



**Cultural and Linguistic Competency Committee Teleconference Meeting
Summary**

Date: August 19, 2024 | Time: 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**MHSOAC
1812 9th Street
Sacramento, California 95811**

****DRAFT****

Committee Members:

Staff:

Other Attendees:

Mayra Alvarez, Chair Senait Admassu Eugene Durrah Luis Garcia Nahla Kayali Richard Zaldivar Other Commissioner Present: Alfred Rowlett	Sandra Gallardo Riann Kopchak Evonna McIntosh Lester Robancho Claire Sallee Jigna Shah Sarah Weber Kendra Zoller	Laurel Benhamida Diego Bravo Jaime Yan Faurot Stacie Hiramoto Steve McNally Pysay Phinith
---	---	--

All Committee Members participated remotely.

Committee Members absent: Estrella Amaro-Jeppesen, Veronica Chavez, Jim Gilmer, Etsegenet Teodros, and Yia Xiong.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Announcements

Commissioner Mayra Alvarez, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 p.m., welcomed everyone, and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Claire Sallee, MHSOAC staff, reviewed the meeting protocols and called the roll. A quorum was not achieved.

Agenda Item 2: Information – General Public Comment

Stacie Hiramoto, Director, Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCO), stated this Committee is important, especially since the passage of Proposition 1, and should play an important role in helping the Commission carry out its duties. She stated the hope that, in the future, meeting materials can be posted so that members of the public can be better prepared to make public comment. She gave the examples of posting the minutes of the last meeting so members of the public can review what took place and posting the slide presentation from today's Proposition 1 Implementation agenda item. She welcomed new Commission staff to the Committee

and stated she looks forward to supporting this Committee in its important work with Proposition 1.

Jaime Yan Furot, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) peer and community advocate, stated she will be hosting a statewide peer conference to be held in October. She asked the Commission and this Committee to think about events like this to support, especially since the passage of Proposition 1, which has diverted funding to housing efforts. She requested support from the Commission for peers and peer-run organizations. She stated she will submit her full written comment to staff.

Agenda Item 3: Action – May 8, 2024, CFLC/CLCC Joint Meeting Minutes

Chair Alvarez asked to correct the spelling of her name in the first paragraph and tabled this agenda item to the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

Agenda Item 4: Action – 2024 CLCC Goals

Chair Alvarez stated one of the things that came up at the CFLC/CLCC joint meeting in May was the shift in how the Committees want to operate, especially given Proposition 1 implementation. She noted that many questions that have come up over the last couple of years have been around how to bring in the perspective of the community, how to measure the effectiveness of the work of the Committees, how to ensure Committee Member expertise is maximized, and how to ensure that the Committees are making valuable contributions to the work of the Commission. As a result of the May meeting, she stated she asked staff to consider potential goals and objectives in the strategic plan that would benefit from Committee work.

Chair Alvarez asked Committee Members to identify areas of focus that support the Commission's strategic plan, how to measure success in these areas, and where the Committee can undertake specific activities to support these areas. Issues to consider are how and where the Committee can lend its expertise and where community engagement can be particularly helpful. She reviewed relevant goals and objectives of the strategic plan to use as a reference during the Committee discussion.

Discussion

Committee Member Garcia stated the goals and objectives are great, but the main issues are implementation, relationship, partnership, and collaboration, and how to work with communities with "best practices" when there are inequalities on what is considered a best practice or what is meant by the term "wellness." Academic research comes out of large universities but the members of the community they engage with are not members of the Medicaid system. There are different lenses and different views. It is time to reframe, with all the knowledge contained in this Committee, how the Committee is planning to make an impact and emphasize providing good services.

Committee Member Garcia stated there are high stigma levels about the Latino community in these high-level research organizations. Research says the Latino community does not like mental health services, when this is not true. He stated the research does not include providers that have expertise with diverse communities. This

is not only about linguistic ability in order to provide services, but that the provider really understands the cultural factors that apply in diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment.

Committee Member Garcia stated research specific to people of color shows that the average treatment per person is only six to eight sessions before they leave. They leave treatment because they are not getting help. There is a need to work with the whole system together, including communities, to make an impact. It is important to consider who is accountable for these inequalities for the past 20 to 30 years. The County Master Plans on cultural competency have been around for 25 to 30 years. He asked who oversees this in the counties, what they do, and how they are scored.

Chair Alvarez asked how to improve accountability in this work.

Committee Member Garcia stated there is a way to measure accountability. He suggested that counties set up goals and objectives, measure the success rate in reaching those goals every six to twelve months, and provide that in their annual report to the state on the percent of improvement seen in specific communities. It is important that counties disseminate information on public events so communities have the opportunity to attend.

Committee Member Garcia stated one of the domains in the Master Plan for the state of California for county cultural competency plans is to list the gaps in communities regarding workforce and to provide an action plan to address those gaps. He asked who oversees this.

Chair Alvarez stated this Committee will not be able to solve many of those challenges but it is important to consider where this Committee has an opportunity to influence any of the processes that are connected to the concerns raised.

Committee Member Feedback

Goal 1: Champion Vision into Action, Objective 1, elevate the perspective of diverse communities.

Goal 2: Catalyze Best Practice Networks, Objective 4, support system-level analysis to ensure the tailored care and universal access required to reduce disparities.

Goal 4: Relentlessly Drive Expectations, Objective 3, promote understanding of the progress that is being made and the advocacy that will result in further improvements.

- Be the collective voice of underserved communities, but the role of Committee Members and what that means need to be redefined.
- Discuss what is missing from the top down in counties and what communities can bring from the bottom up.
- Engage the 11 new Commissioners in cultural competency training.
- What is the role of the CLCC in the Commission's community engagement events?

- Review the Commission's Requests for Applications (RFAs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) prior to being published. This may be a task at the Subcommittee level.
- Help promote the Commission's cultural and linguistic competency activities.
- Take the words "cultural" and "linguistic" and focus on a strategy that includes sound recommendations that encompass the urgency of the issue to the Commission.
- Map out the Committee agendas for the year to align with the full Commission agendas to better serve in an advisory capacity.

Public Comment and Committee Member Discussion

Jaime Yan Faurot agreed with Committee Member Garcia about being intentional. It is important that CLCC meetings announce who the meetings are for and what they are about. It is important to dive deeper into the culture and subculture of communities. It is not about the five boxes on a demographic form. Communities sometimes have an urge to participate but no means to connect. The speaker suggested that the CLCC and members of the public be part of the conversation in planning the agenda.

Jaime Yan Faurot suggested including peer representation at the table. Peers want to be part of the conversation. It is important to hear about the needs of the people rather than the needs of the system.

Stacie Hiramoto stated the CLCC should develop goals and purposes but narrow them to focus on providing support to the Commission. The CLCC has struggled in recent years from a lack of purpose. She suggested that the CLCC learn about Commission roles. She agreed with the CLCC reviewing the requirements of RFPs, how they are awarded, and who judges them.

Chair Alvarez agreed with having a policy overview for CLCC Members to better understand policies as the Commission plans to review legislation or policy positions. She asked about the opportunity for the CLCC to discuss proposals prior to being brought before the Commission. She stated the need to be organized in those conversations to have influence at the right time.

Chair Alvarez stated another thing she heard in Stacie Hiramoto's comments was about an information gap in the role of CLCC versus the role of community advocacy contracts, the work that those contracts are doing with and for the Commission, and where there is opportunity for greater alignment in that.

Stacie Hiramoto stated the most important thing that the CLCC could do this year is to weigh in on the role of the Commission in implementing Proposition 1. Proposition 1 will affect communities of color and the LGBTQ community and all overlapping communities. Innovation has not been a priority that has been realized at the local or state level to a great extent. The CLCC has been isolated from the Commission in the past.

Stacie Hiramoto wrote in the Chat Section that every county behavioral health department is required to have a "Cultural Competence Plan" per regulations in their

contract with the state. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has not been reviewing or commenting on these plans. If the DHCS reviewed these plans in a competent way, this would be accountability, but they do not.

Committee Member Garcia agreed that Proposition 1 is big. He suggested that the CLCC do something short- to medium-term with models working step by step to improve mental and behavioral health and substance use, and help communities come together. He suggested working with The California Endowment, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. These foundations are successful because they are not dealing with the whole mental health system but they deal with one risk factor such as poverty, which impacts housing, employment, economic situation, academic situation, etc. These are ways for the Committee to think outside of the box and to do something actionable, especially with Proposition 1, which is huge.

Chair Alvarez agreed that these are conversations that must be integrated and considered together. She agreed that Proposition 1 is huge and historic but noted that it is also new, which creates questions and opportunities for input and engagement. She stated the need to make the most of this opportunity to address inequities, close gaps, and meet values that Committee Members come to this work with.

Steve McNally, family member and Member, Orange County Behavioral Health Advisory Board, speaking as an individual, stated the need to direct individuals to the original code and original documents that cover specific areas and to cite when something occurred to stop multiple interpretations because the landscape is changing frequently.

Steve McNally stated individuals have walked away from the process so much that to get them back will be difficult. There is no trust in the system. The speaker stated they have attended some of the DHCS listening sessions that continue to be 80 percent discussion and little listening because the public can only put comments in the Chat Section. The speaker looks to the leadership of the Commission and Committees. It would be helpful to empower the state by holding meetings around the state in Oakland, Sacramento, and Los Angeles to get more local people involved with the Committee.

Laurel Benhamida, Ph.D., Muslim American Society – Social Services Foundation and REMHDCO Steering Committee, stated she has been involved with this Commission for years both as a member and as an attendee. She suggested focusing on the Proposition 1 rollout. Two pieces that were separate but part of the Governor's plan were the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court and the youth component. She suggested inviting the entities that are rolling these components out to present at a future CLCC meeting on how they are rolling these out in terms of language access.

Dr. Benhamida stated she has been attending the CARE Court meetings. RAND is doing an evaluation and is issuing data quarterly on the status. This evaluation will be a way to learn if language access has been provided in CARE Court and to what extent, and if individuals have been treated fairly with regard to language access.

Dr. Benhamida stated another component of Proposition 1 could be the move to more clinical services. One of the issues is what will be done about the clinical shortage or individuals who speak languages of the majority of individuals in California.

Dr. Benhamida suggested inviting four representatives to present on the components of Proposition 1 at future CLCC meetings and then providing feedback and suggestions to support them in improving their processes. This is doable for the CLCC and will have impact.

Chair Alvarez agreed and stated the need to think about what those topics are and ensure that this Committee has an opportunity to weigh in on those pieces while acknowledging the need for the Commission to be given an opportunity to act on the feedback and suggestions given by this Committee.

Chair Alvarez asked staff to think through the proposed objectives of the Commission's strategic plan and the discussion today, and to align Committee Member discussion and public comment in today's meeting as activities that contribute to meeting these objectives on behalf of the CLCC, to make them publicly available, and to present the proposed activities at the next Committee meeting for approval.

Agenda Item 5: Information – Proposition 1 Implementation

Chair Alvarez stated the Committee will hear a presentation from Commission staff on the implementation of Proposition 1 and focus on the requirements that impact the Commission beginning January 1, 2025. CLCC Members will provide input on the Commission's proposals to change their name, onboard 11 new Commissioners, and adjust the format of meetings, Committees, and Subcommittees to accommodate a larger Commission. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Kendra Zoller, Deputy Director of Legislation, stated she presented changes to the Commission at the last Commission meeting that will result from the passage of Proposition 1 with a focus on changes effective January 1, 2025. She stated the Commission will concentrate on four key areas over the next four months to ensure a smooth transition: Commission meetings, Committees and Subcommittees, name change/branding, and new Commissioner onboarding.

Jigna Shah, Chief of Innovation and Program Operations, discussed the plans for Commission meetings and Committees and Subcommittees. She stated, beginning January 1, 2025, the Commission will grow to 27 appointees. Since the July Commission meeting, staff reached out to multiple state-level boards and commissions with a list of questions regarding their operations to better understand how the Commission structure may need to change to continue the work of the Commission while also supporting the mandates of the BHSA.

Ms. Shah stated staff met with the California Workforce Development Board, the California Commission on Aging, and the California Behavioral Health Planning Council to discuss board size, meeting structure, and the role that Committees and Subcommittees play. Staff learned that the frequency of board meetings varied from four to ten times per year. Several of the boards had multiple functioning Subcommittees whose role it was to bring recommendations to the full board on a

variety of topics. Staff also learned about the potential of hosting multiple satellite locations across the state for Commission meetings. Staff is working with Chief Counsel Gallardo to discuss the Commission's ability to do that within the requirements of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and within staffing capacity.

Ms. Shah stated, as part of the research, staff also looked at the content of Commission meetings from August of 2021 to July of 2024. Staff did an analysis of the data to help staff understand the ideal number of Commission meetings and the ideal format and role of Subcommittees for the Commission to operate effectively. Staff identified the amount of time the Commission spent on action items versus informational items. In 2023, the Commission spent approximately 30 hours on action items, which means that a minimum of six meetings would need to occur each year just to accommodate the action items and general public comment. She stated staff will continue to break down this data and will work with the Commission Chair to bring forward recommendations.

Deputy Director Zoller asked for feedback on how often to hold Commission meetings and how to make them more effective. She also asked for feedback on potentially using the nickname "The California Behavioral Health Commission" or other ideas, how to get better at communicating the work of the Commission and how it is done, how to improve the onboarding process for new Commissioners, how the Commission uses delegated authority to the Commission Chair or Executive Director, and how Committees and Subcommittees can be used.

Deputy Director Zoller provided examples of how other large boards and commissions use their Committees and Subcommittees, such as providing input for grant and advocacy programs. She stated the Innovation Partnership Fund will begin July 1, 2026, which will be another grant program that the Commission will oversee. She stated there could be a Committee or Subcommittee solely focused on that that can report out to the full Commission.

Discussion

Chair Alvarez asked staff to include a visual representation of their overview when repeating this presentation at the full Commission meeting later this week for better understanding and to send the visual representation to CLCC Members. She asked if Committee recommendations will be expected at the upcoming Commission meeting.

Deputy Director Zoller stated staff will be providing an update on information gathered to date at the Commission meeting later this week. The CLCC will not be expected to provide recommendations at today's meeting. She noted that this agenda item will most likely be on the Commission's September, October, and November agendas.

Chair Alvarez asked for the opportunity for this Committee to weigh in on the proposed four key areas the Commission will concentrate on for the rest of this year prior to Commission approval.

Committee Member Feedback

- Task staff with meaningful community engagement work to ensure that marginalized voices are heard.

Public Comment

Diego Bravo, Resource Development and Policy Manager, Safe Passages, and the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP) Cross-Population Sustainability Steering Committee, stated the importance of the Innovation Partnership Fund. He urged the Commission to form an additional Committee on the Innovation Partnership Fund as soon as possible. This is critical to the mission of the Commission that this new Committee have members of the public, including experts on reducing disparities for BIPOC and LGBTQ communities and on Community-Defined Evidence Practices (CDEPs). The speaker urged the Commission to not just meet with representatives of the DHCS or CDPH regarding innovations funding but to weigh the value of the input from the CLCC and the CFLC in this potential newly-created Innovation Partnership Fund Committee before developing guidelines and language around the Innovation Partnership Fund. Taking these actions will provide critical, much-needed support for unserved, underserved, and inappropriately served communities throughout the state.

Steve McNally wrote in the Chat Section that many counties have procurement policies to elevate certain groups, yet those policies are not implemented. The speaker wrote the need for shared knowledge of the term “cultural competency.” Cultural competency is in the codes, yet, the state does the bare minimum of printing brochures in a language. Meetings need to be held in other languages to discuss complicated issues.

Pysay Phinith, Program Director, Korean Community Center of the East Bay (KCCEB), echoed Diego Bravo’s comments about community engagement and making sure that underserved communities are represented at the table. This is a disparity and struggle being dealt with on an ongoing basis. She suggested that the CLCC partner with the community to ensure this will be happening. Community needs spaces such as the CLCC and Innovation Partnership Fund Committee meetings to share what is going on and how innovation will work to reduce disparities.

Stacie Hiramoto echoed Diego Bravo and Pysay Phinith’s suggestions about an advisory committee for the Innovation Partnership Fund. This is crucial and should be created well before rules and regulations are put in place. She stated the need for people from underserved BIPOC and LGBTQ communities to be a part of the Innovation Partnership Fund Advisory Committee.

Stacie Hiramoto suggested creating a Legislative Committee for added transparency. She questioned how bills are brought to the Commission’s attention.

Stacie Hiramoto stated two Committees that are mentioned in the MHSA are the CFLC and the CLCC. She suggested naming these two Committees as ongoing. She stated there is no transparency, rules, or guidelines about what constitutes a Committee versus a Subcommittee. She stated members of the public were angered when Subcommittees were formed as opposed to Committees because they are formed suddenly, do not need to provide minutes of their meetings, and do not need to comply with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

Agenda Item 6: Information – CLCC Vacancies

Chair Alvarez proposed a plan to fill vacant CLCC seats. There are 15 seats on the CLCC. Currently, 11 active members have committed to staying on through the end of June of 2025, which leaves four vacancies. She suggested not filling those four

vacancies until the recruitment process for 2025 begins this fall. Current Committee Members will have the opportunity to be reappointed for 2025.

Discussion

Committee Member Zaldivar asked when current Committee Members will need to determine if they would like to be reappointed.

Chair Alvarez asked for Committee Members to inform staff within this next month if they no longer wish to serve on the CLCC in 2025.

Committee Member Admassu suggested scheduling shorter meetings more often.

Committee Member Zaldivar asked if Committee Members can be placed on leave until January 1st.

Commissioner Rowlett stated the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act defines Committee Member leave and the establishment of a quorum.

Public Comment

Stacie Hiramoto suggested making the experience and communities the Members are representing clear. Just because a person is a person of color does not necessarily mean that they represent that community. No assumptions should be made.

Pysay Phinith stated the importance of having representatives with experience and knowledge in understanding how to reduce disparities and CDEPs, and in understanding state-level policies and the connection to community. She suggested an immigrant and refugee representative on the CLCC.

Agenda Item 7: Adjournment

Chair Alvarez thanked everyone for their participation and stated the next CLCC meeting will be held on October 16, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. She adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m.