



BHPOC Work Group on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health

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www.cga.ct.gov/ph/BHPOC

Co-Chairs: Alice Forrester and Selma Ward

Agenda

March 1, 2022 11:00 AM via ZOOM

The BHPOC is committed to creating to an environment that provides equal access to behavioral healthcare in a culturally competent capacity, with particular attention to social and racial justice.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://beaconhealthoptions.zoom.us/j/92035438730?pwd=cGluU1llbjU2UkhRY3ZWdFBXZVpFdz09>

Meeting ID: 920 3543 8730

Passcode: 557201

One tap mobile

+16468769923,,92035438730#,,, *557201# US (New York)

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92035438730@zoomcrc.com

Join by H.323

162.255.37.11 (US West)

162.255.36.11 (US East)

Meeting ID: 920 3543 8730

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Yvonne Jones, David Kaplan, Alice Forrester, Lois Berkowitz, Yohanna Cifuentes, Donyale Pina, Bert Plant, Janine Sullivan Wiley, Heather Gates, Jaya Daptardar-Bridges, Stephney Springer, Bonni Hopkins, Selma Ward, Noel Casiano, Karen Siegel, Anisa Cole, Kim Davis, Amy Soto, Carmen Teresa Rosario, Christine Maziuk

I. Continue Discussion of DEI Workforce

DPH Licensure data across all disciplines.

In Connecticut, licensed workers:

6% identify as Latino

15% identify as Black/African American

80% identify as Whites

Data does not identify employment setting. When a psychologist renews their license they are asked where they are working. The same is true for social workers as well. DPH may be able to provide that data.

II. Review of DEI Survey

Three areas of focus from the National Council and the Health Management Associations regarding national crisis on workforce.

- Provide new financial incentive programs or funding to providers support recruitment and retention efforts.
 - Recognize non-wage compensation (e.g., sign-on/retention bonuses, tuition reimbursement, loan repayment assistance, etc.) as allowable expenditures for COLA increases. COLA private providers receive was designed to address immediate workforce challenges and the state has granted flexibility for use of that money for employee compensation. Can happen relatively quickly before the end of the year.
 - Develop a State loan forgiveness and repayment program for behavioral health to address gaps in other programs (e.g., NHSC) (*many states have them: <https://studentloanhero.com/featured/student-loan-forgiveness-for-psychologists/>*).
 - Increase paid internship opportunities for social workers and other counseling professionals, especially BIPOC. Only psychologists are paid interns.
 - Review funding levels/rates across service types/levels of care to assure adequate support for providers to sustain competitive salaries. This rated the highest/most important out of the four.

A study was done under auspices of then CCPA related to the cost of care and the reimbursement rates for Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Another point of data is when 8 month reports and year end reports are conducted. There is a lot of data, but not a reliable way to gather. A good analysis from Medicaid rate perspective has not been done to date.

Grant related: Funding may have paid for 10 clinicians in the past. The demand for increased salaries and overall compensation means that funding now pays for 8 clinicians. Demand for higher salaries and challenges in hiring and retaining staff means fewer clinicians serve fewer people. Fewer clients means fewer outcomes, therefore grants and other funding, etc. drop. The need for services is increasing in light of the end of this pandemic and war. Concern was expressed over the risk of a greater disparity in services for people of color.

What incentive is there for students to enter these clinical professions? They see others in the profession struggle financially because of non-competitive salaries. Individuals leave agencies and enter private practice.

III. Talk about Ideas How to Proceed with this Issue

Need to improve funding, licensure, incentives.

Loan forgiveness if spending two years in underserved communities.

Reimbursement.

Fellowships, internships, scholarships, mentorships.

Money to pay for courses, counseling and time to study.
Money for rent/food.
Look at failure rates.
Share data on what other states are doing.
Get students' input on barriers. (Address CCSU for next meeting)
Stipends on front and back end of education.
Eliminate associates license step. Reduce burdensome documentation and administrative activities
Optimize access to the available behavioral health workforce.

Next Meeting:

Speakers from Universities
Data on failure rates
Share articles/information on what other states are doing
CPA MTM Study
Data on employment setting from DPH

IV. New Business, Announcements, Adjournment

No new business or announcements

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 11:00 AM via ZOOM