



Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council

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www.cga.ct.gov/ph/BHPOC

Co-Chairs: Rep. Mike Demicco, Terri DiPietro & Beresford Wilson
Meeting Summary: May 11, 2022

Via Zoom

Next Meeting is Wednesday, June 8, 2022 @ 2 PM via Zoom

Attendees: Rep. Mike Demicco (Co-Chair), Terri DiPietro (Co-Chair), Donaicis Alas (DSS), Dr. Lois Berkowitz (DCF), Carlos Blanco (Interpreter), David Borzellino, Carrie Bourdon (Beacon), Neva Caldwell (CFAC), Rebecca Colasanto, Brittany Cooper, Roberta Cpok, Sandra Czunas (OSC), Maria Cruz, Evan Dantos, Jaya Daptarder, Kim Davis, Clare Doyle, Howard Drescher, Sarah Eagan (OCA), Jennifer Fiorello, Kathy Flaherty, Alice Forrester, Dr. Frank Fortunati, Heather Gates, Jr., Elizabeth Gemski, Dr. Steven Girelli, Claudio Gualteri, Jessica Guite, Bill Halsey (DSS), Colleen Harrington (DMHAS), Robert Haswell, (DMHAS), Ann Hogan, Joe Holloway, Bryan Klimkiewicz (CSDE), Sean King (OHA), Amanda Knef, Jennifer Kolakowski, Barbara Lanza (Jud), Tanja Larsen, Carlos Marrero, Marie Mormile-Mehler, Laura Nesta, Maureen O'Neill-Davis, Kelly Phenix, Melissa Riley, Galo Rodriguez, Vinnie Russo (DCF), Shaunseyk, Jeff Shaw, Amy Soto (DHP), Howard Sovronsky, Dr. Stephney Springer (DCF), Brian Sullivan, Janine Sullivan-Wiley, Victoria Tran, Sabrina Trocchi, Ann Turkington, Mark Vanacore (DMHAS), Barbara Ward-Zimmerman, Alison Weir, Rod Winstead (DSS), Gui Woolston, and three others by Telephone

BHP OC Administration

Co-Chair Terri DiPietro convened the meeting at 2:10 PM. She notified members that Carlos Blanco was going to give Spanish Translation Services for the meeting. She announced that the minutes from last month were posted on-line. Heather Gates and Alice Forrester made the motion to accept the minutes and all voted to accept it as written. Terri then introduced Gui Woolston to the Council as the new Connecticut Director for Medicaid. Gui gave his personal background and vision for what he hopes Medicaid will be like in Connecticut in the coming future. Members also congratulated Bill Halsey's new role as Deputy Medicaid Director.

Action Items

None

Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership Agency Reports: Department of Social Services-Rod Winstead (DSS)



BHPOC5-11-22Legislative Summary update



BHPOC5-11-22Final List of Bills.docx

Rod Winstead (DSS) reported that the state Budget contained \$1 Million for Behavioral Health for both children and adult mobile crisis initiatives. On the Workforce crisis, he reported that licensing would ease for LMSWs and LPCs to be able to practice in Connecticut and bill to Medicaid as long as they are properly supervised by licensed personnel. Notice was sent out by the Federal Department of Health & Human Services on the wind down from the Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services- Colleen Harrington (DMHAS)

Colleen Harrington said that Adult Opioid legislation was introduced for an oversight committee. Mobile crisis services have been budgeted for 24/7 accessibility and Young Adult Services have been expanded. COLAS for state agencies will increase by 4% but is TBD.

Department of Children and Families – Dr. Stephney Springer (DCF) and Vinnie Russo (DCF)

Dr. Stephney Springer reported that Children's behavioral health has been a topic of discussion and it was at the forefront of this legislative session. As a Department, they are still in the process of reviewing. Some of the key provisions in the Bills are things that they have been discussing for the past few months. She reviewed a few and Vinnie Russo, Legislative Liaison, was present in the event there was more granular detail requested.

Stephney echoed DMHAS and DSS's comments that there will be an expansion of mobile crisis for children to 24/7 statewide so providers can respond to acute psychiatric emergencies anytime of the day. They can also respond to the schools so they don't resort to calling the police to deal with crises. The funding for this is ARPA funds for the next two years.

DCF will be establishing urgent crisis center and sub-acute crisis stabilization centers where children can be treated by clinical professions. This is to support diversion from the emergency rooms and relieve overcrowding and increase more readily access to care. The Department is close to releasing the Request for Proposal for this.

The department will also be expanding in home respite program for families. Finally, DCF will begin planning for the 9-8-8 suicide hotline availability in CT along with DMHAS.

Judicial Branch – Barbara Lanza (Jud)

Barbara Lanza (CSSD) announced Judicial is currently reviewing their budget and will provide an update at another date. Also, the Judicial Branch Purchasing Department expects to notify respondents to the Adult Behavioral Health RFP by Friday, May 13.

State Department of Education- Bryan Klimkiewicz, Special Education Director (CSDE)

Bryan Klimkiewicz announced that the department is currently reviewing passed legislation for children's BH and MH in the schools. They are issuing Temporary Human Services Permits for school professionals in psychology, social workers, etc. Student eligibility for a high school education has been increased to 22 years of age to match federal language. Local education agencies will have responsibility for children's MH and student's needs. They are having Youth Camp (Summer) providers where MH services are available. This program will use Federal dollars for support and services for families over the summer months.

Department of Developmental Services- Tammy Venenga (DDS)

Due to the absence of Tammy Venenga, no report was given.

Committee Reports:

Coordination of Care: - Rep. Jonathan Steinberg, Co-Chair, Janine Sullivan-Wiley, Co-Chair, Kelly Phenix, Co-Chair, and Sabra Mayo, Co-Chair

Co-Chair Janine Sullivan-Wiley reported that the next meeting will be on May 25, 2022 at 1 PM and the presentation will be on the Connecticut Information Exchange (CONNIE). There will also be a quarterly update on Non-Emergency Medical Transportation by Veyo.

Child/Adolescent Quality, Access & Policy: – Steve Girelli and Jeff Vanderploeg, Co-Chairs

Co-Chair Dr. Steve Girelli reported that the April meeting had a presentation on School Based Health Centers from the new Executive Director Melanie Wilde-Lane. It was on physical health and behavioral health services. There was also another presentation from CHDI with Dr. Jeana Bracey and Dr. Jamie LoCurto on the Overview of Comprehensive School Mental Health Initiatives with participating school districts from Middletown, Naugatuck, and Windham.

Adult Quality, Access & Policy: -Paul Acker, Howard Drescher and Dr. Frank Fortunati, Jr. Co-Chairs

Co-Chair Dr. Frank Fortunati, Jr. reported that the committee had a presentation from Beacon with Jay Palica and Bert Plant on the usage of Tele-health service for adults in Connecticut during the Pandemic. The next meeting is on July 12, 2022.

Operations: – Heather Gates and Laura Nesta Co-Chairs

Co-Chair Laura Nesta announced the next meeting will be on Friday, June 3, 2022 at 2:30 PM via Zoom. There will be a tele-health update, IOP, and outpatient rates will be reviewed, and the 1115 Waiver update will be given.

Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health: Alice Forrester and Selma Ward Co-Chairs

DEI continues to work on Workplace Development, primarily as it relates to licensed clinicians and the racial and ethnic makeup of staff in Connecticut. The April meeting hosted Dr. Sandra

Bulmer, the Dean of Health and Human Services from SCSU to discuss how providers can partner with post-secondary educational institutions to influx the pipeline of graduates into the important work we do. The Committee sent Dr. Bulmer away with a couple of action items, so we can gain a better understanding of graduation rates, test scores, etc. The Committee hopes to eventually recommend incentivizing programs, such as loan forgiveness that will help attract and retain diverse talent.

Consumer and Family Advisory Council (CFAC) Update –*Neva Caldwell*

Tri-Chair Neva Caldwell reported that the May meeting had a presentation from DPH with a focus on Behavioral Health and Maternity & Child Health. There was also a discussion with the Reverend Robin Anderson on health equity. The next iCAN Conference will be on Thursday, September 22, 2022 and will be virtual- Save the Date!

New Business/Meeting Announcement/Adjournment

Co-Chair Terri DiPietro thanked everyone for their reports and discussions. She announced the next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 8, 2022 at 2:00 PM via Zoom and that if anyone has ideas for presentation to contact her or David Kaplan. She asked for any other announcements or new business. Hearing none, Terri took the motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:38 PM.

The next meeting date: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 @ 2:00 PM via Zoom