

CSB Attendees: Cheryelle Cruickshank, Diane Arneth, Jun Matsuyoshi, Louise Cohen, Roberto Lewis-Fernandez, Sidney Hankerson, Thelma Dye

Call to Order: 10:03 AM

Welcome and Introductions:

- Dr. Chinazo Cunningham, Executive Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Mental Hygiene (DMH), welcomed CSB members and introduced Dr. Sidney Hankerson as the newly appointed Chairperson of the CSB. Dr. Hankerson led the attendees in roll call and introductions.

Updates from DOHMH:

- Dr. Cunningham shared updates regarding the agency's efforts to promote behavioral health as part of the COVID-19 response, including providing behavioral health providers with resources on vaccine facts, eligibility information, and data, as well as the deployment of emotional support teams to Hurricane Ida Service Centers.

CSB Subcommittee Updates:

- **Dr. Bill Jordan, representing the Substance Use Disorder subcommittee:** DOHMH is investing \$9 million annually to address the increase in overdose deaths in the first few months of 2020 as compared to 2019. The next Municipal Drug Strategy/CSB Substance Use Disorder meeting will be on September 20, 2021.
- **Dr. Myla Harrison, representing the Mental Health subcommittee:** Due to ongoing concerns about workforce shortages, subcommittee members will continue to prioritize workforce issues for 2021-2022.
- **Dr. Janice Chisholm, representing the Developmental Disabilities subcommittee:** Members have been providing recommendations for improving service delivery to communities with developmental disabilities, especially regarding challenges with COVID-19 in congregate settings and limitations of telehealth.
 - CSB member Cheryelle Cruickshank lauded the agency for their helpful vaccine guidance, which she has been using and sharing to encourage staff members to get vaccinated, and encouraged the agency to continue disseminating guidance regarding COVID-19 widely. Myla Harrison reiterated Cheryelle's point and invited CSB members to attend the next webinar for mental hygiene providers regarding COVID-safe practices with an opportunity for Q&A, to take place on September 17, 2021.
- **Dr. Janice Chisholm, representing the LGBTQ+ committee:** Members have been invited to attend a number of joint meetings with the Health Equity Coalition, and the next joint meeting will take place on September 16, 2021. Members, in collaboration with agency staff, are currently planning for the Transgender Community Advisory Board and brainstorming ways to engage CSB subcommittee membership.
- **Aman Nakagawa, representing the Criminal Justice committee:** The next convening of the committee will be on September 21, 2021. The most recent meeting included a presentation regarding the Co-response Health Engagement and Assessment Teams (HEAT) and a status update regarding the Support and Connection Centers. Committee members identified a gap in family-peer advocates in the system, and agency representatives are working to share this feedback with the relevant governance bodies.

Updates on CSB 2021 Priority Issue Areas

- **Telehealth:** Yoshi Pinnaduwa, representing the Bureau of Community Engagement, Policy and Practice (CEPP), shared updates regarding the end of the NYS emergency orders, regulatory waivers from OMH, OASAS, and OPWDD, and emergency regulations from SDOH allowing continuation of telehealth for Medicaid. The Division also reviewed proposed state legislation to require NYS private and public insurance plans to reimburse a telehealth visit at the same rate as an in-person visit, and the agency will continue to track its progress through the 2022 legislative session.
 - Dr. Sidney Hankerson requested an update regarding telehealth services specifically for opioid agonist therapy, and inquired whether these programs will continue. Dr. Bill Jordan, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Alcohol & Drug Use Prevention, Care & Treatment (BADUPCT), shared that the current

methadone delivery system includes options for extended take-homes, which may expire at the end of the pandemic; DOHMH is working with OASAS to extend these options especially in the light of the increasing delta variant, particularly for individuals in isolation and quarantine hoteling.

- CSB member Diane Arneith shared that her large syringe exchange program in Staten Island includes provision of low-threshold buprenorphine. She said that the program has not lost any clients and in fact has had to expand. However, clients continue to encounter challenges with accessing telehealth, including lack of internet access and appropriate devices. Diane recommended that the agency continue to address the digital divide that is preventing individuals from accessing telehealth. Dr. Cunningham agreed with Diane and shared that prior to her tenure at the agency, she worked for a FQHC in the South Bronx providing buprenorphine treatment, and saw first-hand the challenges associated with telehealth access. The agency continues to advocate for an improvement in the city's digital infrastructure, and promote access to internet and appropriate devices to further support the use of telehealth as an option for service provision.
- **Data Disaggregation:** Dr. Janice Chisholm, acting Assistant Commissioner for CEPP, provided updates on disaggregating by ethnicity/cultural identity in surveys and data sources used by the agency, as well as race/ethnicity recodes in State data used by DOHMH (e.g. SPARCS, Medicaid data). Dr. Chisholm also discussed potential next steps in incorporating ethnicity/cultural identity questions into DOHMH surveys, conducting further analysis where data is available, and making recommendations to the State on potential improvements.
 - CSB member Dr. Roberto Lewis-Fernandez shared that he has been involved with state initiatives to improve the collection of race/ethnicity data, and offered to share solutions and recommendations developed. Dr. Lewis-Fernandez emphasized that the terms race, ethnicity, ancestry, and cultural identity are distinctly different, and that cultural identity is a much broader term that encompasses a number of different environments and experiences. He recommended that the agency clearly establish the purpose for which this variable is collected, and create a set of choices in data collection that actually addresses the purpose for which the variable is needed. Dr. Hankerson agreed that this issue is deeply important and multi-faceted, and suggested that this topic be revisited at a future meeting.
- **Workforce:** Clarecetine Brooks, representing CEPP, shared information regarding NY State Assembly Bill A10629-A, which establishes the frontline workers trauma informed care advisory council, including the objectives of the initiative, timeline for compiling recommendations to the legislature, and work completed collectively by Statewide workgroup thus far. For more information, see interim report compiled by OMH in March 2021: <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/statistics/2021-needs-of-frontline-workers-interim%02report.pdf>

Behavioral Health Initiatives for Children and Families

- Marnie Davidoff, Assistant Commissioner for the Bureau of Children and Families, shared information regarding a new initiative that is funded by the System of Care Expansion and Sustainability grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that aims to improve the mental health system of care for children in NYC. Marnie shared the goals and objectives of NYC's Centering Children and Families initiative, including the aims of the Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) component of the initiative, and provided a number of opportunities for collaboration with the CSB. For more information regarding the SAMHSA grant, see the link below: <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/awards/2020/SM-20-007>

Additional Business and Wrap Up:

- Dr. Sidney Hankerson reiterated the issues raised during the meeting, and recommended that time be devoted to workforce issues and data disaggregation at future meetings. Yoshi Pinnaduwa shared that the next meeting will be last meeting in 2021, so the agenda will include a discussion on priorities for 2022.
- Dr. Hankerson expressed gratitude to all DOHMH staff and CSB members for their work and closed the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 11:28 AM

The next meeting will be held from 10:00 – 11:30 AM on Friday, December 10, 2021