

CSB Attendees: Cheryelle Cruickshank, Jun Matsuyoshi, Pankaj Patel, Sarah Church, Sidney Hankerson, Stephanie LeMelle, Thelma Dye

Action items: CSB members to email: CSBNYC@health.nyc.gov if they are interested in drafting a letter to the NYC Commissioner of Health and State agencies regarding resources to address Workforce issues in the behavioral health service system.

Call to Order: 12:34 PM

Welcome and DOHMH Updates

- Dr. Michael McRae, Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner (EDC) of the Division of Mental Hygiene (MHy), welcomed CSB members to the third quarter CSB meeting of 2022. Dr. McRae introduced Dr. Jonathan Giftos, the newly appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Use Prevention, Care, and Treatment (BADUPCT). Dr. McRae also shared DOHMH updates on the ongoing Monkeypox (MPV) response, mental health services provided to asylum seekers at NYC Navigation Centers, and strategies for the first round of payments related to the opioid overdose settlements. Dr. McRae also outlined the City’s vision for addressing mental health needs of 1) children, youth, and their families, especially those of color, 2) people with pre-existing and serious mental illnesses, and 3) people facing substance use and addiction issues, especially with opioids.
- CSB member Jun Matsuyoshi shared that APICHA Community Health Center, the organization that she represents, recently opened a new primary care facility in Jackson Heights and that its staff have capacity to provide services in several languages. She shared that this may be a resource not only for asylum seekers but anyone in Queens in need of primary and behavioral health care. In response to a question from CSB member Stephanie LeMelle about the opioid settlement funds, Dr. McRae expounded further on the expansion of ongoing activities to provide holistic care to people experiencing opioid addiction.

Review of Local Services Plan

- Yoshi Pinnaduwa, Senior Director of Policy and Planning provided an overview of the Local Services Plan, a comprehensive annual plan for behavioral health services, as mandated by NYS Mental Hygiene Law.
- Dr. McRae then outlined the format of the 2023 LSP and shared areas in which the DOHMH incorporated the priorities identified by the CSB in workgroups and meetings throughout 2022, namely Workforce and Youth Mental Health, as well as the priorities identified by the City, as mentioned above.
- In response to a question by CSB member Dr. Thelma Dye, Dr. McRae reiterated that the City recognizes the workforce challenges faced by the entirety of the behavioral health system, and that the DOHMH is working to develop comprehensive strategies to address this ongoing issue. Dr. Dye expressed interest in the State’s new tele-visit reimbursement structure, anticipated for release in January 2023, and its potential impact on the behavioral health workforce.
- Dr. Sidney Hankerson, the CSB Chairperson, led the CSB members in providing unanimous approval of the 2023 Local Services Plan for submission to the state mental hygiene offices by October 31, 2022.

Discussion on 2023 CSB Goals and Action Items

- Dr. Hankerson shared the following goals developed from CSB member input at workgroups and meetings around the two priority issue areas identified by CSB members, namely Workforce and Youth Mental Health:

- Goal #1 (Youth): CSB Members to contribute to DOHMH's goal to address the impact of COVID-19 on youth behavioral health
- Goal #2 (Workforce): CSB Members to advocate for improved data collection on employee attrition at Article 31, 32, and 16 clinics
- Goal #3 (Workforce): CSB Members to advocate for improved data collection on payment structures across different provider types, stratified by race/ethnicity
- Goal #4 (Workforce): CSB Members to advocate for payment and regulatory reform that would allow CBOs to find innovative ways to provide and integrate services
- Goal #5 (Workforce): CSB members to advocate for more loan forgiveness and scholarship models specifically for behavioral health providers
- Dr. LeMelle shared that the CSB's interest in improved data collection on employee attrition is to determine whether providers are leaving their respective organizations or the behavioral health system entirely and suggested that the next steps would be to discover why providers are leaving, and how to best promote longevity in the workplace (e.g., competitive salaries, flexible hours, telemedicine/tele-psych, etc.). Dr. Dye agreed and stressed the importance of determining how pay equity and fringe benefits play a role in people choosing to stay in the industry.
- Dr. Dye also recommended that the CSB work closely with universities to determine if the number of people going into the field of behavioral health have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic, and emphasized that people of color in particular do not consider the field to be as attractive as it once was.
- Jun Matsuyoshi added that anecdotally, the COVID-19 pandemic has stifled opportunities for clinical providers and social workers to meet clients face-to-face, without the advantage of assessing non-verbal cues and behaviors.
- In response to a question and recommendation by Cheryelle Cruickshank, Dr. Hankerson invited the CSB members to collectively draft a letter to the NYC Commissioner of Health and/or the relevant State agencies about their concerns about the behavioral health workforce, for the rest of the CSB members to review by the 2022 Q4 CSB Meeting in December.
 - Cheryelle Cruickshank agreed and emphasized the importance of addressing workforce issues particularly among those who serve communities with intellectual and developmental disabilities, suggesting that the CSB Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee members would be interested in contributing to the letter.

Additional Comments & Wrap Up

- Dr. Hankerson provided a recap on the discussion and invited CSB members to reach out to CSBNYC@health.nyc.gov if they are interested in drafting the letter on Workforce on behalf of the CSB.
- Dr. Hankerson announced that the next convening of the CSB will be on Monday, December 12, 2022, from 2:30 – 4:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned: 1:40 PM