

Subcommittee on Innovation

Meeting Summary

July 30, 2020 | Teleconference Meeting via Zoom

Meeting Purpose

This document summarizes the first meeting since September 2017 of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission's Subcommittee on Innovation. This teleconference meeting was held via Zoom platform due to the current Coronavirus pandemic. The Subcommittee will be holding a series of meetings to engage community members, other stakeholders, counties, and Commission staff to explore challenges and offer guidance to bring forward innovation projects that will provide transformational change.

The presentations and group discussion are summarized below.

Discussion Overview

Vice Chair Itai Danovitch opened the meeting on behalf of Subcommittee Chair John Boyd (who joined shortly afterward) by welcoming those attending this virtual meeting, providing instructions on how to provide public comment for each agenda item, the time limit allotted for participants to provide public comment, and the availability of closed captioning, if needed. After housekeeping rules were provided, Vice Chair Danovitch recommended moving to the first agenda item.

Innovation Agenda Reform

The first panel of speakers from the Commission, Dr. Sharmil Shah, Chief of Program Operations and Grace Reedy, Innovation Team Member, provided information as a result of Commission Chair Ashbeck's request during the May 28, 2020 Commission meeting to discuss and provide recommendations for a more streamlined approval process of Innovation projects.

Committee was provided with data regarding the number of Innovation projects and corresponding approval rates:

- Over the last 5 years, Commission has reviewed approximately 148 county Innovation plans and/or extension
- Commission has a 96% approval rate of Innovation projects (142/148 were approved)
- Innovation plans receive 5% of Mental Health Services Act revenues and less than 1% of overall public mental health spending
- Historically, the Commission typically spends more than 50% of agenda time to review, discuss, and vote on Innovation projects which can limit time to allow discussion of other Commission projects

- There are currently 16 projects under consideration – 15 of those may be approved via delegated authority and the remaining may be eligible for consent agenda

The presentation provided highlights in reference to the May 2019 Commission meeting where Commissioners were provided with four options for consideration in an effort to reduce the number of Innovation projects that were placed on the agenda, thereby allowing more time for Commissioners and Commission staff to discuss the various projects the Commission had undertaken. Panel discussed the four options provided to Commissioners and then went over the two options that were voted on and adopted by Commissioners:

1. Increase the Executive Director's Delegated Authority to approve Innovation projects with budgets less than \$1 million and additionally, delegate joint authority to the Commission Chair so that both Executive Director and Commission Chair must consent to the approval of the project
2. Develop and establish criteria for Innovation projects to be placed on a consent agenda
 - a. Projects must not have any substantive issues or concerns identified in staff analysis including concerns shared via public comment that were received by Commission staff prior to the posting of the agenda
 - b. Any member of the Commission can remove an item from the consent agenda prior to a vote without an explanation

Although these changes were adopted, concerns remained regarding the number of Innovation projects remaining on the Commission agendas. Over the recent months, there were two factors that affected concerns regarding the number of Innovation projects that required Commission approval:

1. Several counties had Innovation funds that were subject to revert if not approved by June 30, 2020. As a result, 11 Innovation projects were scheduled in May and June
2. Due to COVID pandemic, meetings were shorter in length and conducted via teleconference

The opportunities in the continuance of streamlining the approval process for Subcommittee to continue were provided for discussion and consideration:

1. Consider time limitations for Counties when presenting to the Commission while keeping in mind that more complex Innovation plans may require additional time
2. Consider additional ways to gather and incorporate early public comment (Commission staff currently shares Innovation plans with listserv and stakeholder contractors twice in effort to seek public feedback) to strengthen Innovation plans before being placed on Commission agenda

3. Provide guidance and refinements for the staff analysis by identifying key Commissioner concerns for concise detail and analysis of Innovation project
4. Commission may consider providing guidance or criteria to assist Counties with focusing Innovation plans on priorities within their community, as identified in the community planning process
5. Explore ways to refine the analytical framework to focus county projects on the information most important to Commission goals
6. Consider ways to prioritize Innovation projects that are of particular subject areas or are of merit

Public Comment themes for Agenda Item One:

- Seek ways to increase client engagement for Innovation plans
- Look at criteria regarding meaningful stakeholder involvement at the County level beyond the County simply checking off the boxes
- Establish criteria about the projects that go on consent agenda versus what projects appear before the Commission based on the level of meaningful community engagement
- Commission may consider dedicating resources by looking into models for community engagement (Stakeholder has offered to assist in looking for successful models for meaningful stakeholder engagement)
- To support stakeholders and the County process, follow the MHSA and use specific values instead of specific programs in regard to providing outreach and support to the most vulnerable communities and ensure data from Counties is collected to identify those communities that need support
- Commission typically receives substantial public comment on Innovation plans because marginalized communities are often only funded through Innovation dollars

Innovation Systems Change Project

The second agenda item, presented by Jim Mayer, Chief of Innovation Incubation, and Jake Segal, Vice-President of Social Finance, summarized the Commission's efforts to implement the legislatively authorized Innovation Incubator to reduce criminal justice involvement by people with mental health needs and those who are found incompetent to stand trial. The Incubator's projects are designed in part to help counties develop better Innovation projects to improve outcomes. The Commission in May approved a Systems Change Project to assess lessons from the incubator projects and to examine in a more holistic way how the Commission can better support innovation within counties.

The Commission is partnering with Social Finance, a national nonprofit organization, to conduct the assessment. Social Finance works primarily with state and county governments on continuous improvement and outcomes-based contracts.

The System Change project is designed to engage counties, stakeholders, advocates, and Commissioners to capture feedback and opportunities for improvement. The project has three phases, which are described in the project workplan and presented to the Subcommittee:

1. The first phase will identify themes from the Incubator's multi-county collaboratives to identify recurrent barriers that counties face, repeatable successes, and opportunities to reform policy. This first phase will involve working with county staff and community stakeholders to ensure the assessment reflects the counties' experiences in working with Innovation funds.
2. The second phase will involve the creation of a toolkit to provide counties with resources to overcome the barriers identified in the first phase. This phase will involve national and global experts who can provide guidance and a framework for counties to overcome challenges.
3. The final phase will be the development of an Innovation Action Plan, which will include a roadmap and recommendations for the Commission to support improvement in innovations.

Substantial input for this project is needed and highly sought to draw various perspectives from counties, including demographic information, county size, and economic factors. It is anticipated this project will last approximately 12 months and the detailed version of the work plan will be made available on the Commission website. Social Finance also requested that public comments be emailed directly to them (jsegal@socialfinance.org).

Public Comment themes for Agenda Item Two:

- Recommend having more community members and consumers as part of the advisory group – currently they are far outnumbered by professionals and it is important that new people are in the room that haven't been heard before and who are on the ground doing the work and have an understanding of what's happening in their communities.
- Recommendation was also provided to work with African American trans-women due to their creative resiliency and would be valuable for inclusion as part of the LGBTQ community. Two specific names were provided as a recommendation and Committee Chair Boyd asked Commission staff to share his email with stakeholder to engage further on those recommended contacts.

Commissioners Boyd and Danovitch discussed the importance of having new people at the table who can speak to issues based on their own lived experience and being able to design priorities for Innovation plans to solicit the transformational impact desired. Many Innovation

plans fund services that are important, but do not have a clear pathway of sustainability. It is important for counties to place importance on the evaluation and dissemination of learnings from Innovation projects – for counties to promote Innovation plans that facilitate learning as opposed to primarily providing a service with Innovation funds.

Considering the expansion of Medicaid, it may be important to consider bringing health plans to the table for partnership that may be able to partner with multiple counties in California.

Next Steps

Subcommittee Chair John Boyd will work with Commission staff to determine frequency of future Subcommittee meetings with the intent to give a proposal on a streamlined approval process to the Chair for consideration by the full Commission.