

# State of California

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

MHSSA Collaboration Teleconference Meeting Summary  
September 6, 2023

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

### Staff Presenting:

Tom Orrock, Deputy Director of Operations  
Cheryl Ward, Health Program Specialist  
Michele Nottingham, Health Program Specialist  
Lester Robancho, Health Program Specialist

### Welcome and Introductions

Cheryl Ward, Health Program Specialist called the Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) Collaboration teleconference meeting of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC or Commission) to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the eleventh quarterly meeting.

Ms. Ward showed a video titled “Nicole Walsh Foster Care” and noted that the link to the video is posted on the Commission’s MHSSA web page.

Ms. Ward provided an overview of the goals, purpose, and structure of the meeting and stated the emphasis of today’s meeting is the reaching and serving the foster youth population.

### Announcements and Updates

Ms. Ward reminded everyone that the due date for reporting on MHSSA services and students served was August 31<sup>st</sup> and asked those who have not uploaded their data to do so this week or to reach out to staff.

Ms. Ward stated the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for technical assistance (TA) in five key areas was released on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Thirteen responses have been received, which covered four of the TA areas – partnership development, program implementation, data collection, and sustainability. No responses were received for the Workforce Development TA area. A statewide coordinator and possibly other subject matter experts will be utilized to provide TA in that area. Contract awardees will be announced within the next two weeks.

Tom Orrock, Deputy Director of Operations, stated additional funding of approximately \$23 million over 3 years is available to MHSSA grantees by application. A survey was sent to MHSSA grantees in August regarding utilizing this funding. 37 counties

responded with only 1 county stating they would not apply for additional funding. 97 percent of the respondents who would apply for additional funds indicated it would be for expanding reach of services for the current program or sustaining the program beyond the grant term. The other 3 percent indicated a capital purchase.

Deputy Director Orrock asked grantees to take a quick Zoom poll to choose one area to fund over a three-year period, for a limited amount of funding to better inform staff of the need. The result of the poll will be shared later in the meeting.

## **Research and Evaluation Update and WestEd Break Out Sessions**

Ms. Ward stated evaluation partner WestEd has been invited to present an update and explore grantee concerns, hopes, and questions about the MHSSA evaluation. A self-facilitated breakout session will begin this process and allow grant partners to reflect on and collectively discuss the key elements of a successful evaluation partnership with WestEd. She asked the representatives from WestEd to facilitate this agenda item.

Natalie Romer, WestEd, asked grantees to help make a word cloud by sharing one word that comes to mind when they hear "MHSSA evaluation." She noted that the word highlighted in the center of responses was "data."

Arturo Chavez, WestEd, reviewed the questions for discussion for the self-facilitated breakout groups activity:

- From your standpoint, what does a successful MHSSA evaluation look like?
- What does a successful relationship with an external partner (WestEd) look like?

Mr. Chavez asked everyone to separate into their small discussion groups. After the allotted time, grantees reconvened and Mr. Chavez asked grantees to respond to the following questions in the Chat Section.

- What big ideas emerged from your breakout groups?

Evaluation should be a tool for improvement, measure the program against its own goals, and identify areas of improvement.

Streamlining data collection, impact, and measurable change in school mental health.

Impacts. Full picture.

Broad metrics by content area (how grants were clustered - e.g., direct service vs. systems change) but allows locally determined metrics based on specific grant.

Data telling the story about the impact.

What is next/missing; what are the gaps.

Streamlining data collection efforts.

Evaluation of the required partnership between behavioral health and education.

Evaluation of areas identified in grant application to be addressed with funding.

The importance of usability of the data (systems and local level) AND user "friendliness" - both in collection and in ways to utilize.

Obtaining relevant and important information to reflect progress and growth of the program.

- What themes do you notice across groups?

This question is difficult because everyone is doing different activities with MHSSA funds while leveraging other funds to do it.

Clear and frequent communication is key to building collaborative and trusting relationships; also knowing what the collective goals are and what partners hope to collectively achieve.

- What do you still wonder about?

Did we get there? What was the impact of the interventions?

Did students receive what we intended to give? Did they receive school-based mental health and ease of referral to higher level of care?

What were the most meaningful impacts across different counties within the school communities?

How WestEd might help with bridging the gap with parent/family populations?

#### Wrap-up

Alexis Grant, WestEd, stated this is one of many engagements that WestEd hopes to have with grantees. She asked everyone to look out for a doodle poll sometime tomorrow, along with an introduction letter with more information on next steps.

Ms. Grant stated WestEd will be conducting a series of listening sessions. She asked grantees to respond to an anonymous one-question survey to inform efforts in planning the first round of listening sessions:

- Indicate your preference for including Commission staff in these listening sessions.

Nicole Tirado-Strayer, WestEd, asked grantees to help make a word cloud by sharing one word that describes what you hope we collectively bring to the MHSSA evaluation partnership. She noted that the word highlighted in the center of responses was “collaboration.”

Ms. Tirado-Strayer thanked everyone for their time and for all the information they shared today.

## **Approaches to Serving Foster Youth and Juvenile Justice Involved Youth**

Deputy Director Orrock stated the purpose of this agenda item is to learn how the most vulnerable students, including foster youth and juvenile justice involved youth, are being served through the MHSSA grant.

Michele Nottingham, Health Program Specialist, introduced Nicole Walsh and asked her to give her presentation.

Nicole Walsh, Parent Partner, FAST Program, United Parents, shared her story about being a foster youth in the school system and how she became an adoptive and foster parent. She suggested including funding for tutoring and interdistrict transfers.

#### Contra Costa County

Ade Gobir, Program Manager, Contra Costa County Office of Education (COE), presented on the Wellness in Schools Program: Foster and Homeless Youth (WISP), Contra Costa County's foster youth outreach.

#### Tulare County

Mary Xavier, Clinical Supervisor, and Venancio Lopez, Triage Social Worker, Tulare COE, presented on Tulare County's outreach to juvenile justice involved youth.

#### Orange County

Raina Lee, Coordinator, Foster Youth Services, Orange COE, presented on Orange County's Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP), Orange County's foster youth outreach.

#### Discussion

Deputy Director Orrock asked Mr. Lopez about upstream services that may have helped around ages 10 to 12.

Mr. Lopez stated youth have told him that early interventions would have helped them make better choices. He agreed and stated the earlier, the better.

Kelly Mraz, San Joaquin County, asked Orange County if there is a particular focus or support toward graduation.

Ms. Lee stated graduation is one of the major focus areas.

Deputy Director Orrock asked a series of questions to facilitate the discussion:

- What are the gaps that you have encountered in meeting the needs of system involved youth?

Getting other participants to realize how important mental health is in our services.

Getting help earlier in life may help youth make better choices.

Inconsistencies in services and service providers.

It is time intensive to provide services in these complex systems.

Stigma in foster care.

Challenges linked to partnering with other county social workers, as many foster youth do not reside in the county that holds their case.

Different systems not communicating or collaborating together.

A feeling of displacement among students involved in the system.

- Have there been strategies through MHSSA to strengthen partnerships with Child Welfare and Juvenile Systems?

- What agencies or entities have you partnered with to reach these populations?

This question was not addressed.

- What strategies are you using to reach and serve these populations?

This question was not addressed.

## **Adjourn**

Deputy Director Orrock shared the results of the MHSSA Additional Funding Poll. Top areas were to build workforce capacity, enhance programs to provide services to marginalized and vulnerable communities, to build or establish a new Wellness Center, and mobile services units.

Deputy Director Orrock stated the next meeting will be held on December 6, 2023. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.