

State of California

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION**

Minutes of Teleconference Meeting
September 23, 2021

MHSOAC
1325 J Street, Suite 1700
Sacramento, CA 95814

842-1825-8551; Code 46415287

Lynne Ashbeck
Chair
Mara Madrigal-Weiss
Vice Chair
Toby Ewing, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Members Participating:

Lynne Ashbeck, Chair
Mara Madrigal-Weiss, Vice Chair
Ken Berrick
Sheriff Bill Brown
Steve Carnevale
Shuonan Chen

Senator Dave Cortese
Itai Danovitch, M.D.
David Gordon
Gladys Mitchell
Khatera Tamplen
Tina Wooton

Members Absent:

Mayra Alvarez
John Boyd, Psy.D.
Keyondria Bunch, Ph.D.
Assembly Member Wendy Carrillo

Staff Present:

Andrea Anderson, Chief of
Communications
Toby Ewing, Ph.D., Executive Director
Anna Naify, Ph.D., Consulting Psychologist
Tom Orrock, Chief of Stakeholder
Engagement and Grants
Norma Pate, Deputy Director, Program,
Legislation, and Administration

Maureen Reilly, Acting General Counsel
Brian Sala, Ph.D., Deputy Director,
Research and Chief Information Officer
Sharmil Shah, Psy.D., Chief of Program
Operations

[Note: Agenda Item 3 was taken out of order. These minutes reflect this Agenda Item as listed on the agenda and not as taken in chronological order.]

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lynne Ashbeck called the teleconference meeting of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC or Commission) to order at 9:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Amariani Martinez, Commission staff, reviewed the meeting protocols.

Chair Ashbeck gave the announcements as follows:

Announcements

- The next MHSOAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 28th. The agenda will be posted on October 18th. The meeting agenda will include the election of the chair and vice chair for 2022.
- Chair Ashbeck invited Anna Naify, Ph.D., Consulting Psychologist, to introduce new staff members. Dr. Naify introduced graduate student assistants Brianne Smith, who will be working on the Anti-bullying and Fellowship Projects, and Lynze Thornburg, who will be working on the Workplace Mental Health Project and the Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE) Initiatives.
- Chair Ashbeck welcomed Senator Dave Cortese to the Commission. Commissioner Cortese introduced himself.

Research and Evaluation Committee Update

Commissioner Danovitch, Chair of the Research and Evaluation Committee, provided a brief update of the work of the Committee since the last Commission meeting:

- The Committee released the new Suicide Incidence and Rate Dashboard last week as part of National Suicide Prevention Week, which allows users to explore data from the California Department of Public Health about suicide, broken down by demographic factors, location, and methods.
- The Commission's plan and methodology for evaluating the Triage Round 2 programs were presented at the September 1st Committee meeting. There was excellent discussion about the strengths and limitations of that plan. The majority of the Committee endorsed moving forward with the plan with some constructive feedback about things that can be done to improve the plan. The next step is to incorporate that feedback and present the plan and recommendations to the Committee at the January 12th meeting.
- Kai LeMasson, Ph.D., Senior Researcher, MHSOAC, will be presenting at the American Public Health Association conference. The presentation uses data from California full-service partnerships (FSPs) to examine the characteristics of clients who have lost custody of a child and the predictors of parent-child reunification. The findings will be published in an academic journal next year. The hope is that the fundings will help to support improvements in program planning

and services for parents with serious mental illness. He thanked Commissioner Berrick who provided expert guidance on this project.

- The next Research and Evaluation Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 17th, 2022.

Client and Family Leadership Committee Update

Commissioner Tamplen, Chair of the Client and Family Leadership Committee (CFLC), acknowledged the difficult times, especially for communities trying to find safety and experiencing vicarious trauma. She provided a brief update of the work of the Committee since the last Commission meeting:

- The CFLC has not met since the last Commission meeting but will be meeting later this month on Tuesday, September 28th to identify the components for the implementation guide and again on Tuesday, October 19th to continue the work on the guide.
- The Committee will continue its efforts to identify components of an implementation guide designed to assist counties in their efforts to launch Peer Specialist Certification. It will be important for county behavioral health departments to have resources available to guide them through the steps of hiring peers, supervision approaches, core competencies, and methods for supporting peers who are working in mental health.

Roll Call

Maureen Reilly, Acting General Counsel, called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Craig Durfey, Founder, Parents for the Rights of Developmentally Disabled Children (PRDDC), stated they have two websites filled with facts such as information from the Utah Technology, Wellness, and Safety Commission. The speaker stated parents who are appointed to commissions are not being educated that technology has negative mental health consequences. The speaker asked the Commission to put money towards the awareness that too much screen time can cause developmental delays.

Steve McNally, family member, stated a suggestion was made at the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) Board meeting yesterday that the CalMHSA Board meetings should have an e-list like this Commission so individuals can be invited to meetings. The speaker asked about trailer bill language for Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation funds and the ability to reinvest unused funds elsewhere. The speaker stated Commission staff are easy to work with and are welcoming.

Steve McNally encouraged the Commission not to lose sight that there is a pipeline from the MHSOAC to the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC) to boards at the local level for community engagement. One thing that those boards are responsible for approving is all citizen engagement. The speaker stated, if the

Commission does not stay on top of the community planning process, communities are not really involved.

Poshi Walker, LGBTQ Program Director, Cal Voices, stated there are approximately 56 sole-source contracts coming out of the Commission, such as for research and evaluation. There are not enough competitive bidding processes in place. The speaker stated there are bills listed on the new website but there is no explanation as to why those bills were chosen. It gives the impression that those bills are the only mental health-related bills, when there are dozens more that were not listed. The speaker stated it is not transparent how the Commission determines the legislation to prioritize and bring before the Commissioners or post on the website. It is also not transparent when staff testifies on legislation, trailer bills, and budgeting. The speaker suggested putting this on a future agenda to provide an explanation to make the legislative process transparent.

Tiffany Carter, Statewide Advocacy Liaison, Cal Voices, thanked the Commission for including an update on the Tech Suite Help@Hand Innovation Project on the Commission's meeting agenda by the end of this year so stakeholders can provide meaningful feedback.

Hannah Bichkoff, Policy Director, Cal Voices, stated concern about the State Auditor Report 2019-119, Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, which was released last week that revealed "significant issues with how Californians with serious mental illnesses are cared for." The speaker encouraged Commissioners to review the report and recommendations. As of July of 2021, no action has been taken by the MHSOAC on most of the recommendations, according to the State Auditor's Office. This is concerning for a number of reasons.

Hannah Bichkoff stated, at the most recent Commission meeting, a review of the upcoming budget indicated that financial growth will dramatically increase in the coming year, resulting in an expansion of services, initiatives, and personnel. In addition, the Commission posted a list of ten bills on the website last week that they are tracking, sponsoring, or co-sponsoring in their current advocacy and lobbying efforts. The speaker stated, given the expansion of the department and echoing many of the Commissioners' comments at the August 2021 meeting, Cal Voices continues to question how the core services and supports intended to help those struggling the most with mental health will be addressed or resolved in the face of so many competing or beneficial interests.

Nina Moreno, Ph.D., Research and Strategic Partnerships Director, Safe Passages, and one of 35 local evaluators, California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP), urged the Commission to put more research-based practitioners in the field, particularly those connected to community-based organizations, on the Research and Evaluation Committee. The speaker asked when the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Subcommittee report will come out. The speaker urged the Commission to put the PEI Regulations, inclusive of public comment, on the next PEI Subcommittee agenda.

Stacie Hiramoto, Director, Racial and Equity Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCO), spoke in support of Dr. Moreno's comments about the PEI Regulations in

regards to the PEI spending priorities for counties. Although there were many events sponsored by the PEI Subcommittee, the issue of the PEI priorities that Senate Bill (SB) 1004 mandated that the Commission shall establish was never on an agenda or discussed. The speaker questioned whether PEI priorities will be addressed in the PEI Subcommittee report and, if they are, what they are based on.

Stacie Hiramoto spoke in support of Poshi Walker's comments regarding the sole-source contracts. REMHDCO recommends the creation of a legislative committee so the Commission can take a far more inclusive, comprehensive, and open approach to supporting bills. REMHDCO also recommends, in lieu of the Commission awarding so many sole-source contracts, that it form a committee or at least have a meeting so that the process is more fair, inclusive, and comprehensive. The speaker stated the need for more transparency and openness.

ACTION

1: Approve August 26, 2021, MHSOAC Meeting Minutes

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will consider approval of the minutes from the August 26, 2021, teleconference meeting.

Public Comment

Poshi Walker noted that ze are no longer the co-director of #Out4MentalHealth. The speaker asked to strike that from page 4 of the minutes. The speaker stated ze spoke in past meetings against public comments being paraphrased. Ze referred to their comment on page 11 of the August 26th minutes and stated ze said far more than was written regarding their concerns about the racial equity training that is happening for the MHSOAC. The speaker referred to zir notes from that meeting about CCORE and stated ze commented on intersectionality, the school-to-prison pipeline, and other things that are not reflected in the minutes. The speaker noted that this is the second time this has come before the public and ze want zir concerns recorded to accurately reflect what ze said, especially since that program is supported by mental health and resources of the MHSOAC. The speaker stated, since the meeting is recorded, zir request should not be a problem.

Poshi Walker asked, once the minutes are corrected: How can the public see the corrected minutes and will they be listed as edited and corrected?

Chair Ashbeck asked Executive Director Ewing to comment on corrected minutes.

Executive Director Ewing stated corrections to the minutes can be made as part of the adoption process of the minutes. The challenge is that meeting minutes are not verbatim but are a summary of the discussion. A verbatim transcript is cost-prohibitive. Other state and local bodies continue with the traditional version of minutes but make a recording available if someone wants to hear the meeting word-for-word. He stated the Commission would welcome written public comment, which can be included in the record as an addendum to the minutes. This would allow speakers to control their message and have it reflected in the public record.

Tiffany Carter echoed Poshi Walker's comments in regards to the paraphrasing of public comments. The speaker stated, although they understand that the minutes cannot be captured verbatim, it is imperative to speak to the fact that paraphrasing should at least hit all of the topics discussed, which is not happening. The speaker referred to their comment on page 5 about the definition of Innovation and the consistency of Innovation plans being approved by the Commission and stated it does not include a vast amount of what was stated. Instead, the minutes brought their comments down to saying that there is a "need for county plans being approved by this Commission to be innovative by the legal definition and to ensure that Innovation is the appropriate mechanism and funding stream for Innovation plans."

Tiffany Carter stated, although they did indeed say that, they additionally gave an example of an Innovation plan that was beautiful and that is often seen before the Commission, but that it was not the correct funding stream, and that oftentimes, a benefit of a plan is seen and sometimes Commissioners overlook that it is not necessarily Innovative by its full definition. It is beneficial for the community and so it gets pushed through, the speaker said.

Tiffany Carter stated that, at one point the Commission actually identified the Innovation program as one of the mechanisms available; to achieve the goals of transformation that the MHSA supports and that the lack of consistent definitions of Innovation and its application across counties makes this impossible. The speaker also stated they had said the role of the Commissioners is to determine if something is innovative; and, if it includes an evaluation plan that will produce learnings, that other counties can replicate and/or do what has worked. The speaker stated the Commission often has trouble with the latter piece but approves the plans anyway because they see the need.

Tiffany Carter asked that, when paraphrasing, all topics being discussed are touched upon. The speaker stated the need to ensure that what was said is being reflected as much as possible. The speaker advocated for a verbatim transcript but stated they will begin providing their written comment to staff.

Poshi Walker asked to strike that ze are still co-director of #Out4MentalHealth.

Commissioner Mitchell asked if the speaker can articulate the point they are making that ze want reflected in the minutes when giving public comment. It is unreasonable to expect the minutes to be verbatim.

Chair Ashbeck agreed and stated the speaker can say "I'd like the record to reflect" a point.

Commissioner Berrick stated there is an obligation for staff to go back and listen to the recording when correcting errors in the minutes. He suggested a combination of reviewing the recording, the speaker being able to put their intended comments in as an addendum, and, if there is an error, the minutes can be corrected.

Chair Ashbeck asked that Poshi Walker's title be corrected on page 4 by striking "Co-Director, #Out4MentalHealth." She asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Berrick made a motion to approve the August 26, 2021, teleconference meeting minutes.

Commissioner Danovitch seconded.

Action: Commissioner Berrick made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Danovitch, that:

- *The Commission approves the August 26, 2021, Teleconference Meeting Minutes as revised.*

Motion carried 9 yes, 0 no, and 3 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Berrick, Carnevale, Chen, Cortese, Danovitch, Mitchell, and Tamplen, Vice Chair Madrigal-Weiss, and Chair Ashbeck.

The following Commissioners abstained: Commissioners Brown, Gordon, and Wooton.

ACTION

2: Art With Impact Contract

Presenter:

- Andrea Anderson, Chief of Communications
- Cary McQueen, Executive Director and Founder, Art With Impact

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will receive a presentation on how the work of Art With Impact aligns with Commission priorities, addressing themes ranging from youth wellness to equity and inclusion, substance use disorder, black mental health, and refugee and immigrant mental health.

Andrea Anderson, Chief of Communications, introduced Cary McQueen and asked her to give her presentation.

Cary McQueen, Executive Director and Founder, Art With Impact, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the background and mission of Art With Impact. She stated Art With Impact promotes mental wellness by creating space for young people to learn and connect through art and media. Ms. McQueen was unable to show the short films from the Olive Films Collection due to technical difficulties.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Carnevale stated there is a whole body of mental health therapies that are delivered by individuals who get master's degrees in music and art therapies and do a lot of good work, but there has not been any work done to prove the underlying efficacy of these therapies that clearly work. He stated he has been getting involved on a national scale with researchers in bringing the UCSF neuroscience into this picture because they have the ability to prove the efficacy. These alternative modes of communication are essential and are changing the brain.

Commissioner Carnevale stated California has the ability to lead the world in understanding the efficacy of art therapies by bringing in the strengths of California's arts and neuroscience programs. Innovating in ways to deliver therapies with more

efficiency can reduce the cost of delivery, which would allow delivery of more therapies to more individuals with the same number of dollars, which would make the Commission more effective as a mental health body. He offered to talk more about this with Ms. McQueen offline.

Commissioner Danovitch echoed Commissioner Carnevale's comments. He asked for the additional impact information as described in the presentation, specifically about the participation, receptivity, and how to scale the program.

Ms. McQueen stated approximately 4,000 individuals have participated in the program per year for a total of approximately 19,000 participants. She stated she has worked with many colleges and universities throughout California. Additional artistic modalities allow more schools to be visited more frequently. She stated she next sees Art With Impact going to the juvenile justice system. She stated the importance of finding opportunities to create the safety of the containers that are in college and university programs in whatever Art With Impact does next, since it is difficult to bring something as emotionally powerful as art into high schools cold.

Commissioner Brown spoke in support of Art With Impact's partnership with the Commission. He stated Ms. McQueen and her team do a superb job. They bring in people who have expressed deeply personal issues and struggles and through the medium of art and film have been able to find a sense of purpose and a pathway to help them in their recovery and wellbeing.

Commissioner Mitchell echoed Commissioner Carnevale's comments. She stated she attended an Art With Impact workshop a couple of years ago and it was beyond amazing. She stated watching her child who has severe mental illness and their response to art and the neuroscience of that is something she takes note of. She spoke in support of the Commission's exploring and supporting work in this area.

Public Comment

Poshi Walker agreed that the Art With Impact program is well done and the films are excellent; however, it is sole-sourced. The speaker stated their concern is not just with Art With Impact but that there are many marginalized community agencies doing amazing work that never rise to the level of presenting their work to the Commission and asking for funding. The speaker stated concern that this is not a competitive process.

Poshi Walker also stated concern that programs are continually funded for transition-age youth (TAY) who are in college. While the speaker agreed that TAY in college need help, she stated there are TAY who cannot make it to college because they are either disabled by their mental health or because they are working. The speaker noted that those TAY need help too.

Poshi Walker asked the Commission to look at what is being sole-sourced and why, and how they advance what the Commission is supposed to be doing.

Andrea Wagner, LEAD Program Manager, California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations (CAMHPRO), and Community Whole Health Alliance, stated they are a big advocate for arts for mental health. The speaker suggested expanding something like this to older adults and other adults besides TAY. Targeting a specific

age group misses stories that need to be told and experiences that need to be had in other adults, especially individuals in rural areas. Other countries have a branch of their mental health systems devoted to the arts. The speaker stated they would love to see that happen in California.

Andrea Wagner suggested that programs like Art With Impact reach into community-based organizations such as those alluded to by Poshi Walker. There are many agencies already working in communities doing different art modalities for therapy in mental health. The speaker stated it is more about the process than the outcomes. The films are wonderful but they are a highly skilled and expensive art form. There are other art forms that can be very therapeutic. The speaker stated they would love to see funding invested in other art forms as well in smaller communities.

Andrea Crook, Director of Advocacy, ACCESS California, a program of Cal Voices, thanked Andrea Wagner and Poshi Walker for their comments. The speaker stated they were struck by the amount of air time Art With Impact was given on today's agenda. While Art With Impact seems like a fabulous program and is for a relatively small amount of funding, but the Commission's stakeholder contractors have never been asked to present on the work they are doing at a Commission meeting. The stakeholder contractors are funded to inform the work of the Commission for diverse communities in California; yet, on the website, there is no recognition of current and former contractors or their Annual State of the Community Reports. The speaker suggested elevating the work of the Commission's stakeholder contractors.

Stacie Hiramoto, REMHDCO and a member of the CRDP, echoed the comments of the previous speakers and thanked Poshi Walker and others for bringing up some of the issues they, too, were planning to bring up. The presentation by Art With Impact was compelling. The speaker stated it seems to be an impressive program and organization but it would have been nice to learn the background on how this project became connected with the Commission and how the sole-source contract funding from the Commission has been spent. Also, there was no budget presented today for the planned use of the \$500,000 contract funding.

Stacie Hiramoto stated the board and staff of Art With Impact are not racially and ethnically diverse. The speaker stated Art With Impact's mission and vision statements do not mention serving underserved communities or reducing disparities. There is an old model of serving Black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ communities – that is, to give a lot of funding to an organization that is governed and staffed primarily by whites, although they may award small grants to individuals who are in communities of color.

Stacie Hiramoto stated the CRDP Phase 1 was one of the major grants funded by the MHSA that was awarded by the Commission and broke this old pattern. Instead of giving all the planning funding to one large organization, five separate organizations that specialize in serving particular racial, ethnic, and LGBTQ communities were awarded separate grants to do community participatory research. In this way, there is capacity building for those community organizations. The speaker stated the CRDP Phase 2

continued this practice and funds multiple organizations that primarily serve particular communities.

Stacie Hiramoto suggested a more open, transparent, and fair process when funding projects like Art With Impact.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Mitchell suggested having a discussion to address questions asked during public comment at a future meeting. She asked Executive Director Ewing to comment.

Executive Director Ewing addressed the questions about sole-source contractors. He stated the Commission does both sole-source contracting and competitive procurement. He stated sole-source contracting is clearly consistent with the law – the MHSA explicitly authorizes the Commission to do sole-source contracting with these funds. Within that, the Commission follows the policies and procedures outlined by the Department of General Services (DGS) for good practices. All contracts are posted online.

Executive Director Ewing stated the vast majority of dollars for sole-source contracting goes toward academic partners, typically the University of California for research work, and there is a natural bias in the state to work with state agencies in the contracting rules. Rules are more lenient when working with another state agency simply because it is another public agency. This does not mean that the Commission does not sole-source contracts with smaller vendors.

Executive Director Ewing stated the competitive procurement process is staff-intensive and he is continually trying to improve that work, including its transparency.

Executive Director Ewing addressed the questions about how the Commission makes decisions about the use of its time and that other stakeholders do not have the opportunity that Art With Impact has had to present their work. He stated, managing the very limited time that the Commission has is an ongoing challenge. Art With Impact has presented their work before the Commission in the past and was particularly asked to present today to highlight its emphasis around diversity, equity, and inclusion, due to the fact that Commissioners have been asking what the Commission is doing around issues such as stigma and access to care that look through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This was an appropriate use of Commission time, he said.

Executive Director Ewing stated, given more time, the Commission would love to hear presentations on the work of other contract holders. He stated, if the Commission would like a more thorough conversation, staff will do some analysis on the amount of money being spent through a competitive procurement process versus sole-source.

Chair Ashbeck asked for a motion to approve the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve a two-year contract not to exceed \$500,000 to continue with the Art With Impact work..

Commissioner Wooton seconded.

Action: Commissioner Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wooton, that:

The Commission approves Art With Impact's request for program funding for two years, as follows:

Name: Art With Impact

Amount: \$500,000

Project Length: Two (2) Years

Motion carried 10 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Berrick, Brown, Carnevale, Chen, Danovitch, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, and Chair Ashbeck.

BREAK

[Note: Agenda Item 3 was taken out of order and was heard before the break.]

ACTION

3: Crossings TV Contract

Presenter:

- Toby Ewing, Ph.D., Executive Director

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will receive a summary on the work performed by Crossings TV. Commission staff are recommending approval of a one-year contract not to exceed \$110,000 to continue Crossings TV's mental health outreach work to California's Asian-language speaking population. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Executive Director Ewing briefly reviewed the impact of in-language messaging targeting stigma reduction, help for victims of hate crimes, and connection to culturally appropriate mental health services, and showed a short clip of some of the commercial work beginning to air. He stated the idea is make a small, reasonable investment to ensure that a target population that is experiencing tremendous trauma associated with anti-Asian hate, COVID-19, and economic dislocation is reached; and, to help connect them with resources and information to support their overall mental health.

Jinky Dolar, Senior Account Executive, Crossings TV, stated the Asian community has increased 27 percent and anti-Asian hate crimes have increased in California, with many incidents not being reported.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Mitchell stated the 30-second TV spot was clear and powerful. She asked about the number of individuals who have called in or asked for help as a result of seeing the commercial.

Executive Director Ewing stated Ms. Dolar's work reaches approximately 4.2 million Asian Californians. Crossings TV has phenomenal data in terms of reach but it does not translate into impacts. At the end of the 30-second TV spot, there is a link to a national organization that has agreed for the Commission to use them as a resource to send individuals to. Staff continues to talk with them to ensure they are not being overwhelmed and that individuals are being sent to valid, reliable, available resources. He suggested talking with them about tracking that information.

Ms. Dolar stated mental health is a difficult topic for everyone, especially for the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community because they feel embarrassed or ashamed. She stated the importance of awareness, letting the community know that they are not alone, and that there is help available.

Commissioner Carnevale stated business knows how to measure these kinds of things. He stated this messaging is very important. Greater awareness translates to individuals getting services sooner, which means money will be saved in the system in the long run, which allows California to serve more individuals. He stated there is a way to determine the impact and the return on investment of this so the optimal amount of funding can be measured that will serve more individuals. He asked the Commission to explore this more for the Crossings TV messaging but also for the general work of the Commission.

Public Comment

Nilda Valmores, Executive Director, My Sister's House, stated My Sister's House collaborates with Crossings TV on mental health issues. The speaker encouraged the Commission to approve the Crossings TV contract for another year.

Poshi Walker clarified her previous public comment and stated she did not mean that the MHSA does not allow for sole-sourcing but that she is asking what the Commission - in its role as the Commission - should be funding.

Poshi Walker stated appreciation for Crossings TV. The speaker stated reaching out to marginalized communities, especially those that do not speak English, is an excellent idea. The speaker asked if the Commission is doing the same kind of effort and resources and is offering funding and opportunities for other marginalized communities, as well, such as making commercials and doing interviews in other languages and showing it on TV channels and over radio stations. The speaker stated she is not trying to take anything away from the AAPI community but this is what happens to communities – they end up fighting over the same little piece of the pie instead of getting a whole pie that everyone can share.

Poshi Walker suggested doing a specific outreach to AAPI individuals that are also LGBTQ since there are different issues there in terms of seeking mental health services. The speaker agreed with Commissioner Carnevale that there should be a way to at least show some kind of correlation between the time a messaging is shown and a spike in individuals contacting the national resource. The speaker asked about using California resources. There are AAPI resources including LGBTQ AAPI resources in California that individuals can go to.

Stacie Hiramoto agreed with the previous speakers. The speaker stated they are not opposed to sole-source contracts but stated the need to have a plan. The speaker questioned the amount of funding being given to Crossings TV as compared to the funding being given to Art With Impact.

Carol Sewell, Legislative Director, California Commission on Aging, stated the Asian hate that started during the beginning of the COVID-19 transition has been a huge problem. The speaker noted that this has been especially hard on older Asian Americans. The Commission has taken action to support legislation to act out against this. The speaker stated the hope that future advertising and PSAs feature older adults in the images portrayed.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Mitchell took note of the illustrations presented to the Commission today and some of the work that is being done in marginalized communities. It is important to show the work being done in these various communities. She recommended continuing this trend.

Chair Ashbeck asked for a motion to approve the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve a one-year agreement for up to \$110,000 to continue support for Crossings TV's mental health outreach work to California's Asian-language speaking population.

Commissioner Gordon seconded.

Action: Commissioner Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gordon, that:

- *The Commission approves program funding for Crossings TV for one year in the amount of \$109,880.*

Motion carried 9 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Berrick, Brown, Carnevale, Chen, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, and Chair Ashbeck.

ACTION

4: Marin County Innovation Plan

Presenter:

- Talia Harter, Student Board Member, San Rafael City Schools Board of Education

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will consider approval of \$1,648,000 in Innovation funding for Marin County's Student Wellness Ambassador Program (SWAP): A County-Wide, Equity-Focused Approach Project.

Commissioner Berrick recused himself from the discussion and decision-making with regard to this agenda item pursuant to Commission policy.

Chair Ashbeck asked the representative to present this agenda item.

Talia Harter, Student Board Member, San Rafael City Schools Board of Education, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the need, proposed project to address the need, community contribution, learning objectives, evaluation, and budget of the proposed SWAP Innovation Project.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Gordon asked about youth involvement in the management and oversight of the project, and the confidence level that the county will continue to sustain this project.

Galen Main, MHSA Coordinator, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Marin County Department of Health and Human Services, stated Student Wellness Ambassadors from each school district will help oversee the governing advisory committee body for this project. The youth will be involved in developing and evolving the curriculum throughout the project. The county will continue to support this project using prevention and early intervention or other funds.

Commissioner Gordon stated he was particularly interested in maintaining the power of the youth voice and influence over the ongoing maintenance of the project.

Ms. Harter stated having these conversations in schools will create an environment for this program to thrive.

Ms. Main added that the county has strong student commissions and youth representation.

Commissioner Mitchell asked how students are selected to be Wellness Ambassadors.

Ms. Main stated the county will work with community-based organization partners to ensure that youth from underserved populations are recruited to be Wellness Ambassadors.

Jonathan Lenz, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education, Marin County Office of Education, stated the Marin County Office of Education works with known student leaders in this space. He stated the belief that students will spread the word about the program, the program will grow, and students will come forward to be a part of it.

Commissioner Mitchell stated there are many students who do not shine but they are still great students. She stated the need for an opportunity for all students to be involved in a program with a well-balanced representation. She asked for assurance that students who are not “shining stars” but who want to engage and be a part of this program will have that opportunity.

Mr. Lenz stated what is meant by “shining stars” is that, in the context of wellness; students who are interested in supporting students in their social-emotional wellbeing are interested in available resources and in ensuring that these things are connected and safe.

Commissioner Mitchell stated the need to dig wide and deep to ensure there is a broad representation of students in this program.

Ms. Harter added that some of the most passionate students have been previously failed by current systems. Presenting the opportunity for those students to engage, and voice what they want and need, will be critical to this program.

Commissioner Tamplen asked if peer support trainings will be offered for youth who have had experiences with mental health challenges, to give them the hope of becoming a Certified Peer Support Specialist,, and passing on the support they received to other youth.

Commissioner Brown asked about the 18 additional schools in Marin County.

Ms. Harter stated this program will be across all 18 school districts in Marin County.

Commissioner Brown asked how the system will work, who students reach out to, and who will put students in touch with peer navigators.

Mr. Lenz stated the students are not “signing up” services. The Student Wellness Ambassadors are not seen as therapists; they have tools in their toolbelt that they can share with their peers. It is more about students reaching out, connecting, and sharing resources. Training is included to help students recognize when other students may need access to resources. The program is about changing the culture in the school rather than students signing up for something.

Commissioner Brown asked how students reach out for help when suffering from mental health challenges or going through difficult times, and if students can only receive help if they happen to have a friend who has been trained in this; or if there is a mechanism for that student to go through to be put in touch with a peer support person.

Mr. Lenz stated it can be both. A mechanism can be created for students to be in touch with that person, but also resources could be made available that students can access in another way.

Commissioner Brown asked who coordinates putting a student in touch with a peer support person.

Mr. Lenz stated it happens at the district level. Each district will create a system for that to happen. He stated individuals from all school districts are brought together to train on the implementation of this model, but local decisions will be made about how students will navigate the system, based upon what is available in each school in each district.

Ms. Main stated youth currently have to go to an adult to ask for help but county research has shown that youth do not tend to go to adults for a referral. This program is about youth going to other youth within the schools.

Commissioner Brown asked how students will know who is a peer support individual.

Ms. Main stated they will be giving wellness presentations in classrooms, doing lunchtime events, and making themselves visible on campus.

Commissioner Mitchell stated her understanding that the ambassadors are coordinated through the county office of education.

Mr. Lenz stated, the program is designed for implementation of the model countywide. All leads from each school district will be brought together for a collective conversation

about implementation of the model. How the coordination works is ensuring that everyone is working off the same framework and implementing as designed.

Commissioner Mitchell stated she loved the concept of the program but suggested that the county improve upon how it explains the implementation of it.

Chair Ashbeck stated the idea of peer support is not new. She asked about the innovativeness of peer support in this program.

Mr. Lenz stated it specifically reaches out to an historically underserved student population and it will be a countywide implementation to eliminate the variable access to services between school districts. Everyone will work collectively on a common model. Also, the program serves 6th through 12th grades to improve the conversation between elementary and high school districts as students transition, which makes it more comprehensive and cohesive.

Chair Ashbeck stated concern that each school district will need to figure out how to implement the model.

Mr. Lenz stated each school will do it differently, based upon their unique structure, but the model is static and will be implemented in the same fashion across all school districts. Also, all districts will join in collective discussions on a regular basis to share lessons learned for consistency across the county. He stated the fundamental principles will not be altered although some of the operational features can be implemented differently per district.

Ms. Main added that the students from all districts will be trained together and will learn from each other about how it will be implemented.

Commissioner Gordon stated it seems that a lot will depend on how the young people will be worked with, so as to give them much greater agency to collaborate and help lead the work from their perspective in terms of what is needed.

Commissioner Mitchell asked how the project will be measured for success.

Chandrika Zager, Senior Program Coordinator, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Marin County Department of Health and Human Services, stated it is important to include the youth voice in every aspect of this project including the evaluation. The youth will be critical in developing the evaluation and gathering and presenting the data to inform the decision-making around the program. She stated Behavioral Health will be holding focus groups and doing surveys with caregivers, staff, and youth to measure the quality and effectiveness of the learning collaboratives and trainings to look at skill and leadership development. They will be looking at the California Healthy Kids Survey, comparison data, and a variety of different methods to evaluate the project.

Public Comment

Andrea Wagner spoke in support of the proposed Innovation Project.

Craig Durfey suggested including SB 224 mental health education training and AB 8217 and their efforts for empathy in this project. The speaker suggested the movie

Screenagers about youth who are addicted to technology. The speaker noted that children are suffering through something that can be alleviated.

Adrienne Shilton, Senior Policy Advocate, California Alliance of Child and Family Services, spoke in support of the proposed Innovation Project.

Hannah Bichkoff spoke in support of the proposed Innovation Project.

Priscilla Miranda, community-based organization, Marin County, spoke in support of the proposed Innovation Project.

Dana Van Gorder, Executive Director, Spahr Center, spoke in support of the proposed Innovation Project.

Preston Lee, student, spoke in support of the proposed Innovation Project.

Commissioner Discussion

Chair Ashbeck asked for a motion to approve Marin County's SWAP Innovation Project.

Commissioner Gordon moved the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Tamplen seconded.

Action: Commissioner Gordon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Tamplen, that:

The Commission approves Marin County's Innovation Plan, as follows:

Name: Student Wellness Ambassador Program (SWAP): A County-Wide Equity-Focused Approach

Amount: Up to \$1,648,000 in MHSA Innovation funds

Project Length: Three and a half (3.5) Years

Motion carried 8 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Brown, Carnevale, Chen, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, and Chair Ashbeck.

The following Commissioner abstained: Commissioner Danovitch.

Commissioner Berrick rejoined the meeting.

ACTION

5: Mental Health Wellness Act of 2013 (Triage)

Presenters:

- Norma Pate, Deputy Director
- Toby Ewing, Executive Director

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will hear an overview of the Mental Health Wellness Act of 2013 and opportunities for new investments in the 2021-22 Fiscal Year. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Executive Director Ewing provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the background, expected outcomes, and next steps of the SB 82 Triage Grants. He stated experts will be invited to present at the next Commission meeting about how to best make use of this funding. He asked Commissioners to provide guidance about preparation over the next few months for staff to best support the Commission as it considers the competitive procurement discussion around Round 3 of the \$20 million Triage Grants.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Wooton asked if ride-alongs for peer support workers, and law enforcement, if necessary, would be considered for the triage program.

Executive Director Ewing stated the need to follow the statutory and budgetary guidance but those are the kinds of issues where the Commission has flexibility to prioritize, such as the role of peers in that work.

Commissioner Danovitch stated it is critical to ensure that everyone receiving funds proposes a way to evaluate and shows the impact of the funds and sustainability. He asked for more details on the one-year versus four-year disbursements.

Executive Director Ewing stated, word from the counties is that the current structure is problematic. The original allocation for triage was \$32 million per year. It was reduced to \$20 million because counties were unable to spend the funding because of profound challenges in hiring staff under such a short timeframe. The requirement that funds be used for staffing suggests that that should be modified, which would require legislation.

Executive Director Ewing stated, if this is something the Commission wants to do, it makes sense to release this funding under a shorter timeframe such as two years. If the Commission is satisfied with the current structure, then it should not be modified and the funding should be released for a longer window such as four years. Based on county information, triage should be updated but this cannot be done prior to the allocation deadline.

Commissioner Berrick stated, as it relates to the overall evaluation versus individualized evaluation, there is a need to measure outcomes across the state. This does not preclude counties that have unique programs from adding components of evaluation. Funding should be set aside for individualized evaluations while also doing a statewide evaluation. Although evaluations cannot be uniform, they can achieve agreed-upon outcomes. He encouraged the Commission to consider the most expedited timeline possible to help ensure that schools can implement this program at the beginning of the school year.

Chair Ashbeck agreed that up-front planning is important to expedite implementation after funding.

Public Comment

Craig Durfey suggested paying for and distributing the Screenager and other movies to all schools in the county. The speaker stated JFK University ecotherapy has been proven by psychologists and they endorse it to look at that as promoting advancement of this psychology to bring wellness. The speaker stated the hope that funding will go towards education on technology addiction.

Mary Ann Bernard, retired lawyer and family member, stated they are unfamiliar with the crisis intervention legislation being discussed, but noted the first presentation slide contained the word “stabilization,” which is an opportunity to remind the Commission about other funding. The speaker stated the last clause of Section 5840(c) of the MHSA mandates the Commission to use prevention and early intervention funding for relapse prevention for people with existing severe mental illnesses. Crisis intervention centers are a wonderful place to do that, and stabilization is apparently part of this process, the speaker said.

Mary Ann Bernard stated that, historically, this group tried hard to ignore that mandate and the speaker’s law firm took it to the Office of Administrative Law, where they made the Commission pay attention to that mandate. The speaker stated, if the Commission does not follow statutory mandates, there is a very easy fast route to the Office of Administrative Law to get the Commission to do what they already made this Commission do once. This is something that should be done even if not mandated because it is so badly needed.

Ruqayya Ahmad, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN), stated CPEHN is concerned that almost all mobile crisis response teams currently operated by county behavioral health departments are co-responder models that involve law enforcement. These models often do more harm than good for communities of color. The speaker asked the Commission to stipulate that mobile response programs supported by these funds not support programs with law enforcement involvement. The speaker noted that this is an opportunity to build an alternative system that is more racially just and more effective. There are currently effective community-driven models in operation that can be scaled and sustained.

Ruqayya Ahmad stated services should meet language access needs of California’s diverse communities. From the first point of contact, community members must be able to receive services in their primary language and without fear of criminalization, and the program should be required to conduct robust culturally and linguistically competent outreach to their own local communities.

Ruqayya Ahmad stated, regarding evaluation, CPEHN feels that the Commission should include evaluation and accountability measures that specifically center on racial equity; and should require counties to collect robust demographic patient-centered outcome and system efficacy measures, and the data should be regularly provided to the public to inform refinement of the program and to determine next steps.

Stacie Hiramoto stated REMHDCO strongly supports CPEHN’s recommendations. The speaker thanked the Commission for having this on the agenda early so the public knows what is coming up and can prepare and provide input. The speaker

recommended, when considering partners, partnering with community-based organizations, particularly those that specialize in serving BIPOC and LGBTQ communities.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Brown stated, although he respects the opinions offered by several of the speakers, due to the experience of Santa Barbara County's program with a crisis response model that teams law enforcement with clinicians from the behavioral wellness department, it would be a huge mistake to exclude law enforcement involvement in crisis response. He stated Santa Barbara County has had exceptional success with their program and has universal support for it in the community. Although it may not work for all counties, it does work for others. He cautioned against excluding successful programs from being considered.

Commissioner Mitchell asked about the upcoming Listening Session.

Tom Orrock, Chief of Stakeholder Engagement and Grants, stated the upcoming SB 82 Round 3 virtual Listening Session is scheduled for September 28th.

Executive Director Ewing stated this is a multi-step process with lots of engagement built in. Over the past six months, the Commission has begun talking about the upcoming Round 3 of the SB 82 Triage Grants. Today's agenda item gave the opportunity to provide more detail, to put tensions on the table about evaluation, timeframe, and prioritization, and to announce the upcoming Listening Session and the panel discussion planned for the October Commission meeting to better understand current crises and opportunities. The feedback gathered from these events will be funneled into a proposal that will come before the Commission for additional public review and comment in order to expedite the release of an RFP to support local activities.

Commissioner Mitchell asked about the pros and cons of single-year funding versus multiple-year funding and how that will affect counties.

Executive Director Ewing stated the Commission has heard over the past few years from community partners about some of the restrictions within the design of SB 82 – that the funding is not necessarily tailored to support the most urgent needs in communities. He stated there is a heavy emphasis to use this funding to hire staff. Hiring staff can be one of the most difficult things to do, so much so that the counties have had to return millions of dollars because they were unable to hire staff as required under the statute.

Executive Director Ewing stated one of the issues to explore is if the Commission should pursue a conversation with the Administration and the Legislature about modifying the rules. In the meantime, these funds are currently available to support what is happening in the counties. In the past, the Commission has elected to bundle the annual \$20 million funding over multiple years – 4 years would allow the Commission to raise an \$80 million grant procurement. This grant procurement would have to be spent under the existing rules – primarily for hiring staff.

Executive Director Ewing stated, alternatively, if the determination is to allocate the funds in a shorter timeframe, such as two years, it would allow time to have the conversation about more flexibility in the funding.

Executive Director Ewing stated, when the Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) was passed, the Legislature asked community partners how to give local partners more flexibility rather than replicating the triage language. The requirement that the funds shall be used for staffing was removed, which allowed the Commission to use the MHSSA funds in a more flexible manner to respond to what is happening in communities. To have this conversation about the triage grants means investing in only one or two years. Although the funding would have added flexibility, it would not extend to as many local partners due to the short timeframe of one or two years.

Executive Director Ewing stated the other thing to think about is whether the goal is to give a small grant to everyone or to try to make a larger investment in a smaller number of programs.

Executive Director Ewing stated these trade-offs will be written up for discussion at the upcoming Listening Session and at the October Commission meeting.

Chair Ashbeck suggested considering regional grants.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:53 p.m.