies and practices. One member noted that many or most providers and other organizations are doing extensive internal work to strengthen their approach to health and racial equity and that the ad hoc committee could reach out to providers to learn more about what is happening among providers in this area. Another member suggested that the ad hoc committee consider "user experience" in public mental health and how these experiences vary by race and ethnicity. Another member noted that unnecessary rules around non-emergency medical transportation can contribute to access problems generally, but perhaps especially for low-income members, and individuals from certain racial/ethnic groups. Another member suggested that the ad hoc committee focus on access to school mental health services, particularly among the state's most under-resourced districts. Participants repeatedly raised the importance of two-way communication between the ad hoc committee and other committees. Others noted that the ad hoc committee should focus on disparities in outcomes by race/ethnicity, as well as promoting access for non-English speaking consumers.

Vanderploeg noted that the committee should consider a name change to more directly name the issue(s) on which they are focusing. Participants indicated that this should include racism and other diversity factors that are related to discrimination and inequities. Participants questioned whether the ad hoc committee should become a permanent committee of the BHPOC, or whether they should make recommendations for all other committees to permanently adopt (and subsequently sunset their work). Members again underscored the importance that even though the ad hoc committee has been formed, the BHPOC and its subcommittees should be accountable for incorporating racial equity into their agendas and discussions.

Update from Consumer and Family Advisory Council (CFAC)

Kelly Phenix reported that CFAC had been discussing a proposed parenting intervention, Peace at Home, and wanted to ensure that the evidence behind it was inclusive of diverse populations.

New Business and Adjournment

There being no new business or announcements raised, Steve Girelli adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m. A reminder was provided that the next meeting will be Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 2:00 – 4:00 PM via ZOOM.

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