



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

Legislative Office Building Room 3000, Hartford CT 06106
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www.cga.ct.gov/ph/BHPOC

Co-Chairs: Alice Forrester and Selma Ward

Agenda

February 6, 2024 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://beaconhealhtoptions.zoom.us/j/92035438730?pwd=cGluU1IibjU2UkhRY3ZWdFBXZVpFdz09>

Meeting ID: 914 3279 4667

Passcode: 404331

+19292056099,,95844380526#,,, *971141# US (New York)

+13017158592,,95844380526#,,, *971141# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 980 3203 0015

Passcode: 660830

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/adF88NqOqJ>

Join by SIP

92035438730@zoomcrc.com

Join by H.323

162.255.37.11 (US West)

162.255.36.11 (US East)

Meeting ID: 929 6974 4605

Passcode: 336456

David Kaplan, Brenetta Henry, Tanya Larson, Jim Lisher, Heather Gates, Yohanna Cifuentes, Alice Forrester, Noel Casiano, Mark Vanacore, Stephney Springer, Neva Caldwell, Amy Soto, Theresa Rosario, Yvonne Jones, Sean King, Alexis Mohammed

Scribe: Christine Maziuk

1. Nomination of New Chair.

- Brenetta Henry agreed to Co-Chair with Alice Forrester. Brenetta has four children, two of which have behavioral health of mental health issues, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Brenetta has been in advocacy for over 20 years and sits on the Medical Home Advisory Council. Brenetta is Chair of Regions for Department of Children and Families Regional Advisory Board as well as a member of coordination of care as well as other behavior health oversight committees and subcommittees go also. Brenetta is also chair of the Citizen review panel for Department of Children and Families.

2. Legislative Session Goals

- a. What is the story we want to discuss about health equity in this short session?
- b. What impact do we have?

The Legislative Session begins tomorrow, February 7, 2024. The messaging from the Governor's office is not very positive. There was a really good series in the Connecticut Mirror on the guardrails that have been protecting a lot of the funds and where it's not going. Not enough is being done for children with needs and health equity. Alice will provide the article to the group. Alice invited anyone thoughts from a legislative perspective. Amy offered to send articles to David to share with the group relating to **health equity, perspective, and access to care. Discussion ensued over the need to reinforce that there is a need for cost of living to be applied to both the State grant sources as well as Medicaid**, which is critical. The lack of attention to Medicaid outpatient rates a problem. **There is also the** need for ongoing permanent funding mechanisms for the UCC's and the sub-acute issues facing children in the State. There is also a need for advocating for paying attention to the adult mental health system. There has been a lot of focus on substance use and opiate dependence, but it's been decades since the adult mental health system has received a substantial influx of any funding to address issues there. Discussion over the need for peer-to-peer support in ER's ensued as well as the lack of funding for translation services and if the quality of AI interpretations. Also discussed was the race and ethnicity data. Less than 50% of individuals completing forms identify their race/ethnicity. People may have a variety of reasons for choosing not to respond, however, understanding what the population looks like accurately is a concern and as a group, we should research other ways to obtain the information.

Discussion around the potential for a DEI presentation to various work groups to highlight the issues and changes that are necessary and share ideas around a livable wage for healthcare workers, Medicaid rates, accurate demographics and data, funding, access to equitable healthcare, etc. Heather Gates described the "Warm Line" and it's funding and how it is manned frequently by individuals with lived experience in recovery. Neva Caldwell, Yvonne Jones and Brenetta Henry, and Noel Casiano volunteered to draft slides to present at the March meeting.

Discussion ensued on the importance of having individuals with lived experience on the committee as well as presenting at legislative sessions.

3. New Business, Announcements, Adjournment

None discussed

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 11:00 AM via ZOOM