

CSB Attendees: Adrienne Abbate, Cheryelle Cruickshank, Cheryle Hinds-Leslie (zoom), Joanne Siegel, Karmita Morgan-Randall (new member), Lourdes Reyes-Martinez, Sarah Church, Sidney Hankerson, Stephanie LeMelle, Thelma Dye (zoom)

Action items/ Resources from DOHMH:

- DOHMH to invite additional Divisions working on behavioral health issues to provide updates at future meetings.
- DOHMH to strategize on how to engage Community Services Board (CSB) members in efforts to improve the use of outcome measures for behavioral health program reporting
- DOHMH to share resources for complaints/support on insurance reimbursement. Added below:
 - NYS independent health insurance ombudsman program (CHAMP) <https://www.cssny.org/programs/entry/champ>; 888-614-5400
 - NYS Office of the Attorney General Health Care Bureau <https://ag.ny.gov/publications/mental-health-parity-laws>; 800-428-9071
 - NYS Department of Financial Services Online Complaint Form <https://myportal.dfs.ny.gov/web/guest-applications/consumer-complaint?hn=1&forward=new>; 800-342-3736
 - New York Department of Health: Complaints Email: managedcarecomplaint@health.ny.gov; 800-206-8125

Call to Order: 1:02 PM

Welcome Remarks:

- Dr. Hankerson, Chair of the CSB, called the meeting to order, welcomed members, and led introductions.
- Deepa Avula, Executive Deputy Commissioner (EDC) of DOHMH Division of Mental Hygiene (DMHy) reviewed the agenda and introduced Karmita Morgan-Randall, a new CSB member.

Updates on CSB Membership:

- Dr. Hankerson informed members of recent Board vacancies and requested nominations for three new appointments.
 - Anika Kalra, Senior Planning Analyst for the Office of Policy and Planning, described criteria for nominations, including: Two candidates that reside in Brooklyn, two candidates that identify as male or gender non-confirming, at least one Consumer and one medical provider, at least one candidate identifying as Asian and at least one identifying as Hispanic. The rest of the criteria can be any. Please send any nominations to CSBNYC@health.nyc.gov.

CSB Overview Presentation:

- Yoshi Pinnaduwa, Senior Director for the Office of Policy and Planning, provided CSB members with a brief overview of the CSB's purpose, composition, and membership as well as a brief overview of the Local Services Plan (LSP).

DOHMH and Bureau Updates:

- Deepa Avula provided brief updates on behalf of Bureau of Health Promotion and Justice-Impacted Populations (HPJIP), and invited Bureau DMHy leadership to provide updates, namely Shivani Mantha, Acting Assistant Commissioner (AC) of the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Use, Prevention, Care, and Treatment (BADUPCT); Marnie Davidoff, AC of the Bureau for Children, Youth and Families, and Developmental Disabilities (CYF-DD); Janice Chisholm, AC of the Bureau of Community Awareness, Action, Response, and Engagement (BCAARE); and Jamie Neckles, AC of the Bureau of Mental Health (BMH).
 - In response to a question from CSB Member Stephanie LeMelle, Shivani Mantha and Deepa Avula estimated that overdose deaths from 2023 Quarter 1 were in line with previous years, but data from future months is needed to determine trends.

- In response to a question about [OMH's Community Mental Health Promotion and Support](#) (COMHPS) program from CSB Member Adrienne Abbate, Janice Chisholm explained that outreach for eligible individuals occurs in community centers, neighborhoods, and community spaces.
- In response to a question from CSB Member Stephanie LeMelle regarding the [IMT program](#) audit, Jamie Neckles explained that the audit was quantitative and clinicians were not interviewed. She also mentioned that as cohorts of new enrollees spend more time in the program, they will likely show more positive outcomes.
 - Stephanie commented that the audit did not measure engagement and other key impacts of the IMT program and recommended using tools to measure additional outcomes.
 - Deepa Avula mentioned that DMHy is working on improving reporting to measure meaningful outcomes and invited input from Stephanie and other CSB members. Stephanie expressed interest in joining this effort.
- CSB member Adrienne Abbate requested presentations from other DOHMH Divisions relevant to behavioral health, including the Office of School Health. Deepa Avula committed to this for the next CSB meeting.
- In response to a question from CSB member Lourdes Reyes-Martinez regarding police response to crisis calls, Deepa Avula described DOHMH's commitment and partnerships with NYPD for health-led crisis response and crisis intervention trainings. She also informed CSB members about the agency's [Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\) trainings](#) pertaining youth and adult mental health that is available to the public.
 - CSB member Cheryelle Cruickshank shared that her organization received free MHFA training from DOHMH and expressed that it is an amazing resource that should be shared widely. Deepa responded that DMHy is working on increasing delivery of the training.
 - CSB member Joanne Siegel suggested that MHFA training include experiences of individuals/families with intellectual/developmental disabilities, including breaking down stigma. She recommended running a campaign in schools to counter bullying, isolation, and loneliness.
 - CSB member Lourdes Reyes-Martinez emphasized that schools are community gathering spaces and suggested a campaign during Mental Health Awareness Month in May in collaboration with DOHMH and DOE.
 - CSB member Karmita Morgan-Randall suggested including NYPD's Community Affairs in the campaign.
 - CSB Chair Sidney Hankerson informed the board about [OMH's strategic framework](#) which includes reducing stigma in NY and suggested partnership opportunities for DOHMH.
 - CSB member Karmita Morgan-Randall informed members about the [NYPD Citizen Police Academy](#) and suggested it be provided in High Schools to inform young adults.
- In response to a concern about long wait times for mobile crisis teams through 988 from CSB member Adrienne Abbate, Deepa Avula informed members that DMHy is working on improving 988 response time and that operational aspects and mobile crisis teams are functioning well at this time.

CSB Discussion on Payment and Reimbursement Reform:

- Dr. Hankerson led the group in a discussion on Payment and Reimbursement Reform.
 - CSB member Sarah Church mentioned the current shutdown of [Change](#) clearinghouse due to a cyberattack and suggested having more diversity in clearinghouses to avoid interruptions in billing.
 - CSB member Adrienne Abbate described challenges with lower rates of reimbursement by commercial insurance plans than Medicaid and disparities in billing codes for telehealth versus in-person care.
 - CSB member Sarah Church added that commercial rates for addiction treatment are half what Medicaid pays, and suggested advocating for at least equal rates.

- Sarah also shared that some insurance plans that have commercial and Medicaid products pressure providers to contract with both product lines in order to receive a contract with their Medicaid product(s).
- CSB member Joanne Siegel seconded this for individuals/families with developmental disabilities and commented on the difficulties patients with commercial insurance have in accessing affordable behavioral health care. She also shared that there is a parity bill regarding Medicaid rates for vendors providing durable medical equipment which have not been increased in decades and are 30% less than cost. Joanne also described her advocacy for a 3.5% COLA instead of 1.5%
- CSB member Thelma Dye expressed concerns that reimbursements are often slow from Managed Care companies, resulting in practices having to cover their own costs.
 - CSB member Adrienne Abbate asked the group for resources to support with reimbursement issues. CSB member Stephanie LeMelle shared that the Department of Financial Services has oversight of insurance companies. Yoshi Pinnaduwa informed the board about [CHAMP](#), the state's ombudsman agency that offers support with insurance related claims, and shared the other resources listed above.
- CSB member Stephanie LeMelle commented that nonprofits are often unaware of what billing codes to use and suggested DOHMH provide education on this. Deepa Avula also suggested education around state and federal funding opportunities for providers.
- In response to a question by CSB member Stephanie LeMelle on what role DOHMH can play in these state policies, Deepa Avula briefly explained DOHMH's advocacy and policy review opportunities. Stephanie also explained to members that insurance plans did not compete to become Managed Care organizations during the transition of behavioral health services into Medicaid managed care in NYS and so are not incentivized to improve services.

Additional Comments & Wrap Up:

- Dr. Hankerson provided a recap of the meeting, including the discussions on youth mental health, stigma in schools, and payment and reimbursement challenges.
- Dr. Hankerson advised NYC DOHMH to invite other Agency staff working on overlapping behavioral health issues to attend the next CSB meeting, suggested adding the upcoming DOHMH report on youth mental health to the next agenda, reminded members of the next meeting dates, and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 2:13 PM