



Mental Health Services  
Oversight & Accountability Commission

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

**MHSOAC**  
**1812 9<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Sacramento, CA 95811**

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**Committee Members:**

**Staff:**

**Other Attendees:**

Mayra Alvarez, Chair Senait Admassu Luis Garcia Jim Gilmer Corinita Reyes Etsegenet Teodros Richard Zaldivar	Toby Ewing Amariani Martinez Tom Orrock Lester Robancho Nai Saechao	Lauren Benhamida Miya Bray Kevin Dredge Rebecca Gonzales Stacie Hiramoto Mel Mason Josefina Alvarado Mena
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\*All Committee Members participated remotely.

Committee Members absent: Estrella Amaro-Jeppesen, Clair Buckley, Veronica Chavez, Eugene Durrah, Nalah Kayali, Jonathan Lee, Lee Lo, Gladys Mitchell, Vice Chair, Yolanda Randles, and Yia Xiong

**Agenda Item 1: 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. She noted that the two-year term of this Committee will end at the end of 2022. New Committee Members are appointed through an application process, which will be announced through the Commission website and listserv.

Tom Orrock, Chief of Community Engagement and Grants, called the roll and stated a quorum was not present.

Amariani Martinez, MHSOAC staff, reviewed the meeting protocols.

General Public Comment

Kevin Dredge, mental health advocate, invited everyone to participate in a family summit on substance abuse on November 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The speaker suggested working together to discuss this issue.

Stacie Hiramoto, Director, Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCO), thanked the Chair and Committee for their hard work over the past two years.

She asked CLCC Members to attend the Children’s Committee to provide input on the implementation of the Governor’s Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI).

## **Agenda Item 2: Action – October 18, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

### Public Comment

Stacie Hiramoto stated some public commenters provided comments for Agenda Item 3 during the public comment time for Agenda Item 4 and were therefore listed under Agenda Item 4.

Chair Alvarez tabled this item to the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

## **Agenda Item 3: Information – K-12 Students Advocacy Procurement Planning**

### **Presenter:**

- Tom Orrock, Chief of Community Engagement and Grants

Chair Alvarez stated the Committee will hear a presentation on the K-12 Students Advocacy Request for Proposal (RFP) and will provide input on priorities and strategies to engage K-12 students in diverse racial communities as part of the process.

Mr. Orrock provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the background of advocacy contracts, strategies, minimum and desired qualifications, and next steps of K-12 student advocacy planning. Questions for Committee discussion were as follows:

- What desired qualifications of a statewide or local organization should be considered when awarding a contract for K-12 advocacy, training, and education?
- What strategies should be considered by advocacy organizations when seeking to engage with marginalized and vulnerable students?

### Committee Member Feedback

- Be groundbreaking in the approach to the RFP process by looking at targeting vulnerable populations, particularly when identifying specific racial, ethnic, or cultural groups, and requiring organizations that apply to have a board of directors that reflects the target population that they serve.
- Consider agencies that have proven that they have equity with the services they provide, that they increase equity in the population they serve, and that they are doing well with the financial component.
- Require agencies to have not only the racial, ethnic, cultural, and LGBTQ congruency but to have transition-age youth (TAY) involved with the organization in order to be more effective. TAY are the connectors to other youth.
- Members of the Scoring Panel should reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural makeup of California.
  - Members of the Scoring Panel should also reflect California geographically.

- The Scoring Panel should consider culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS Standards) for these communities.
- Have a comprehensive approach to the student populations to be more successful. Including family is crucial, especially for TAY.
- Solicit feedback on the best outreach, engagement, and services for these populations from individuals such as Dr. Gustavo Loera, who does high school academies statewide.

Committee Member Garcia asked about the makeup of the Scoring Panel.

Mr. Orrock stated the Scoring Panel is required to be made up of state workers. Staff does their best to identify individuals who reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural makeup of California. There are limitations in terms of regional knowledge but this difficulty can be overcome.

Committee Member Zaldivar asked if parents will be engaged.

Mr. Orrock stated local organizations probably have a greater reach in providing training and outreaching to parents, especially parents of K-6 students.

Committee Member Zaldivar stated the need to target TAY and also their parents or guardians. Oftentimes, students have parents with alcohol or drug addictions and would like training to learn about these issues.

Executive Director Ewing provided context on the regional knowledge discussion. He stated part of the procurement process is that material cannot be considered that has not been provided by the applicant. Outside knowledge cannot be considered during the selection process. The other thing to consider is the engagement that is already supposed to be happening on the school mental health work being done by local education agencies and county behavioral health departments under the CYBHI with school communities. This is a supplemental investment that is specific to K-12 students and their parents to elevate the voice of youth to ensure that they have a seat at the table next to caregivers.

Committee Member Admassu asked if these funds are for advocacy to raise awareness and make policy for the advocacy community or about providing services in the community, and if immigrants and refugees will be included in this funding.

Mr. Orrock stated these funds are for advocacy, training, and outreach and education engagement to give students a voice in mental health services for students. He noted that students in immigrant and refugee communities are also included.

Chair Alvarez stated the need to be intentional in leveraging the Commission's multiple stakeholder contracts in an equity-centered approach to work collaboratively to build off of each other's work so each contractor does not have to do everything.

#### Public Comment

Mel Mason, Executive Director, Clinical Director, and Co-Founder, The Village Project, and California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP) African American hub, agreed that it is important to include parents. The speaker stated the approved agencies should also have a

proven track record that it is a trusted agency within the community and among the members of the target population.

Executive Director Ewing noted that the budget requirements are specific that this RFP is for elevating the voice of students. The Commission's decisions will not necessarily reflect disagreement with comments provided, but these dollars are small and are specific to K-12 students.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Information – Prevention and Early Intervention Discussion**

Chair Alvarez led a discussion on the Prevention and Early Intervention draft report *Well and Thriving* and asked for additional Committee feedback on the draft report, in particular ideas on what it looks like to commit to the vote the Committee had taken around ensuring that the Commission is prioritizing non-college-attending TAY as well as the importance of community-defined evidence practices (CDEPs). These are important opportunities that came up during the discussion at the last meeting. She asked how these opportunities can be operationalized by the Commission.

##### Discussion

Committee Member Gilmer suggested that all services entail some reference, recognition, and inclusive strategies that bring CDEPs to the forefront. If CDEPs are not stipulated in RFPs, contracts and PEI plans, they will never get to the level of respect in order to assimilate CDEPs into the mainstream. It must start somewhere. This provides a good beginning and learning opportunity for counties, providers, and other interested parties to begin building cross-collaboration to take their programs from demonstration to mainstream reality throughout communities.

Committee Member Gilmer shared the stories of youth who needed help but were unable to go to college.

##### Public Comment

Josefina Alvarado Mena, CEO, Safe Passages, stated these opportunities can be operationalized by the Commission by adopting the recommendations put forward and augmenting the PEI priority language. The CYBHI provides a great example of how this is operationalized starting with the inclusion of evidence-based practices and community-defined evidence practices (EBPs/CDEPs) in the language of the legislation and the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) CYBHI EBP/CDEP Grant Program. It is also important to include this language in the PEI Report, along with language about including youth who are not in college.

Josefina Alvarado Mena stated another example is related to the CLAS Standards. CLAS Standards are not mandates but are guidance on how to create health programs that are more equitable and culturally and linguistically appropriate for communities. It starts with augmenting the language to make it possible for local jurisdictions to use Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding for EBPs/CDEPs.

Mel Mason echoed the comments of the previous speaker about including youth who are not in college and CDEPs. The speaker provided more detail on CDEPs including surveys

and evaluations. Communities know what works effectively for them. It is important to adopt and validate EBPs/CDEPs.

Stacie Hiramoto thanked the CLCC for voting at the last meeting to approve the two recommendations that the CRDP, REMHDCO, and the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) put forward. In response to the Chair's question about how to operationalize this, she stated the need for it to start with the Commission adopting the two recommendations into the language as allowed by Senate Bill (SB) 1004, which mandates that the Commission establish a list of priorities and that things can be added to this list of priorities for use by counties in determining PEI funding. She encouraged the Committee to reinforce their request to the Commission to adopt these priorities.

Miya Bray, Intern, REMHDCO, and TAY, shared their experience of losing mental health resources that were available to them as a student. The speaker highlighted the importance of prioritizing TAY who are not enrolled in college. Accepting the two recommendations is a step in reducing disparities, ensuring that programs that are funded will actively serve historically underserved communities, and ensuring that Black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC) and LBGTQ communities are receiving ample and effective mental health resources. The speaker asked the CLCC to make another formal recommendation to the Commission that it would adopt the two recommendations.

Laurel Benhamida, Muslim American Society – Social Services Foundation and REMHDCO Steering Committee, stated what she envisions if this process succeeds and is implemented is RFPs that would be focused on tradespeople from immigrant and refugee communities who are young and may never go to college.

Rebecca Gonzales, National Association of Social Workers (NASW), California Chapter, agreed with the previous speakers. The speaker thanked the Committee for taking up the two recommendations on prioritizing youth who are not in college and adding language prioritizing CDEPs. The speaker encouraged the Committee to ensure that the Commission takes this up and knows the strong support the Committee has for these two recommendations.

Chair Alvarez encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming PEI Subcommittee.

## **Agenda Item 5: Information – Committee Progress and Next Steps**

### **Presenter:**

- Tom Orrock, Chief of Community Engagement and Grants

Chair Alvarez stated the Committee will hear a presentation on past Committee input, discuss actions taken by the Commission in response to the input provided, and discuss recommendations for the incoming CLCC Members on priority topics for the Committee.

Mr. Orrock reviewed the Summary of Activities and Committee Input document, which was included in the meeting materials. He stated the document is a historical record of what took place at each Committee meeting and outlines all Committee discussions. He reminded everyone about the Committee's three overarching goals:

- Provide input on the Commission's Racial Equity Action Plan and efforts to address inequities in internal processes and grant programs.
- Identify ways to document and communicate inequities in California's mental health system to inform policy and practice.
- Identify policy and practice reforms and explore existing efforts and model programs to address inequities.

Mr. Orrock stated the Committee addressed each of these goals. He stated the document includes ways that Committee recommendations were included in the Commission's work. He asked how this document can be helpful to future Committees to help guide their work.

### Discussion

Committee Member Teodros asked for data on individuals who are incarcerated or in state institutions.

Chair Alvarez reflected on a past Commission meeting where someone said we measure what we treasure. It is important to capture the data that helps tell the right story of impacts of mental health inequities. She asked Committee Member Teodros how to improve the data collection for individuals who are incarcerated or in state institutions.

Committee Member Teodros stated the need for extra resources to be provided so individuals with lived experience and smaller organizations can provide information to fill this gap in data.

Committee Member Garcia stated there is a lot of data in the state of California but the focus has been on penetration rates. Penetration rates are only one component. It is important to break down the data to include information on the activation of services, family participation, length of time in treatment, services received, the number of treatment goals accomplished, and other outcomes.

Committee Member Garcia stated every agency in the state of California has this data. It is important to include all the components because the data provides the evidence and the evidence shows areas that need improvement to reduce inequalities. This issue has been the same for decades; the difference now is today's technology. Data provides the framework and the roadmap for equity. The data is there but the issue is who is watching that. Counties provide reimbursement but the state also has all the information. He stated the need to be more responsible and to increase accountability regarding the entities that have all this data.

Executive Director Ewing stated the data question is something the Commission has worked hard on for quite some time. He stated limited racial and ethnic data should already be available for individuals who are in state institutions. The difficult part is ferreting out which of those individuals have mental health needs and how many are receiving services.

Executive Director Ewing stated the comment about we measure what we treasure is accurate from the perspective that data is almost exclusively designed around billing as opposed to outcomes. The Commission is aligned with the requirements of improving reporting, sharing information, and analyzing data to shape understanding. The issue is

that the quality of collected data is so poor that it cannot be relied upon and would require a tremendous level of investment and cooperation from community providers, counties, and other state agencies.

Public Comment

No public comment.

**Agenda Item 6: Adjournment**

Chair Alvarez thanked Committee Members for their service over the past two years. She asked everyone to consider reapplying for the next round.

There being no further business, Chair Alvarez adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m.

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