

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



CVH WHITING TASK FORCE

Meeting Summary

October 6, 2020

Dr. Linda Schwartz convened the meeting and asked members to comment on today's patient forum.

She asked Mary Kate Mason about the first individual who testified about the lack of access to Wi-Fi services and recommended that Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) contact the Veterans Home in Rocky Hill to ask how they resolved a similar issue.

Ms. Mason stated she would share the suggestion with the IT Department at DMHAS.

Mr. Lawlor noted that the Wi-Fi complaint is outside the jurisdiction of the task force even though it relates to patient wellbeing. He wondered if access to Wi-Fi is considered a security concern for forensic patients and asked Ms. Mason if any concerns would extend to non-forensic patients.

Ms. Mason asked Mr. Lawlor to elaborate on his security comment.

Mr. Lawlor explained that inmates in prisons are not given access to the internet services and that some of the same reasons apply to patients who are confined due to a criminal justice related reason.

Ms. Mason stated she is not sure that they don't have access to online services. Rather, it seems that patient was talking about the quality of the Wi-Fi and the different types of technology that they can use, specifically Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.

Ms. Alisberg noted that this is an issue that CLRP and DRCT have been concerned with because it impacts the ability of patients to communicate under the Patient Bill of Rights. She added that communication has changed significantly since its enactment and is part of the task force charge in terms of their ability to communicate and dignify treatment. Further weighing on this issue would be beyond task force charges.

Mr. Acker added that it goes to what people are experiencing while they are at CVH and the rumors that the people at Whiting have more access to technology than the people at CVH.

Dr. Rodis stated that he didn't understand what the issue would be for listening to music once you pass the security issues. He noted that there is a therapeutic value to music and that some is on the internet for free. He suggested adding it to the list of recommendations for consideration.

Mr. Acker suggested including a request for the Legislature to update the Patient Bill of Rights to update the communication platforms that are currently available.

Task force members spent additional time discussing other testimony received.

Members discussed procedures for the 10/27/20 CVH Whiting Task Force Informational Forum where they will hear testimony from members of the public, and CVH and Whiting staff.

The task force discussed the final report deadline and how to proceed towards the goal of completing the report.

Dr. Schwartz proposed sending a letter to the Public Health Committee leadership requesting an extension of the deadline.

Members were reminded to review the numerous materials and documents posted on the task force webpage. A suggestion was made for members to submit their recommendations to staff for compilation into one central document for discussion.

Dr. Schwartz mentioned the possibility of the task force going into executive session to draft the final report.

Mr. Lawlor reminded members that any meeting to discuss the report would be regarded as a public meeting.

Dr. Schwartz informed the group that she had received an executive session ruling.

Ms. Alisberg noted that FOIA could only have provided suggestions and that they cannot make a ruling unless a complaint is filed.

Mr. Lawlor was tasked with getting FOIA clarification on the issue above.

Dr. Rodis suggested that the spreadsheet for the recommendations be designed by listing the domain of the eight legislative charges.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 11:15 AM.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.