

CSB Attendees: Geoff DeBery (DOHMH), Carmen Johnson (DOHM), Myla Harrison (DOHMH), Marnie Davidoff (DOHMH), Jessica Jeavons (DOHMH), Victoria Merlino (DOHMH), Anastasia Roussos (DOHMH), Nicole Torres (Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health), Warren Berke (MH-CSB member), Rachel Saloman (MH-CSB member), Cheryle Hinds-Leslie (MH-CSB member)

General Updates

- **New Executive Deputy Commissioner** at Mental Hygiene Division is Dr. Chinazo Cunningham. She comes to DOHMH from Montefiore System with background in addiction medicine.
- **Local Services Plan:** NYC is not required to submit a LSP for next year, but we are expected to submit responses to a survey before July 1, 2021. Survey draft has been completed and is pending final approval from Mayor's Office. Survey does not require the same level of community services board (CSB) approval as a traditional LSP and covers the impact of COVID on Mental Hygiene Services.
- **COVID Pandemic:** Current rate of positivity in NYC is very low, number of hospitalizations are low, number of COVID deaths are low. COVID is not gone but key metrics have improved largely attributed to vaccination efforts. DOHMH working to address equity issues with vaccines with many efforts directed at communities with lower vaccination rates. DOHMH encourages mental health providers to work with individuals receiving services from a person-centered perspective when approaching returning to in-person services.

Bureau of Children Youth and Families Updates

- **Loss and Bereavement:** Concerns that large number of children in NYS have experienced the death of a caregiver as a result of pandemic with a greater proportion of deaths in Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens. DOHMH started an advisory committee to address needs including identification, assessment and support. Identification is a challenge because no central database to capture children who have lost a family member due to COVID. MH-CSB members noted that loss of a family member due to violence is a rising concern to be considered.
- **Youth suicidality:** DOHMH is hearing from multiple stakeholders that there is an increase in suicidal thoughts/behaviors among youth. DOHMH hospital surveillance is not showing an increase, but qualitative reports from providers are extremely important. DOHMH convened a stakeholder group to meet monthly as a learning collaborative to understand drivers and potential strategies.
- **Strong Families and Communities Center:** New program for front line social service workers in evidence-based parenting models. Program is being implemented by the New York Foundling.
- **Concept Papers:** Children Youth and Families Bureau is currently soliciting community feedback for two concept papers that are anticipated to evolved into RFPs. Paper 1 is to address suicide prevention for Latina adolescents and LGBTQ Latino/a adolescents. DOHMH is aware of disparate suicide ideation and suicide attempts in these communities and DOHMH is hoping to partner with an agency (or agencies) who have trusted relationships with target communities and can propose innovative solutions. Paper 2 is to expand the High-Fidelity Wraparound program that is currently operating as a demonstration project and was recently awarded SAMSHA dollars to support the program over four years. The SAMSHA dollars also support a Community Based Participatory Action Research approach to strengthening systems of care and will work with community to understand impacts of recent system transformation on youth and families.

Bureau of Mental Health Updates

- **Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT):** Program uses a team approach to provide ongoing engagement and treatment for individuals in the community for whom our services system has failed in the past. Program currently has 11 teams in the city and will be adding 25 more over the next 1.5 years, effectively tripling capacity.
- **Clubhouse:** Clubhouses provide meaningful daytime activities for individuals with serious mental illness to receive supports, including employment assistance and socialization opportunities. Program currently serves 3000 members citywide and will be expanding to add 750 new members, effectively a 25% increase.

- **CONNECT (Continuous Engagement between Community and Clinic Teams):** New program model to offer flexible services where individuals can receive support in a clinic or non-clinic setting and addresses service system gap between ACT and outpatient clinic. Program includes a robust social determinants component allowing individuals to receive support with benefits access, legal assistance and other assistance. Program will begin fall 2021-winter 2022 with 9 providers as a demonstration project, targeting areas with highest COVID impact and neighborhoods with highest level of psychiatric hospitalizations.
- **Supportive Housing:** DOHMH continues to work with new contracted providers to increase number of supportive housing units under NYC 15/15 – the Mayor’s initiative to build 15,000 new housing units over 15 years.
- **Mobile Crisis:** Adult mobile crisis teams (MCTs) are moving toward a faster response time to align with the expectation for a 2 hour response, similar to that of the Children’s Mobile Crisis Teams. MCTs are different from IMT in that they are helping someone in crisis, and do not provide long term treatment.
- **Other:** National initiative to create a new federal number for suicide prevention, 988. NYS is working across the state and with NYC to implement in July 2022.
- **Questions:**
 - a. MH-CSB members asked if DOHMH is involved in the new program to pair EMTs with mental health professionals to respond to mental health emergencies. Health and Hospitals mental health clinicians (H+H) are working with Fire Department of NY (FDNY) emergency medical technicians under leadership of the Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health, called B-HEARD. DOHMH is on the steering committee for this program. DOHMH is responsible for the Health Engagement and Assessment Team (HEAT) program which accepts referrals from the emergency response program.

Subcommittee Priorities for 2021-2022

- **Workforce:** DOHMH acknowledges that workforce is historically a major challenge for community based mental health providers and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Committee members were encouraged to think about response in terms of immediate solutions and long-term solutions, with strategies existing along a continuum. Several strategies were considered and MH-CSB committed to immediately supporting two of the strategies:
 - a. Increasing awareness of existing student loan forgiveness programs to entice clinicians to enter non-profit sector and support current staff in obtaining forgiveness benefits (Rachel and Warren interested).
 - b. Letter (or email) to state OMH to encourage policies that require expanded federal dollars (MH-SBG and FMAP) to result in increased salaries and improved working conditions for front line Mental Health Staff. DOHMH advised committee members that this needs to be completed immediately to have any change of impacting decisions at the state level (Warren, Cheryle, Rachel with support from DOHMH staff to connect with other CSB members).
 - c. Other initiatives discussed and to be considered at a later date:
 1. Outreach to high schools to encourage high school students to consider mental health career fields through activities such as career fairs, internships and social work courses in high schools
 2. Partnerships with colleges to encourage students to enter into mental health fields of study
 3. Partnerships with graduate schools to expand curriculum and offer more seats to students pursuing clinical training
 4. Expanding city funded scholarships for mental health professions
 5. Advocating for increased reimbursement rates to allow for increased salaries and improved working conditions for clinical staff
 6. Analysis of how much funding currently trickles down to front line staff salaries and other workplace initiatives to improve conditions and ultimately retention of front-line mental health staff.
- **Subcommittee membership:** Currently 3 vacancies for community members created by recent departures of Tony Hannigan, Joanne Park, Liz Roberts. DOHMH asked for input on new members to represent community with a focus on Mental Health Service System. Other individuals with interest in MH issues but working in other sectors (e.g., corrections) would be able to be involved in other subcommittees, not necessarily MH-CSB. Members suggested approaching some of the other large agencies, and smaller agencies with a focus on specific populations such as



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urban justice programs. Overall agreement among committee members to represent the entire NYC community with a focus on underrepresented groups especially seniors and LGBTQ communities. Members also requested new members with large networks that they can represent on the MH-CSB and also to bring back information to their groups.

Follow up and next steps:

- DOHMH to share concept papers from CYF
- DOHMH to share CSB membership list and membership list for the MH Subcommittee
- DOHMH to share contact information for state OMH
- MH-CSB members to draft letter to state OMH to encourage funding from FMAP and MHSBG to trickle down to worker salaries and other initiatives to support workforce retention. MH-CSB members exchanged email addresses and will begin collaboration with goal of submitting a letter within one week.