
State of California

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION**

Minutes of Teleconference Meeting
June 11, 2020

MHSOAC
1325 J Street, Suite 1700
Sacramento, CA 95814

877-853-5257; Password: 677491

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

Members Participating:

Lynne Ashbeck, Chair
Mara Madrigal-Weiss, Vice Chair
Mayra Alvarez
Reneeta Anthony
Ken Berrick
John Boyd, Psy.D.
Sheriff Bill Brown

Keyondria Bunch, Ph.D.
Itai Danovitch, M.D.
David Gordon
Gladys Mitchell
Khatera Tamplen
Tina Wooton

Members Absent:

Senator Jim Beall
Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo

Staff Present:

Toby Ewing, Ph.D., Executive Director
Filomena Yeroshek, Chief Counsel
Norma Pate, Deputy Director, Program,
Legislation, and Technology

Brian Sala, Ph.D., Deputy Director,
Evaluation and Program Operations

[Note: An additional General Public Comment section was added to the agenda after Agenda Item 4 per the chair's request.]

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Lynne Ashbeck called the teleconference meeting of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC or Commission) to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Chair Ashbeck reviewed the meeting protocols.

Announcements

Chair Ashbeck stated that the death of George Floyd has underscored the equity issues that have long challenged our country and our communities. She stated she wanted to recognize everyone participating in the meeting and acknowledge it's more important than ever to be aware of the mental health needs of ourselves, our families, our neighbors and our communities. She encouraged all to take care of each other and extend grace to one another as we figure out how to move forward to do this work. Chair Ashbeck thanked everyone for being on the call today, and for the work that is being done to lift up the mental health services, and spirits, in the State of California.

Chair Ashbeck stated the need for dedicated thinking to better manage the Commission's meeting agendas for improved satisfaction of Commissioners and stakeholders. She asked Commissioners Boyd and Danovitch, as the current Co-Chairs of the Innovation Subcommittee, to take on the task of working with staff and stakeholders on how the Commission might reframe the agendas to better deal with the Innovation project approval and reflect the priorities of the Commission within the available meeting time.

Commissioners Boyd and Danovitch agreed to take on the task.

Chair Ashbeck suggested looking at different ways to use the Consent Calendar and tiering the levels of discussion based on the amount of Innovation funding required. She suggested, during these unprecedented times during the COVID-19 pandemic, taking the opportunity to try something new. She stated the goal is to get the work done, hear from the public, and complete the mission of helping to transform mental health in California.

Chair Ashbeck requested that the Innovation Subcommittee present recommendations before the Commission within the next 30 to 45 days to be tested out before the end of the year.

Roll Call

Filomena Yeroshek, Chief Counsel, called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Pamela Inaba, ACCESS Ambassador, Cal Voices, stated on June 3rd, the MHSOAC rejected Cal Voices's protest and is upholding the award of the 2020-2023

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Client/Consumer Stakeholder Advocacy contract to another agency. The speaker requested that the MHSOAC's Executive Director use his contract authority under Section 2.4 of the Rules of Procedure to enter into a contract in the amount of \$100,000 with Cal Voices to continue the important work of the ACCESS Ambassador Program. The speaker sent a letter with their full comment to staff.

Janet King, Native American Health Center, expressed appreciation for Chair Ashbeck's opening statements that the nation's political unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic are unveiling the lack of equity across communities and that people of color are suffering. The speaker encouraged the Commission to reinstate the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee (CLCC) meetings. It is appropriate during these unprecedented times.

Carol West, ACCESS Ambassador, Cal Voices, echoed Pamela Inaba's comments and spoke in support of continued funding for the Cal Voices ACCESS Ambassador Program. The speaker sent a letter with their full comment to staff.

Jim Gilmer, a member of the Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCO), former Co-Coordinator of the African American Strategic Plan Work Group for the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP), and Co-Chair of the California Multicultural Mental Health Coalition, thanked Chair Ashbeck for her opening comments relative to the current national and local situation regarding the cumulative impact of racism. The speaker stated, as a former prevention and early intervention evaluator and Committee Member, they were very struck at this moment to see that the nation is still at the stage where racism and mental health are not at the forefront of the Commission's work.

Jim Gilmer thanked Janet King for highlighting the need to reinstate the CLCC meetings. The speaker stated inclusive dialogue has been eliminated by eliminating many of the Commission's service subcommittees instead of turning the status of public mental health toward reducing racial and ethnic disparities and impacting racism in mental health. The speaker stated it is time to make that a priority. It is time to reengage communities of color and LGBTQ to help turn the dial because the nation is in a worse state racially compared to mental health.

Amparo Ostojic, ACCESS Ambassador, Cal Voices, echoed Pamela Inaba's and Carol West's comments and spoke in support of continued funding for the Cal Voices ACCESS Ambassador Program.

Mandy Taylor, Outreach and Advocacy Coordinator, California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network, stated the California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network is the organization to whom the MHSOAC intends to award the LGBTQ Stakeholder Advocacy Contract. The speaker stated, since the intent to award was announced, the California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network has made public comment several times during Commission meetings and spoken with staff, requesting that the MHSOAC change the annual budget distributions to the fifteen local level entities in order to better support equity and resources for local partners. The requested changes would not change the overall amount of the grant or the scope of

work – they only change the way in which funding is distributed to local level partners across the three years.

Mandy Taylor urged Commissioners to explicitly authorize staff, during Agenda Items 2, Budget, and 5, the Executive Director Report Out, to make the following changes to the proposed contract, based on feedback provided by local partners:

- Change the direct pass-through funding for local level entities to be the same for all fifteen organizations across all three years.
- Move \$65,000 from year 3 to year 1 to allow for more equitable distribution of funding and participation in technical assistance.

Mandy Taylor sent a letter with their full comments to staff.

Karin Lettau, Director of Training and Employment, California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations (CAMHPRO), thanked Chair Ashbeck for her opening statement. The speaker stated the hope that the Commission will find a way to address the human rights discrimination and racist practices that are still systemic within its own organization. The speaker questioned the diversity of Commission staff and Commissioners.

Karin Lettau asked about the opposition to the elimination of all the MHSOAC Committees. The speaker stated, if anything, there should be a greater emphasis on taking the recommendations from Committees for consequential action in Commission meetings.

Tiffany Carter, Statewide Advocacy Liaison, ACCESS California, a program of Cal Voices, echoed the previous ACCESS Ambassadors' comments. The speaker stated the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) calls for an unprecedented amount of stakeholder engagement and empowerment, which ACCESS California has been honored to successfully nurture throughout the state over the past three years. The speaker spoke in support of continued funding for the Cal Voices ACCESS Ambassador Program.

Stacie Hiramoto, Director, REMHDCO, thanked Chair Ashbeck for her opening comments relative to the COVID-19 pandemic and the monumental response to the current situation nationally and locally regarding the cumulative impact of racism, which have disproportionately affected communities of color statewide. The speaker encouraged the Commission to respond in a positive and meaningful way to these historic and overwhelming situations.

Stacie Hiramoto stated REMHDCO members and allies believe that convening the CLCC is one concrete action that the Commission could take. The CLCC could make authentic suggestions on what the Commission could do within its own programs and operations to reduce disparities for racial, ethnic, and other underserved communities. For years REMHDCO has been wanting the CLCC to do this.

Stacie Hiramoto stated this is the time for genuine and meaningful change. The CLCC could review and make recommendations on the Commission's reports and projects

before they are finalized. The speaker stated it is time for institutions to do business differently.

Hector Ramirez, consumer and advocate, thanked Chair Ashbeck for the reminder that the mission of the MHSOAC is to transform mental health in California. This Commission oversees and provides accountability for the largest number of individuals with psychiatric disabilities in the United States, the majority of which are in Los Angeles County. The speaker stated this month marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disabilities.

Hector Ramirez stated the Commission can help the MHSA transform mental health for the people of California by looking at practices, ensuring that all programs of the MHSA are accessible and designed for individuals with disabilities, and identifying accommodations that communities need.

Poshi Walker, LGBTQ Program Director, Cal Voices, and Co-Director, #Out4MentalHealth, referred to a previous public commenter and stated their concern that the Commission cut off an important Black voice by not allowing that speaker to finish their thought after the allowed time had been reached. The nation has spent the last 15 days in protest because Black voices and Black lives have been silenced for 400 years.

Poshi Walker stated it is important for this body to realize that Black voices matter. The speaker noted that a Black person was not even on the panel for the first criminal justice meeting. It took Jim Gilmer, who was in attendance, to finally bring up the Black disparities in the criminal justice system. The speaker stated their appreciation that the Commission thinks they must do equal time for all speakers, but equality is not the same as equity. There barely are any Black voices coming to Commission meetings.

Poshi Walker agreed with Janet King and Stacie Hiramoto about reinstating the CLCC but only if it will be allowed to be an effective voice. The speaker stated they have served on the CLCC in the past and never felt that that voice was truly heard, especially in the last few years.

Chair Ashbeck apologized to Jim Gilmer that his call was ended abruptly. She agreed that the agenda is not more important than the voices. She asked the Executive Director to reach out to Jim Gilmer.

Lorraine Zeller, MHSA Steering Committee, County of Santa Clara; Coordinator, Community Living Coalition; and ACCESS Ambassador, Cal Voices, thanked Chair Ashbeck for supporting agenda reform so that more voices can be heard. The speaker spoke in support of continued funding for the Cal Voices ACCESS Ambassador Program. The speaker sent a letter with their full comment to staff.

Andrea Crook, Advocacy Director, ACCESS California, a program of Cal Voices, stated Cal Voices has been the Commission's Client/Stakeholder Advocacy contractor for almost three years. The speaker spoke in support of continued funding for the Cal Voices ACCESS Ambassador Program.

Andrea Crook encouraged the Commission to read the ACCESS Ambassador Program's State of the Community Reports and post them to the Commission's website so Californians can see the meaningful work that the Commission has invested in.

Mark Kamatz, consumer and advocate, spoke in support of reinstating the CLCC. The speaker announced that the Disability Rights California Board Meeting will be held this Saturday, June 13th.

Jessie Wright, ACCESS Ambassador, Cal Voices, spoke in support of continued funding for the Cal Voices ACCESS Ambassador Program.

Tiffany Duvernay-Smith, ACCESS Ambassador, Cal Voices, stated they are a Black voice who stands in solidarity with Jim Gilmer, Karin Lettau, Stacie Hiramoto, and Poshi Walker. The speaker spoke in support of continued funding for the Cal Voices ACCESS Ambassador Program.

Commissioner Mitchell responded to several public comments that were made regarding the Commission's responsibility or lack of action regarding the CLCC or any work towards the Commission's mandate with respect to equity and inclusion. She stated Commissioners and staff are all upset over the inequity of people of color and specifically of Black Americans in this country. This story has played out over and over and the Commission is not blind to that. Consumer voices are being heard and conversations are occurring regarding the issue of equity – and this includes equity for Black people.

Commissioner Mitchell stated the need for the CLCC to not be a Committee of tokenism or an afterthought. She stated she has been working with staff on different directions and priorities for the CLCC. She stated she wanted the public to know that this Commission is not ignoring this huge issue. She stated a CLCC meeting will occur in the near future and the issues of equity and inclusion will be discussed.

ACTION

1: Consent Calendar

- Solano County Innovation Project Extension Plan: Approval of \$1,249,797 Innovation funding to support an extension to the Interdisciplinary and Collaboration Cultural Transformation Model Innovation project previously approved by the Commission in 2015.

Chair Ashbeck stated all matters listed on the Consent Calendar are routine or noncontroversial and can be acted upon in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items prior to the time that the Commission votes on the motion unless a Commissioner requests a specific item to be removed from the Consent Calendar for individual action.

Chair Ashbeck stated meeting minutes are also a part of the Consent Calendar. She noted that the minutes for the May 28, 2020, Commission meeting will be approved as part of the Consent Calendar at the June 25th Commission meeting.

Commissioner Questions and Discussion

Commissioner Alvarez stated the Solano County Innovation Project is an important item because it uses culturally- and linguistically-appropriate standards that have been defined at the national level that show a huge uptick in outreach to particular communities of color across the board and the general population. She asked that the Commission learn more about this project. She suggested that Commissioners Boyd and Danovitch look at this project with the Innovation Subcommittee. This project could highlight something that might be shared with other counties in the approach to outreach, particularly during these difficult times.

Chair Ashbeck asked for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

Commissioner Alvarez moved to approve all items on the Consent Calendar as presented.

Commissioner Mitchell seconded.

Public Comment

Poshi Walker commented about the idea of Innovations being on the Consent Calendar. The speaker pointed out that Innovations and prevention and early intervention is where marginalized communities were told that they would be served. While Innovation is a small part of the Commission's budget, for certain populations, it is the only hope. It is frustrating how few Innovation plans have realized that hope. The speaker suggested that that be a part of the MHSOAC Innovation conversation moving forward, and that stakeholders and community members be a part of that conversation of how to move forward with recommended ideas and also how to handle Innovation projects during MHSOAC meetings.

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

- *The Commission approves all items on the Consent Calendar as presented.*

Motion carried 12 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Alvarez, Anthony, Berrick, Boyd, Brown, Danovitch, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, Vice Chair Madrigal-Weiss and Chair Ashbeck.

ACTION

2: Governor's May 2020 Budget Revise Briefing and the Commission's Final 2019-20 Budget

Presenter:

- Norma Pate, Deputy Director

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will be presented with an overview of the Governor's May Budget Revise for Fiscal Year 2020-21. The Commission will consider approval of its final Fiscal Year 2019-20 Operations Budget. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Norma Pate, Deputy Director, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the Commission budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20, local assistance, and Governor's May Revise.

Deputy Director Pate stated there was a significant increase in savings from the personnel line item due to vacant positions that were unable to be filled. She stated there was also savings from the travel budget line item because the Commission and some committees did not hold in person meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Deputy Director Pate stated those funds have been redirected to support communications efforts for the Commission's suicide prevention work, COVID-19 related activities, and racial equity and criminal justice efforts.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Brown asked if there is any indication from the state on the projected downturn in income tax revenues and the ongoing reduction in MHSA funds to be anticipated.

Executive Director Ewing stated a dramatic reduction in MHSA revenues overall is estimated, which will primarily impact counties. Those impacts would normally be better understood at this time of year except that the state moved the deadline back for paying taxes. He stated he will try to find the outline of the Department of Finance's impact estimates and present that in his Executive Report later in today's agenda.

Executive Director Ewing stated, in terms of the budget impact on the Commission, an impact is not anticipated this year. A downturn may be expected in next year's budget since the revenues are from stock market earnings. The counties are anticipating dramatic cuts in their budgets. The MHSA impact is a little delayed, but the Realignment have already hit the counties because they are sales tax revenues.

Chair Ashbeck asked for a motion to approve Fiscal Year 2019-20 expenditures.

Vice Chair Madrigal-Weiss moved to approve Fiscal Year 2019-20 expenditures.

Commissioner Berrick seconded.

Public Comment

Poshi Walker referred to the last sentence in the fourth paragraph from the bottom of page 3 of the budget narrative, which states "staff will begin to look for ways to reduce the Commission's spending over the next few years and assess the need to continue some of our current contracts." The speaker stated concern that there is no clarification as to which contracts are being referred to but it could include the stakeholder contracts. The speaker stated concern about the transparency and stakeholder involvement in this assessment process. The speaker asked the Commission to direct staff to include stakeholder voices throughout this assessment process and not just have the outcomes be presented at a meeting where stakeholders are limited to a two- to three-minute public comment period.

Stacie Hiramoto echoed Poshi Walker's comments. The speaker urged the Commission to make the \$100,000 sole source contracts awarded by the Executive Director transparent and consider those in the reductions.

Stacie Hiramoto stated a letter was included in the meeting materials at the last meeting from a broad coalition of mental health organizations outlining the agreements they made with the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) about how the Governor and the MHSOAC should respond to the budget and the COVID-19 situation. The speaker highlighted that the large coalition does not want prevention and early intervention funds at the local level to be transferred to other components of the MHSA.

Stacie Hiramoto encouraged the Commission to review that letter and encouraged staff to lobby these positions with Commissioner permission.

Hector Ramirez asked how oversight and accountability is really being funded in this budget. The speaker proposed that advocacy be included as a high priority. The speaker noted that, in the Great Recession of 2008, counties in California struggled to keep their services funded and departments solid. Some service disruption was seen that is still trying to be recovered to this day, especially in the Los Angeles County homeless and criminally involved populations. The speaker suggested that the Commission look at the challenges and best practices in the counties from the Great Recession of 2008.

Hector Ramirez echoed Poshi Walker's and Stacie Hiramoto's comments. The speaker agreed with the importance of stakeholder involvement now more than ever.

Mandy Taylor echoed Poshi Walker's statements about stakeholder involvement and the process of reassessing contracts and determining the contracts that are important.

Mandy Taylor echoed Stacie Hiramoto's concerns about sole source contracts under \$100,000.

Mandy Taylor asked about the unspent funding for racial equity and criminal justice efforts. The speaker asked about the amount that was spent to address racial inequities and criminal justice. The speaker stated it has been seen in recent times that law enforcement should not be responding to mental health crises. It was never intended to be their job. The speaker asked that there be accountability about the kind of mental health funding being provided to law enforcement.

Mark Karmatz stated Innovation is only five percent of the mental health budget, which is unfair.

Commissioner Discussion

Chair Ashbeck asked Executive Director Ewing to comment on the stakeholder contract questions that came up during public comment.

Executive Director Ewing stated there have been questions about how the state's \$54 billion deficit could impact the Commission's ability to fund stakeholder contracts. There was concern, going into the May Revise, that the Commission may face cuts and need to spread those cuts throughout the budget.

Executive Director Ewing stated, as indicated in the table on Presentation Slide 2, the stakeholder contract funds are technically not mingled with other funding. The funds the Commission receives through the budget process for stakeholder contracts go towards those stakeholder contracts.

Executive Director Ewing referred to the sentence about reducing costs on page 3 of the Staff Report, which was included in the meeting materials, and stated the drive to reduce costs stems from a budget letter from the Governor's Office directing all agencies to be prudent, recognizing the fiscal impact that the state is facing. The intent is that this will not affect the stakeholder contracts primarily because those dollars are given to the Commission through the budget process specifically for that purpose.

Executive Director Ewing stated the budget has not yet been signed but it is expected that it will be signed consistent with the language in the May Revise.

Executive Director Ewing responded to the public comment about the \$100,000 sole source contracting. He stated the contracts that are not agendized and adopted by the Commission are contracts such as to maintain the copier or to buy office supplies. Recently, the Commission purchased laptops for staff to allow them to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those kinds of purchases are not typically brought to the Commission for approval. They fall under the provision in the Rules of Procedure that allow the Executive Director to make a purchase if that purchase is less than \$100,000.

Executive Director Ewing stated he will talk more about the public comment around being able to free up funding to support racial equity issues and reducing criminal justice involvement during his Executive Director Report later in the agenda. He clarified that the Commission is not funding law enforcement but is funding projects to implement the Commission's Criminal Justice and Mental Health Report, which has a heavy emphasis on diversion.

Action: Vice Chair Madrigal-Weiss made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Berrick, that:

- *The Commission approves Fiscal Year 2019-20 expenditures.*

Motion carried 12 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Alvarez, Anthony, Berrick, Boyd, Brown, Danovitch, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, Vice Chair Madrigal-Weiss and Chair Ashbeck.

ACTION

3: Tulare Innovation Plans

Presenter for the Advancing Behavioral Health and Project Empath Innovation Projects:

- Michele R. Cruz, MHSA Manager

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will consider approval of \$6,000,000 in Innovation funding to support the Advancing Behavioral Health Innovation Project and \$1,400,000 to support the Project Empath Innovation Project. She asked the representative from Tulare County to present this agenda item.

Advancing Behavioral Health Innovation Project

Michele Cruz, MHSA Manager, Tulare County Mental Health Department, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the need, proposed project to address the need, and budget of the proposed Advancing Behavioral Health Innovation Project.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Alvarez stated the Whole Person Care Pilot Program was something that the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) supported through a Medicaid waiver. She asked if Tulare County has a Whole Person Care Pilot Program in place and if the proposed Innovation project will build off of that model and, if not, if the county has talked to other Whole Person Care Pilot Initiatives throughout counties. She suggested leveraging the investment that the DHCS has already made and cautioned against duplicating efforts.

Ms. Cruz stated Tulare County did not implement a Whole Person Care Pilot at that time with those efforts and the county hopes to do so with this project.

Commissioner Alvarez suggested that staff identify ways in which the Commission can collaborate with the DHCS on Whole Person Care approaches. That is the preferred health care system model of care. She stated there seems to be continuous siloed approaches. She suggested a more collaborative effort to ensure that resources are maximized.

Executive Director Ewing stated staff has been in conversation with the DHCS around ways to partner on technical assistance. This is consistent with comments Chair Ashbeck made earlier about thinking about the larger picture and that so much time is spent at this stage and opportunities are missed as a result to bring everyone together. Tremendous progress has been made in supporting multi-county collaboratives. He stated Whole Person Care is a perfect example of how to learn together because of siloed, fragmented efforts.

Chair Ashbeck encouraged Tulare County to link with other counties, for example Fresno, that have tried delivering services in innovative settings. There are interesting opportunities that might help accelerate the work in Tulare County.

Project Empath Innovation Project

Ms. Cruz provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the need, proposed project to address the need, and budget of the proposed Project Empath Innovation Project.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Danovitch asked a series of questions:

- How can the use of virtual reality facilitate the development of empathy?

- Does the county have experience with that?
- Is there is evidence that the county can draw upon to suggest that that is an effective strategy?
- If not, how does the county intend to evaluate the proposed project and understand whether it is effective?

Noah Whitaker, Community Outreach Manager, Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency, stated artificial intelligence is currently being utilized, primarily in the military. He stated there are training and evaluation protocols that the county can pull from that environment as well as traditional measures to see shifts over time. He stated part of the hope is, while developing the products, the county can concurrently offer Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training without the use of this virtual reality technology to enable the county to utilize evaluation tools as a control group as they would not yet have been exposed to the technology.

Mr. Whitaker stated the county can then reevaluate once officers and other first-responders are exposed to the technology. He stated the county will continue to use other tools and metrics that are used to gauge empathy, and there are other stigma tools that can also be used, especially when stepping out of the first-responder groups and looking at groups such as the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) peer groups.

Commissioner Danovitch stated there is promise in the use of augmented and virtual reality tools for these types of applications but they are highly experimental. He noted that it is critical to do the following:

- Develop good protocols and have methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of the virtual reality tools.
- Build partnerships with groups that have expertise developing this content, since so much depends on the particular platform and the software.

Commissioner Danovitch stated it is important that those details are worked out, along with a good evaluation and dissemination plan that would learn from the successes or the lack thereof.

Mr. Whitaker stated there is a video game that has already been developed called *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice* in which the makers worked with a psychiatrist from Cambridge University to make the experiences as authentic as possible. The county's intent is to engage specific content area experts in the development process.

Commissioner Brown stated he was impressed with the proposal and presentation. It covered many of the areas that Commissioners are concerned about, such as the collaborative nature and the inclusion of individuals with lived experience. He commended the county for a truly innovative program that brings the community together and is a multidisciplinary program.

Commissioner Mitchell asked how change in behavior will be measured and if there is a specified period of time in which one would expect to see change.

Ms. Cruz stated the county plans to develop pre- and post-surveys with stakeholders along with having a control group with the CIT training officers. Then, when the technology begins to be implemented as part of that training, there would be pre- and post-surveys at that point to learn about changes in attitude during that one training session.

Ms. Cruz stated the CIT training is held four times a year and recurring training will be developed to perhaps look at the officers who were first introduced to the proposed project. When they come back from a recurring training, they can be assessed as to how their empathy, behaviors, or attitudes towards individuals with mental illness have changed. There are other measures but those were the ones considered during that specific pilot period.

Commissioner Tamplen asked about the leadership role of peers with lived experience for facilitating group discussions and trainings. She stated Dr. Patrick Corrigan has gone much research on stigma reduction of mental health. She asked to hear more about the leadership in facilitating these stigma reduction efforts.

Ms. Cruz stated Tulare County has Peer Support Specialists involved in all aspects of service delivery and currently participating in CIT trainings.

Mr. Whitaker added that the technology being utilized is part of the connection with the peer groups. One of the aspects hoped to be gained through this technology is a dashboard where a consumer can adjust certain features or traits such as the loudness or presence of an auditory hallucination and be able to make those adjustments so another person can get a richer experience of that individual's experience with mental health conditions. The county has an active and engaged consumer group who helped develop some of the initial demonstrations.

Public Comment

Poshi Walker commented on the proposed Advancing Behavioral Health Innovation Project. The speaker stated Cal Voices has been doing LGBTQ research across the state for ten years. One of the top barriers that consistently comes up is being unable to find an affirming and culturally competent mental health provider, even more so for queer and trans Black individuals and individuals of color.

Poshi Walker stated the presentation showed that 60 percent of the individuals spoken to state that appointment time is their biggest barrier. The speaker was concerned that this percentage hides the numbers of the most unserved and underserved individuals. LGBTQ individuals and individuals of color often feel unsafe and unwelcome in community planning meetings and are not provided a platform to meet their specific needs for initial and continued engagement. The speaker stated the hope that the county will look at that as a reason why individuals are not coming back or not engaging at all.

Poshi Walker commented on the proposed Project Empath Innovation Project. The speaker stated concern that mental health funding will continue to be given towards the training of police officers. The speaker stated the hope that it has been learned over the past two weeks that that is not a solution. Police officers have been being trained for

several decades and it is not helping. This is an intersection of Black Lives Matter and mental health. Money and Innovation funding are being spent on defunding the police, meaning someone other than the police should be responding to mental health concerns, not training the police to continue to do a job that is difficult and not appropriate for them to do.

Poshi Walker stated concern that there are other Innovation projects in the queue with virtual reality and that virtual reality will become the new toy.

Mark Karmatz requested more information on the proposed Project Empath Innovation Project.

Andrea Crook echoed Poshi Walker's comments and appreciated Commissioner Tamplen's question about peer leadership in the proposed Project Empath Innovation Project. The speaker stated the response spoke volumes. There is a need to look at how this Innovation plan came to be and to go back to hearing the client voice and choice in the programs they want to see since they are the end user.

Tiffany Carter commented on the proposed Project Empath Innovation Project. The speaker echoed Poshi Walker's and Andrea Crook's comments. Training law enforcement officers is not where the focus should be. The speaker stated peers should be utilized more in de-escalation and intervention. There is significant data that supports that peer involvement is what is needed for many consumers with mental health issues.

Tiffany Carter stated concern about the lack of peer leadership in the proposed Project Empath. The speaker stated, for something as innovative as this, it is imperative that peers are in leadership roles, not just used as consultants or as individuals who fill out surveys. Peers need to be in decision-making roles ensuring that the project is reflective of consumers and evolving with them as well.

Mandy Taylor commented on the proposed Project Empath. The speaker echoed Poshi Walker's comment that law enforcement should not be responding to mental health crises. More funding should not be invested in training law enforcement to respond to situations that they should not be responding to. That money is better spent funding crisis response for consumers who are mental health professionals and/or peer support.

Mandy Taylor also stated concern that Tulare County had another Innovation plan last year for cultural brokers that would support training for direct service staff where the amount of funding is drastically less than the funding for the proposed Project Empath. The speaker also stated concern that funding will be spent on technology to support and educate non-consumers on how to be empathetic when there are many under-resourced consumer communities in Tulare County, particularly communities of color and LGBTQ communities, that are not getting the services they need. There is great space for innovation in Tulare County to support these communities.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Brown responded to public comment about how inappropriate it is for law enforcement to be involved in mental health emergencies, to have training in mental health issues, or to respond to individuals who are in crisis. He asked everyone to recognize, even if an alternative model was developed to send other agencies or

members of the community to deal with these issues, that there are many times that law enforcement would still be brought into the equation, particularly where individuals are in crisis and are violent, are armed, or have a history of that.

Commissioner Brown asked everyone, in the emotion of the moment of what has happened across the nation, not to lose sight of the fine work that is being done in communities and in collaborative efforts between mental health professionals and law enforcement.

Commissioner Brown stated Santa Barbara County has a collaborative program with the county's behavioral wellness department that teams up deputy sheriffs and mental health clinicians to respond to mental-health-related calls in the community. He provided an example to demonstrate the success of that program – three teams responded to 186 contacts in the month of April and only two of those contacts resulted in the arrest of the individual involved.

Commissioner Brown stated these are programs and this is training that keeps individuals out of the criminal justice system and more appropriately gets them mental health services in the field. There is a great need for this collaborative effort to keep individuals safe, to keep the deliverers of mental health services safe in many situations, and to have an effective response to these calls which, unfortunately, are all too common in communities throughout the nation.

Commissioner Berrick asked about the current status of the Tulare County's mental health mobile crisis response capability.

Ms. Cruz asked Casie Ennis to discuss the county's Psychiatric Emergency Team (PET) program in response to Commissioner Berrick's question.

Casie Ennis, Clinical Administrator, County of Tulare, stated the county has two mobile crisis teams that respond to consumers and individuals in the community who are actively experiencing crisis. The teams go into the community and hospitals and they partner with law enforcement. The teams attend trainings with law enforcement where they learn how to connect and partner and they connect with the county's Homeless Outreach and Proactive Enforcement (HOPE) team of law enforcement members who actively work with the homeless community in the field.

Ms. Ennis stated Tulare County has a positive relationship with their law enforcement agencies, which are very open to working with the county. She stated it has been a great collaboration.

Commissioner Berrick asked if the county's mobile response teams operate 24/7.

Ms. Ennis stated they do.

Chair Ashbeck asked if the Commission has funded other virtual reality Innovation plans and if there are other counties doing similar work as Tulare County. She cautioned against funding several disparate counties doing several different virtual reality projects and not linking together.

Executive Director Ewing asked Sharmil Shah to respond to Chair Ashbeck's question.

Sharmil Shah, Psy.D., Chief of Program Operations, MHSOAC, stated Tulare County is the first virtual reality project but there is another county that will be presenting a proposed virtual reality project to the Commission in the future to address Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in transition age youth (TAY) that will come under the Executive Director's delegated authority.

Chair Ashbeck recommended linking similar projects together. She noted that technology is expensive and unwieldy when not connected.

Chair Ashbeck asked for a motion to approve Tulare County's Advancing Behavioral Health Innovation Project.

Commissioner Brown moved the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Wooton seconded.

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

- *The Commission approves Tulare County's Innovation Plan as follows:*

Name: Advancing Behavioral Health

Amount: Up to \$6,000,000 in MHSA Innovation funds

Project Length: Five (5) Years

Motion carried 12 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Alvarez, Anthony, Berrick, Boyd, Brown, Danovitch, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, Vice Chair Madrigal-Weiss and Chair Ashbeck.

The following Commissioner abstained: Commissioner Bunch.

Chair Ashbeck asked for a motion to approve Tulare County's Project Empath Innovation Project.

Commissioner Danovitch spoke against the current plan. He stated the objectives are very positive but he was concerned that using virtual reality to facilitate empathy is something that requires development, testing, and adoption of an intervention. He stated it is unclear how the proposed plan will do each of those components and whether it is feasible.

Commissioner Danovitch suggested asking the Tulare County to come back with further details about exactly what will happen, including leveraging other counties and/or infrastructure of partners that would be helpful in sharing that they could feasibly do those things.

Chair Ashbeck asked if Commissioner Danovitch is making a motion to continue this item and to ask staff to work with the county to more fully develop the items outlined by Commissioner Danovitch.

Commissioner Danovitch agreed that that would be his motion.

Commissioner Berrick seconded.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Mitchell agreed with Commissioner Danovitch and spoke against the current plan. She asked that the county address Poshi Walker's public comments when this proposal comes back to the Commission for approval including the issue regarding the lack of stakeholder participants in the process and the reason that individuals do not want to come in for services

Commissioner Mitchell agreed with Commissioner Brown's comments that law enforcement requires mental health training. She stated she understands both sides of the issue. As a family member of a person with lived experience, she stated it is helpful to have trained law enforcement to assist in times of crisis.

Commissioner Tamplen highlighted Tiffany Carter's statements about the lack of peer leadership in this project. She agreed that it is imperative that peers are in leadership and decision-making roles.

Commissioner Berrick stated, when looking across counties and the number of law enforcement officers who are dedicated and responding to these situations versus the number of mobile response and mobile crisis teams, California and the nation have vastly underfunded mobile response and mobile crisis teams. He stated the first line of response for mental health crisis should be trained mental health professionals and peers working together in concert with the community with which they are deeply connected and embedded. For the most part, law enforcement has been made the first line of response, which puts them in a terrible position. There are still counties that have no mental health mobile crisis capability. This must be deeply considered.

Chair Ashbeck stated the proposed Project Empath Innovation Project funds are subject to reversion. She asked if that is a factor in the continuance of this agenda item.

Executive Director Ewing stated rules require counties to either spend this funding prior to the end of the month or to dedicate this funding to a project that the Commission has approved. If the Commission continues this project to a future meeting, there would be three options:

- To present further details at the next Commission meeting on June 25th, which would allow the county to possibly have an approved project that would meet the deadline.
- To not approve, which would force the funding to revert.
- To allow the Commission to authorize the county to enter into an Innovation Plan and work with staff to revise that plan after the fact.

Executive Director Ewing asked the county about the amount of funds that are Assembly Bill (AB) 114 funds or otherwise subject to reversion.

Ms. Cruz stated the amount is \$1.4 million in total for the proposed Project Empath Innovation Project.

Chair Ashbeck asked Commissioner Danovitch, as the maker of the motion, which option he would prefer.

Commissioner Danovitch stated, since there is a meeting prior to the end of the month, his preference would be for the county to present further details at the next Commission meeting on June 25th, which would allow the county to possibly have an approved project that would meet the deadline.

Chair Ashbeck asked Ms. Cruz if this option is doable for the county.

Ms. Cruz stated the county will make every effort to fulfill Commissioner Danovitch's request.

Chair Ashbeck stated her understanding that Commissioner Danovitch is amending his motion to continue this item to the June 25th Commission meeting.

Commissioner Danovitch agreed.

Commissioner Berrick stated he supported that change in the motion.

Commissioner Mitchell requested that the county also be given a list of the comments and requests made during public comment, particularly Poshi Walker's comments.

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

- *The Commission continues consideration of Tulare County's Project Empath Innovation Plan to the June 25th Commission meeting to address Commissioner Danovitch's concerns and the concerns heard during public comment.*

Motion carried 12 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Alvarez, Anthony, Berrick, Boyd, Brown, Danovitch, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, Vice Chair Madrigal-Weiss and Chair Ashbeck.

The following Commissioner abstained: Commissioner Bunch.

ACTION

4: Mendocino Innovation Plans

Presenter for the Healthy Living Community Innovation Project:

- Karen Lovato, Acting Deputy Director of Mendocino County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will consider approval of \$1,230,000 in Innovation funding to support the Healthy Living Community Innovation project. She asked the representative from Mendocino County to present this agenda item.

Karen Lovato, Acting Deputy Director of Mendocino County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the need, proposed project to address the need, and budget of the proposed Healthy Living Community Innovation Project.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Tamplen asked if the housing units are in one location or integrated into the community.

Ms. Lovato stated the project will start in one location with one housing unit of 37 apartments. The county has other housing units but the population would be slightly different as those units have been filled for some time as opposed to newly-housing individuals who have a history of chronic homelessness. She stated there are also housing developments in progress, which is the reason for the cost for year three. It is related to the No Place Like Home Initiative housing that could be eligible for a similar expansion and testing if the proposed project is successful throughout various applications.

Commissioner Wooton thanked the county for considering an equitable wage for the peer advocate and for including outings. She stated social connectiveness is an important part of recovery.

Commissioner Brown stated the cost for the proposed project, which does not include housing or sustenance, averages between \$24,600 and \$33,243 per person. He stated the cost is high compared to what is being proposed. He asked how this project compares to existing services that are being provided and their cost in other communities, and if there is a plan for sustaining this effort if this project is acceptable at those financial levels.

Ms. Lovato stated the high cost is due to including what would normally be multiple other agency cost equivalents for multiple types of wellness centers and service provider agencies. The proposal brings all those resources into one location at the housing unit. She agreed that it is a high cost per client. She stated there may be a higher number of clients served, depending on turnover at the apartment complex and depending on successful results, spreading to other housing complexes, and doing testing in other environments.

Ms. Lovato stated the costs that would normally be associated with the operational costs of a wellness center, for example, or an outpatient specialty mental health facility are combined in the community room at the housing complex. Much of the funding is going to stocking those items. She stated the county could look at the operating costs of the wellness centers to use as comparison to the proposed project.

Ms. Lovato stated, if the proposed project is successful, the county would write into future community services and supports (CSS) contracts an expectation that either these services will be provided through a Request for Proposal (RFP) or that existing wellness centers will make part of their services offered on-site at housing locations and would develop systems around that. Because the services are for seriously mentally ill individuals who fall into full-service partnership categories for most of the time that they are being housed, they would qualify for CSS services. The county would look at partnering those successful outcomes and practices with existing CSS operations and future MHS plans.

Public Comment

Hector Ramirez stated the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the mental health landscape. It is important that the Commission no longer continue to make funding decisions with a pre-COVID-19 framework. The speaker applauded the intent of the county but stated it is not innovative. The speaker stated individuals do not learn to be independent in this setting unless they are out in the community where they can receive supported community integration services, which is what works best. The speaker stated this has been happening for years in the intellectual and developmental disability communities.

Hector Ramirez cautioned the Commission against funding Innovation plans in congregate settings such as the proposed project due to COVID-19 safety protocols. The speaker suggested holding decisions on county Innovation plans to allow proposals to be adjusted to include COVID-19 safety protocols. The speaker stated COVID-19 has changed mental health forever. The Commission needs to adapt and think differently.

Poshi Walker strongly echoed Hector Ramirez's comments and reminded everyone that there never will be a pre-COVID-19 world again, at least not until there is a 100 percent effective vaccine and 100 percent immunity.

Poshi Walker encouraged the county to talk to the homeless teams at the Veteran's Administration. They have many lessons learned as they have tried to house veterans, many of whom have mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders and have been chronically homeless.

Poshi Walker stated many homeless individuals have pets and one of the reasons homeless individuals do not want to be housed is because they are required to give up what is essentially a child or a partner to them, since programs generally do not allow pets.

Poshi Walker stated the need to ensure that implicit bias is addressed among the members of the group whenever individuals are grouped together. Just because they all have a mental illness does not mean there is not also racism, heterosexism, and transphobia issues. The speaker stated the need in congregate settings to not present certain religious holidays to the exclusion of others.

Commissioner Discussion

Chair Ashbeck stated the proposed project is right for Mendocino County but is not innovative. She stated the need to link similar Innovation plans together. She recommended that it be made a requirement that counties with similar projects link together going forward. She asked Commissioners Boyd and Danovitch, as the Innovation Subcommittee considers how to manage the meeting agendas, to also consider how to link similar Innovation projects such as making a tiering of projects and to distinguish between projects that are innovative to one county when other counties have already tried it.

Chair Ashbeck asked for a motion to approve Mendocino County's Healthy Living Community Innovation Project.

Commissioner Bunch moved to approve the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Anthony seconded.

Commissioner Alvarez stated the need to be mindful about COVID-19 and the expectation that individuals do not congregate together. She made a friendly amendment to ask the county to inform the Commission how they would respond to that, given public health guidelines, and what that would look like for discussions and gatherings to ensure the safety of individuals who participate in the proposed project.

Commissioners Bunch and Anthony agreed to accept Commissioner Alvarez's friendly amendment.

Chair Ashbeck asked the county to reply to Commissioner Alvarez's request in writing with attention to living arrangements in close quarters, group settings, disinfecting, masks, and other requirements that are part of COVID-19 safety protocols.

Ms. Lovato agreed.

Action: Commissioner Bunch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Anthony, that:

- *The Commission approves the following Mendocino County's Innovation Plan, and requests the county to submit in writing within 30 days their plan to comply with COVID-19 safety protocols with special attention to living arrangements in close quarters, group settings, disinfecting, masks, and other requirements that are part of COVID-19 protocols:*

Name: Healthy Living Community

Amount: Up to \$1,230,000 in MHSA Innovation funds

Project Length: Five (5) Years

Motion carried 12 yes, 1 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Alvarez, Anthony, Berrick, Boyd, Bunch, Danovitch, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, Vice Chair Madrigal-Weiss and Chair Ashbeck.

The following Commissioner voted "No": Commissioner Brown.

[Note: An additional General Public Comment section was added to the agenda after Agenda Item 4 per the chair's request.]

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Lilyane Glamben, ONTRACK Program Resources, appreciated that COVID-19 and the nation's unrest have been discussed in this meeting. The speaker thanked Poshi Walker, Stacie Hiramoto, Hector Ramirez, and others who provided feedback in today's meeting. The speaker stated a train wreck is just beginning due to the COVID-19

pandemic in terms of behavioral health services and the African American community. The speaker stated the disparity data that has been worked with until now does not capture the detrimental impact that will be happening for services for the African American community and others that have been underserved or inappropriately served until now. The speaker noted that telehealth has many barriers and challenges.

Lilyane Glamben implored this Commission to be proactive as much as possible. The speaker agreed that the CLCC should be reinstated but stated the need for it to be armed with teeth and the ability to act with actionable items.

Commissioner Berrick stated Lilyane Glamben spoke about important issues from what is happening in the communities, to the meltdown in Realignment funds and what is expected to happen to the MHSA funding, to the massive underreaction at the federal level to what is going to be a crisis like has never been seen before in the communities. He thanked Lilyane Glamben for bringing these points across in such a powerful way.

Additional Public Comment

Per Chair Ashbeck's request, a summary of the written public comment submitted by members of the public who were in the teleconference queue to provide their public comment for General Public Comment but were unable to get through are as follows:

Bill Floyd, Program Coordinator, Peer Recovery Art Project; ACCESS Ambassador, Cal Voices, wrote their concern that the ACCESS Ambassador Program, a program of Cal Voices, was not awarded a new three-year contract. The speaker wrote in support of continued funding for the Cal Voices ACCESS Ambassador Program.

Bill Floyd asked the Commission to consider ways in which applications were scored and the way the scoring process was changed to result in the decision that has been made.

INFORMATION

5: Executive Director Report Out

Presenter:

- Toby Ewing, Ph.D., Executive Director, MHSOAC

Chair Ashbeck stated Executive Director Ewing will report out on projects underway, county Innovation plans approved through delegated authority, and other matters relating to the ongoing work of the Commission.

Executive Director Ewing provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the Commission's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 and racial equity, personnel, Committees, Innovation work, and projects. He stated there are 18 Innovation Plans in the queue. He stated the need for the Commission to change its logo for ADA compliance.

Executive Director Ewing recognized Ashley Mills, Research Supervisor, Policy and Research Section, Research and Evaluation Division, who was on the local KVIE channel to provide suicide prevention messaging on PBS.

Executive Director Ewing invited Dawnte Early to report on the Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE).

Dawnte Early, Ph.D., Chief, Research and Evaluation, summarized the purpose, the Commission's role, and goals of the CCORE. She stated, with COVID-19 and racial injustice disproportionately impacting communities of color, this is the time to assess and build capacity to meet this critical challenge. She stated doing so will enable the Commission to more effectively engage with stakeholders, make policy and resource decisions, and communicate intentions.

Commissioner Questions and Discussion

Commissioner Gordon stated the COVID-19 impacts and the issues related to equity and diversity are superimposed on the Commission's regular work. He stated meeting times are spent rushing from one urgent approval to another. The Commission is not spending the time it should to think and discuss how these issues should be approached.

Commissioner Gordon encouraged setting aside time to discuss adjustments to the equity and diversity work and other adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He suggested making time for facilitated discussions on these two issues to determine what needs to be adjusted in grants and plans in a way that Commissioners can work thoughtfully together.

Executive Director Ewing agreed and stated staff has expressly made that argument to the Budget Committees and Administration and asked them to pause the incentive to spend Innovation funding quickly and recognize that none of the Innovation plans and County Three-Year Plans that have been developed that are coming to the Commission were done in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated some of this fiscal pressure must be taken off counties to allow the thoughtful work recommended by Commissioner Gordon.

Commissioner Bunch requested that information on the CCORE be sent to Commissioners.

Executive Director Ewing stated staff is working to clarify the CCORE information. Part of the intent is to bring that proposal to the CLCC for feedback and guidance and then disseminate the information.

Commissioner Bunch stated pieces of the CCORE can be used in the Workplace Mental Health work.

Executive Director Ewing agreed and stated the CCORE can also be used in Schools and Mental Health, Prevention and Early Intervention, and Suicide Prevention work. This is part of the conversation.

Commissioner Anthony stated her concern about institutional bias by organizations and their service practices. She stressed the importance of measuring pre- and post-

institutional bias that is discovered, reporting on it, and making it an issue. Institutional bias is at the heart of some of the problems being seen.

Commissioner Berrick strongly agreed with Executive Director Ewing and that the Commission should take time to evaluate its role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated continuing to do business as usual makes the Commission less relevant.

Commissioner Berrick spoke about structure. He stated Commission meetings consistently run over the time allotted. This is bad planning. He noted that Chair Ashbeck facilitates the meeting beautifully and in the best way possible and he agreed that time must be given to hear public comment, especially in these unprecedented times. The Commission needs to be thoughtful and engaged while, at the same time, it needs to move quicker than it has in the past. He acknowledged that it is difficult to do both.

Commissioner Berrick suggested that the next meeting be scheduled for at least four hours and maybe longer with a ten-minute break, knowing that there will not be time for things that are both urgent and important without doing that. He stated breaks make virtual meetings work better.

Commissioner Berrick stated the Commission can help to be an activist on changes that need to occur both within and outside of California. This refers to COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter but also it refers to a federal government that is not being responsive to the needs across the country. The Commission cannot take stands on those kinds of issues but it can at least discuss them.

Commissioner Mitchell thanked fellow Commissioners for being open to discussing the complicated issue of race and Black lives equity. Equity is really what this conversation is about nationwide. The only way change will happen is when everyone takes an appropriate stand. All lives matter but it has been seen that equity is not what is going on in America. She urged Commissioners not to be afraid to do the right thing and not to be afraid of the discussion because it is equally as difficult and often there is only one Black voice at the table. She stated everyone is angry, but there needs to be an intelligent, reasonable conversation in order to effect change.

Chair Ashbeck suggested changing the name of the CLCC. The name is outdated. She suggested using the word "equity" mentioned by Commissioner Mitchell.

Commissioner Mitchell agreed that it is worth a discussion because the issue is equity. The goal is to get the work done and to raise awareness in all the Commission does. She agreed with Dr. Early's question if the Commission is contributing to the problem with its own quiet implicit biases because everyone has them.

Public Comment

Hector Ramirez requested hearing more about the peer advocacy initiatives. The speaker agreed that there is a need for structural change in the way the Commission functions. Today's meeting highlights the need for the state to start looking at that conversation again. The speaker stated the importance of one of the strategies as far as adjustments or proposals is looking at emergency crisis response services. It should not

be the sole burden of the MHSOAC to come up with the right model but the state needs to step up.

Hector Ramirez stated there is still a missing piece between law enforcement and health care. It is not right to burden law enforcement with so many responsibilities and, at the same time, leave family members and individuals with psychiatric disabilities to depend on law enforcement when they need medical help. There is a need for a broader conversation with intentional strategies for the sake of providing guidance.

Stacie Hiramoto stated the need for more transparency around the sole source contracts. The speaker reminded the Commission that, at a meeting in 2019, stakeholders learned that there had been a grant awarded to the California Children's Trust and staff had put on the agenda that the MHSOAC should entertain awarding this contractor \$500,000. The speaker stated it is misleading to say that contracts are only for such things as office supplies and laptop computers.

Poshi Walker agreed with Commissioner Berrick's comments about the agenda and added it would be helpful to show the faces of the speakers from the public, when possible.

Poshi Walker agreed with Stacie Hiramoto's comments. It is misleading to say that sole source funding is spent on copiers and laptops. The speaker stated they have no problem with the funds being used for things such as copiers and laptops but the sole source funding has been used to fund organizations and other activities that perhaps should have either been competitive or at least brought before the Commission and, more importantly, the public.

Mandy Taylor spoke about the sole source funding of up to \$100,000. The speaker stated there are some contracts, like the funding provided to the California Children's Trust, that the LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network is not in agreement with because of the level of accountability, but there are also some sole source contracts that are acceptable, such as Art With Impact. The speaker stated, had there been a competitive process, Art With Impact would have gotten the contract.

Mandy Taylor stated the problem is not always who is getting the funding, it is how they are getting the funding and the level of accountability. It is great to have a policy to set aside \$100,000 for administrative and personnel costs, but special projects and public safety projects should go through a competitive RFP process to ensure that back-room deals are not being made or money is not being given away with no accountability.

Mandy Taylor applauded the Commission for taking concrete steps to address equity and institutional racism within the Commission's system and the system in general. The speaker thanked the Commission for providing more detail on how the unspent funds are being used to proactively address these issues.

Mandy Taylor stated the LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network looks forward to supporting the Commission's efforts to establish a suicide prevention department within the Department of Public Health using the amazing research and recommendations that the Commission put forward in the report. It is important work and the LGBTQ Health

and Human Services Network is fully behind the Commission and is eager to provide support in any way it can.

Mandy Taylor stated their excitement about the expansion of the Fiscal Transparency Tool. The LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network and its communities have used this as a resource for advocacy work and would love to see that expanded to include not just information that staff must painstakingly input by hand, but in such a way within the system that the counties and programs within the public mental health system are being held accountable and are being transparent.

Mark Karmatz stated their concern that more people will contract COVID-19 during these demonstrations where there is no social distancing.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.