



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

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[www.cga.ct.gov/ph/BHPOC](http://www.cga.ct.gov/ph/BHPOC)

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*Co-Chairs: Alice Forrester and Selma Ward*

### *Agenda* **February 7, 2023 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://www.google.com/url?q=https://zoom.us/j/97306542389?pwd%3DdmVVMENZR0svMXNEL0QzbnFXVjg4UT09&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1670696192842583&usg=AOvVaw0vgsH1TdJrufzvZf7d4P4l>

Meeting ID: 963 0983 0092  
Passcode: 605352

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Meeting ID: 918 1345 4786  
Passcode: 834245

David Kaplan, Robert Haswell, Beresford Wilson, Selma Ward, Kelly Phoenix, Tanya Larsen, Amy Soto, Bernie Park, Jaya Daptarder, Heather Gates, Sam Haun, Lois Berkowitz, Donyale Pines, Alice Forrester, Yohanna Cifuentes, Steven Heffler, Stephaney Springer, Christine Montgomery, John Lisher, Sean King, Bernadette Tallarita

Scribe: Christine Maziuk

### **I. Final Update on LMSW Mastery Test Legislative Efforts**

- A brief overview was provided on where the committee is in our support of the NSAW eliminating the MSW exam and reduction in the cost of licensure. The DPH does have language in support of this. Volunteers are asked to testify at the upcoming session to speak on the roadblocks they experienced firsthand.

## **II. DEI Training and Effective Models Used in Non Profits**

- An understanding is needed on where agencies are currently on DEI training and policies. Identify agencies that need help. Next, select a leader, and at some point making it mandatory. Making the training mandatory is the only way to achieve sustainability. What has been working for various agencies? What are systemic racial barriers in obtaining care as well as entering the workforce?
- Two years ago, CHR Health as well as The Trade Association that represents many of the providers is also undertaking work in this area, starting internally on the heels of the George Floyd murder. CHR embarked on a process of deciding on what was to be done as an organization internally, and externally to those CHR serves. CHR has been focusing on having a diverse BOD, management and workforce. Still, the management team is less diverse than aimed for. CHR appointed a DE and I officer for the organization in addition to a Director of DE and I. CHR sought a consultant to assist on what would be a multi-year process. The goal being to focus on activities that were sustainable and would ultimately lead to CHR being a more inclusive and just organization and to significantly change how CHR thinks about issues internally, how it relates to our community, and how it is serving people who come for care. The work has been focused on providing mandatory training on a monthly basis to all managers throughout the service system. Going forward the mandatory training will be on a quarterly basis. CHR will work to ensure this is ongoing and a permanent part of the organization. The consultant also conducted a survey of CHR culture. The data gathered was helpful in the formulation of goals. CHR then created their AFEDI council; Action For Diversity and Inclusion, made up of staff and managers who have guided the organization in goal setting, provides feedback, defined direction and behaviors. Working with the consultant a three year plan has been developed focusing on four areas as defined by including staff to participate. Those areas are Staff Development, Providing a Just Environment, Improving Communication, and Diversity. All this will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. CHR has committed nearly \$300,000 to date and this will be an annual amount. CHR is also looking at job requirements and when is a Masters degree necessary and how to calculate years of experience. CHR has considered how a student who has to work while pursuing degrees effect people of color vs. someone who is white. How to accommodate for that in setting salaries. The consultant is Andrea Hopkins of Leading Culture Solutions. The work with the consultant will continue for three years and will move into a train the trainer model. Overall reception by staff has been positive. Some of the trainings have been on microaggressions, terminology, the LGBTQ community, how race affects how individuals think. LCS also provides short, 10 minute trainings you can send to staff. DCF and DMHAS contracts and setting salaries was discussed. How CHR paid for the consultant and training was discussed. Robert Haswell offered to reach out to Samiya Hussein, his director of Cultural Health Equity to join a meeting or schedule something separately. A conversation around national news on tragedies gets attention, but when the media around it dies down, people become complacent again. Amy Soto offered to reach out to Mario Garcia to see if he would present on the SHIP plan, the State Health Improvement Plan.

### **New Business, Announcements, Adjournment**

None discussed

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 11:00 AM via ZOOM**

