

CSB Attendees: Ahmed Jamil, Cheryelle Cruikshank, Jun Matsuyoshi, Louise Cohen, Roberto Lewis-Fernandez, Rosa Gil, Sarah Church, and Thelma Dye.

Call to Order: 1:04 PM

Welcome and Introductions:

- Dr. Rosa Gil, Acting Chair of the Community Services Board (CSB), welcomed Dr. Myla Harrison in her new role as Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Mental Hygiene at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Dr. Gil and Dr. Harrison welcomed the attendees and led the CSB members in rollcall and introductions.

Updates from DOHMH:

- Dr. Myla Harrison shared updates regarding the agency’s efforts in the vaccine phase of the COVID-19 response, including providing behavioral health providers with resources on vaccine facts, eligibility information, and data. Dr. Harrison also shared updates on Project Hope, which includes New York’s COVID-10 Emotional Support Helpline (<https://nyprojecthope.org/>).

CSB Subcommittee Updates:

- **Aman Nakagawa, representing the Criminal Justice committee:** The committee convened on February 2, 2021, and welcomed two new members. At this meeting, members discussed anticipated mental health needs and strategic planning for 2021. Members identified lack of affordable housing and telehealth as priority issue areas.
- **Janice Chisholm, representing the LGBTQ+ committee:** On November 6, 2020, the Division of Mental Hygiene held a listening session on the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of mental health services among LGBTQ+ clients. Plans are underway to solicit feedback on the biggest challenges for LGBTQ+ provider organizations during COVID-19.
- **Janice Chisholm, representing the Developmental Disabilities subcommittee:** On February 22, 2021, the subcommittee met with stakeholders to solicit initial feedback in preparation for the 2022 LSP COVID-19 survey, and next steps include integrating stakeholder feedback into the NYS Department of Health survey.
- **Gail Goldstein, representing the Substance Use Disorder subcommittee:** The agency recently released the latest overdose mortality data from 2019 and the first quarter of 2020, and in response NYC pledged an additional \$2 million in outreach and overdose prevention resources, including expanding access to buprenorphine treatment, increasing naloxone distribution through community-based organization, and establishing harm reduction vending machines to make naloxone readily available.
- **Marnie Davidoff, representing the Mental Health subcommittee:** On December 15, 2020, the subcommittee met to discuss key data on the mental health of New Yorkers during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as resources for meeting mental health needs. Members also discussed ways the mental health system can better support NYC communities during the pandemic and into the future, including possible emergent needs as a result of the pandemic.

2022 LSP Update

- Yoshi Pinnaduwa shared the State’s announcement that the 2022 Local Services Plan (LSP) is optional, and that all counties are instead required to submit responses to a COVID-19 survey. Racial equity and other equity issues are being considered for inclusion in the 2023 LSP as priority issue areas. CSB member Dr. Thelma Dye expressed optimism for the inclusion of equity in future iterations of the LSP.

Vaccine Information for Behavioral Health Providers

- Dr. William Fisher and Jennie Sutcliffe presented an overview of COVID-19 vaccines and the NYC vaccination program, including the science of vaccine development, the agency’s efforts to ensure equity in vaccine delivery, and details on how the agency is building COVID-19 vaccine confidence, including among mental hygiene program

staff and participants. The presenters also shared upcoming provider webinar and other resources for mental hygiene providers.

- In the Q&A portion of the presentation, Dr. Gil requested clarity on guidance for individuals who have received both doses of the vaccine and want to visit their relatives. Dr. Fisher and Jennie Sutcliffe shared that while the risks are reduced for vaccinated individuals, they are still advised to take the same CDC-recommended precautions such as wearing appropriate face coverings and maintaining physical distancing to further reduce the risk for transmission and illness.
- Dr. Gil also raised concern that undocumented immigrants are particularly hesitant to make vaccine appointments, even if they are considered essential workers. Dr. Fisher acknowledged the barriers for undocumented essential workers, including their employers' reluctance to provide an employment letter as proof of eligibility, but he reiterated that individuals seeking to get vaccinated will never be asked about their immigration status.
- Dr. Thelma Dye asked if incentives such as gift cards have been considered in the effort to address vaccine hesitancy, and Jennie Sutcliffe reiterated that the agency's goal is to help people understand the public health value of being vaccinated. However, she also shared possible recommendations for employers to consider, including allowing time off for staff after their second dose due to more likely side effects.
- Finally, Dr. Gil shared that some clients are having difficulty making appointments and requested clarity on how the agency is addressing these barriers. Dr. Fisher shared that the mobile appointment app has been considerably streamlined, but still has some limitations; it only shows available appointments for vaccination sites run by the City of New York. Efforts are ongoing to develop a universal vaccine finder that is linked to all facilities in NYC including State run facilities providing vaccine appointments. Furthermore, the agency is working hard to provide vaccines to individuals in the community, particularly for those in congregate settings and/or have transportation or mobility needs. DOHMH is also working with community-based organizations to make block appointments for their clients at NYC vaccination hubs to further reduce the challenges with making individual appointments for high-risk populations.

Additional Business and Wrap Up:

- Yoshi Pinnaduwa reiterated the three priority issue areas identified by the CSB members at the December 2020 meeting, namely telehealth, workforce issues, and data disaggregation by ethnicity, and shared that DOHMH will provide status updates regarding these issue areas at the next CSB meeting and solicit further feedback and next steps from the CSB members then.
- Rosa Gil expressed gratitude to all DOHMH staff and CSB members for their work and closed the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 2:30 PM

The next meeting will be held from 12:00 – 1:30 PM on Friday, May 21, 2021.