



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

December 6, 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

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Meeting ID: 973 0654 2389

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David Kaplan, Alice Forrester, Brenetta Henry, Neva Caldwell, Bonni Hopkins, Noel Casiano, Tanya Larson, Heather Gates, Valentin Rosario, Yvonne Jones, Jaya Daptarder, Yoanna Cifuentes, Sean King, Bert Plant, Marissa Bayer, Pina Donyale, Lois Berkowitz, Sam Haun, Mark Vanacore, Stephney Springer, Loida Reyes, Beresford Wilson, Kelly Phenix

Guest: Steve Karp

Scribe: Christine Maziuk

I. Continue Discussion of DEI Workforce

- Steve Karp Presentation: CT NSAW with regard to the LMSW test and lowering licensing fees. Following presentation, make a formal recommendation to the Behavioral Health Oversight Council supporting the elimination of the LMSW test, not the licensing.

- Steve Wancezyk-Karp, Executive Director for National Association of Social work for Connecticut. Chapter with 34 years experience.
 - Steve provided a history of the LMSW introduced into legislation in 2009 and passed into law in 2010 and the reasoning behind it at the time. Portability from state to state, interns at hospitals unable to accept positions without a license. After 3000 hours of supervision there was one year to attain licensure. Individuals were working under supervision sometimes for years without attaining licensure. The exam was looked into for equitable potential among races and older social workers.
 - Steve provided statistics on the passage rates among races: Blacks 50.5%, Latino 66%, Asian 70.5%, Multiracial 84.7%, Whites 85%, Men first time takers was 76.8%, Women 76.5%. With regard to age, passage rates fell for every ten years in age. The LCSW exam does not stop one from being practice. The LMSW does. DPH is planning to put forward legislation to suspend the LMSW Exam until such time that there is an equitable exam or other means to determine someone's qualifications. There are 8,843 licensed LCSW's and 5,034 licensed LMSW's licensed in the state of Connecticut. There is no data from the ASWB on why blacks score so low. There is no data on how many people stop trying after the first try and fail at the exam. Connecticut has the highest fee for exams in the nation at \$240. Annual renewal is \$190. In the first year it could run \$500-\$800. Currently an individual graduates then waits months to be able to take the exam. The pandemic delayed many opportunities because the test is in person. Temporary licenses are only 120 days has been expanded to one year. Proposal is to take the exam, graduate and get immediate licensure. There needs to be support to prepare for the test. There is a need to analyze why the exam is not equitable and how to make it so or eliminate the exam. A livable wage needs to be attainable at the end of all the hard work a student puts in and the fees and other costs make it unattainable for some.
 - Discussion on next steps: When we are working with regulatory standards, licensing standards, accreditation, standards, etc. they sometimes help to improve quality of care. These issues are barriers to the provision of care. We are faced with extraordinary workforce challenges. The impact of not thinking about alternative ways of either licensing or not licensing a very large segment of our workforce is that there are individuals who are in dire need of care who are going without it and the harm of that to those individuals of not receiving the care they need is far greater than any harm created by going with a more flexible system related to allowing people to practice. We need to frame our discussion and our argument with legislators and on how do we weigh the pros and cons of sticking with a current system which is clearly not working versus going with something completely different. Connecticut is slow to adopt practices that have been adopted in other parts of the country. If we don't, do it now, when we're going to do it, because we are in a crisis and it's the people who keep demanding care and needing it who are paying the price for our inability to act in a way that is timely and make sense at this point. Sick/mental health days, salary improvements, sign on bonuses were discussed. Supervision hours on an already overwhelmed workforce. There is an urban trauma initiative going on in Connecticut. Dr. Frank Gregory is to give a presentation to the oversight committee in February. As a committee we will seek other ways to make change.

- Through a show of hands, the majority of the committee voted in favor of drafting a letter to DPH in support of eliminating the LMSW exam.

New Business, Announcements, Adjournment

None discussed

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 7, 2022 at 11:00 AM via ZOOM