



**Cultural and Linguistic Competency Committee Teleconference Meeting Summary**  
**Date: Thursday, March 10, 2022 | Time: 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**MHSOAC**  
**1325 J Street, Suite 1700**  
**Sacramento, CA 95814**

**\*\*DRAFT\*\***

**Committee Members:**

**Staff:**

**Other Attendees:**

Mayra Alvarez, Chair Senait Admassu Claire Buckley Eugene Durrah Luis Garcia Jim Gilmer Corinita Reyes Etsegenet Teodros Yia Xiong Richard Zaldivar	Andrej Delich Amariani Martinez Tom Orrock Lester Robancho	Laurel Benhamida Angela Brand Stacie Hiramoto Nkauj Iab Yang
--	---	---

Committee members absent: Estrella Amaro-Jappesen, Veronica Chavez, Nahla Kayali, Jonathan Lee, Lee Lo, Gladys Michell, Vice Chair, Yolanda Randles

**Welcome, Announcements, and General Public Comment**

Commissioner Mayra Alvarez, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 p.m., welcomed everyone, and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Tom Orrock, Chief of Stakeholder Engagement and Commission Grants, called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Amariani Martinez, MHSOAC staff, reviewed the meeting protocols.

General Public Comment

Laurel Benhamida, Ph.D., Muslim American Society – Social Services Foundation and Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCO) Steering Committee, stated the issue of threshold languages needs to be addressed in the mental health system. She stated that it took years for Iraqi refugees to have their language designated as a threshold language and that Ukrainian and Russian are not the same language.

Committee Member Teodros asked for an update and discussion on any changes being made to the budget after the release of the final budget in June or July.

### **Agenda Item 1: Action – Approval of the February 10, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

Chair Alvarez tabled this agenda item to the next Committee meeting.

### **Agenda Item 2: Presentation – Strategies and Approaches for Investment in Community-Based Organizations to Serve Underrepresented Communities**

#### **Presenter:**

- Ruben Cantu, Associate Program Director, Prevention Institute

Chair Alvarez stated the Committee will hear a progress report from the Prevention Institute on their contracted work to engage county behavioral health departments and community-based organizations (CBOs) to build a shared vision for moving prevention and innovation further upstream at the local and state levels. The discussion will include the findings gathered from interviews related to building the capacity of county behavioral health departments and CBOs to advance a shared vision for program sustainability.

Ruben Cantu, Associate Program Director, Prevention Institute, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the goal, activities, findings, themes to explore, and potential outcomes of Creating Common Ground: Advancing Equity in Mental Health Outcomes through Upstream Community Prevention in California, a project to advance the uptake of Community Defined Evidence Practice (CDEP). He asked a series of questions for consideration:

- Where do you see strong county/community partnerships?
- What change would facilitate further uptake of CDEPs?
- How can we improve readiness on the part of both county mental health and community organizations/advocates?

Mr. Cantu asked Committee Members to send comments and suggestions to his email address, which he provided to staff.

#### **Discussion**

Committee Member Gilmer stated the philosophy of the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP) Phases 1 and 2 is CDEPs. He asked for details about the early development of the Creating Common Ground project and whether the Commission and the CLCC were involved in that process.

Chair Alvarez stated this is the reason Mr. Cantu was invited to present at this meeting, given the alignment of this project with the Commission's strategic plan. She stated the Prevention Institute would value the CLCC's recommendations.

Chair Alvarez asked Mr. Cantu about the timeline and when recommendations are expected to be put forward so the Committee can better understand the opportunities for engagement.

Mr. Cantu the one-time project is an 18-month project that kicked off in the fall of 2021. The project is anticipated to be completed by April of 2023. Recommendations and case study examples are expected to be submitted by that time. In the meantime, conversations will continue with groups and regions through webinars to share what is being learned.

Chair Alvarez suggested continued dialogue with the CLCC as the Prevention Institute develops recommendations, as a tremendous opportunity to leverage the expertise of this Committee.

Committee Member Gilmer suggested vetting each stage of the process through the CLCC. This would give the Committee hands-on work to do, which is what the Committee Members have been asking for.

Mr. Cantu agreed and suggested coming back to this Committee during the lifetime of this project to share updates and learnings and to benefit from the Committee's input.

Committee Member Garcia agreed and stated this would be a tremendous alliance to help meet the current needs in communities. He noted the importance of community engagement. He asked about the amount of funding and who provided it for this study.

Mr. Cantu stated the funding was \$350,000; it came from the Commission as part of COVID-19 relief efforts.

Committee Member Lo appreciated the findings about community engagement and expanding how different systems work with community and that it is beyond just community engagement but that it is about allowing community voices and expertise to lead the implementation of programs and strategies. She asked about the Commission's role in actualizing the themes and findings mentioned in the presentation. She asked, beyond the CLCC, who will be actualizing the findings.

Committee Member Lo stated this is a missed opportunity to continue to do research about gaps in services and potential opportunities when there is no entity held accountable for seeing these recommendations through. She asked about next steps and implementing the findings seen in the studies to make systemic changes in communities.

Mr. Cantu stated the intention is to develop a set of recommended actions that the Commission can take to address barriers and create pathways for specific actions and practical approaches to incorporating CDEPs into county behavioral health strategies.

Chair Alvarez stated the Committee has the opportunity to discuss what to do with the recommendations, whether that is to make a formal request to the Commission to consider them or to explore other advocacy avenues.

Committee Member Lo suggested that the Committee invite Mr. Cantu to come back to report on the findings and provide a voting opportunity for the CLCC to make a formal recommendation to the Commission. She asked the Prevention Institute to consider what the implementation process could look like during development of the recommendations.

She suggested, if the Commission moves forward with the recommendations that come out, that an entity, such as the Prevention Institute, support the implementation of those recommendations, and that the CLCC inform the implementation process.

Chair Alvarez asked Mr. Cantu to keep her informed on the best times to provide an update to this Committee in order to have regular input from the CLCC. She suggested formally agendaizing an update on this project as it gets closer to the April of 2023 completion of the project to allow the CLCC to vote on recommendations to bring to the Commission.

Mr. Cantu agreed.

### Public Comment

Stacie Hiramoto, Executive Director, REMHDCO, wished the CLCC had been more informed and involved in the decision-making process prior to this contract. The CLCC Members should have known where this funding came from and the amount. If the CLCC was involved from the beginning, the Prevention Institute would not need to consider changing their deliverables promised to the MHSOAC staff.

Nkauj Iab Yang, Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA), stated, although she is glad to see there is an item on workforce development, the need is so great that communities cannot wait for the workforce development process to occur. She suggested appropriate, culturally-relevant trainings for mental health service providers so they will have the tools and resources to serve the community.

Angela Brand, Project Manager, Center for Applied Research Solutions, and Field Manager, California Mental Health Equity Training and Technical Assistance Center, stated she is excited to hear more about this work. She asked to include the Center for Applied Research Solutions in these updates, especially around the CDEP-focused work.

### **Agenda Item 3: Next Steps and Future Agenda Items Related to Committee Goals**

Chair Alvarez stated a survey on next steps and future agenda items will be sent out to Committee Members.

### **Adjourn**

Chair Alvarez stated the next Commission meeting will be held next Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup> and the next Committee meeting is scheduled for May 12<sup>th</sup>. Another meeting is planned in April to follow up on survey results and goals for the year. She adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:00 p.m.