



Cultural and Linguistic Competency Committee Teleconference Meeting Summary
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2022 | Time: 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

MHSOAC
1812 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

****DRAFT****

Committee Members:

Staff:

Other Attendees:

Mayra Alvarez, Chair*	Amariani Martinez	Sonya Young Adam
Senait Admassu*	Ashley Mills	Joel Baum
Claire Buckley*	Tom Orrock	Laurel Benhamida
Eugene Durrah*	Kali Patterson	Diego Bravo
Luis Garcia*	Lester Robancho	Miya Bray
Jim Gilmer*	Nai Saechao	Elissa Feld
Corinita Reyes*		Rebecca Gonzales
Etsegenet Teodros*		Stacie Hiramoto
Yia Xiong*		Erica Juhn
Richard Zaldivar*		Jake Osborne
Other Commissioner present:		Regina Mason
Alfred Rowlett*		Josefina Alvarado Mena
		Anna

*Participated remotely.

Committee members absent: Estrella Amaro-Jeppesen, Veronica Chavez, Nahla Kayali, Jonathan Lee, Lee Lo, and Yolanda Randles.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome, Announcements, and General Public Comment

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

Amariani Martinez, MHSOAC staff, reviewed the meeting protocols, called the roll, and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

General Public Comment

Diego Bravo, Safe Passages, thanked the Committee for voting to recommend to the Commission to support the two prevention and early intervention (PEI) recommendations recommended by the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP), the Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCO), and others. The speaker urged the Committee to formally request that the full Commission adopt the recommendations on

prioritizing transition age youth (TAY) who are not in college and community-defined evidence practices (CDEPs). The statewide CRDP report, which is scheduled to be released by the end of this year, shows that CDEPs are both effective for communities served and are cost effective.

Jake Osborne, Mentor and Program Manager representing the TAY program within The Village Project, thanked the Committee for previously voting to support the recommendations recommended by The Village Project for the Commission to adopt as PEI priorities. The speaker spoke in concern for TAY from the Black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC) community being left out of Senate Bill (SB) 1004, which is earmarked for college students. These youth may want to attend college but they and their parents are concerned about how to reach that goal due to the lack of funding and programs.

Agenda Item 2: Action – July 14, 2022, August 23, 2022, and September 8, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Chair Alvarez asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the July 14, 2022, CLCC meeting.

Committee Member Buckley made a motion to approve the July 14, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Durrah.

Vote recorded with participating members as follows:

- Approve: Committee Members Admassu, Buckley, Durrah, Garcia, Reyes, and Xiong, and Chair Alvarez
- Abstain: Teodros

Chair Alvarez asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the August 23, 2022, CLCC meeting.

Committee Member Teodros made a motion to approve the August 23, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Durrah.

Vote recorded with participating members as follows:

- Approve: Committee Members Admassu, Durrah, Garcia, Reyes, Teodros, and Xiong, and Chair Alvarez
- Abstain: Buckley

Chair Alvarez asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for September 8, 2022, CLCC meeting.

Committee Member Garcia made a motion to approve the September 8, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Admassu.

Vote recorded with participating members as follows:

- Approve: Committee Members Admassu, Durrah, Garcia, Reyes, Teodros, Xiong, and Zaldivar, and Chair Alvarez
- Abstain: Buckley

Agenda Item 3: Information – Prevention and Early Intervention Draft Report

Chair Alvarez asked for Committee Member feedback on questions sent out last week on the PEI Subcommittee's second draft report, *Well and Thriving*. Comments made by Committee Members will be shared with the PEI Subcommittee. The questions were as follows:

1. SB 1004 reflects the tension between establishing statewide priorities and supporting counties to tailor their investments to meet local needs. Recognizing this tension allows the Commission to identify priorities to guide investments while preserving funding flexibility at the local level. To what extent should prioritization of PEI be happening at the local versus state level to maintain a fair and effective balance?
2. Among the long list of recommended priorities, of some target populations such as non-collegebound TAY or LGBTQ communities, some are focused on programmatic priorities such as relapse prevention while others are focused on topical areas such as avoiding criminal justice involvement. How can the Commission best sort through these priorities as this work unfolds?
3. The Commission has received guidance to do more to address growing mental health disparities. For example, the CLCC recommends that that Community Defined Evidence Practices (CDEPs) be added as a priority for PEI funding.
 - a. How can the Commission best promote effective strategies to address disparities? For example, are state priorities the best way, or should it be incentive funding? Should the Commission focus on prioritizing investments to reduce disparities, or is the guidance limited to CDEPs?
 - b. How could the Commission support implementation of CDEPs? Is there shared agreement about what constitutes community-defined evidence? Is there an inventory of existing CDEPs and who is responsible for such designation? What kind of support would counties need to be successful?

Discussion

Committee Member Garcia stated the need to implement an action plan rather than merely sharing ideas. He stated concern that the CLCC voted at a past meeting to recommend two priorities to the Commission but they are not in this second draft report.

Chair Alvarez stated the CLCC voted to make a recommendation to the Commission to add TAY that are not in college as a priority and also to specifically reference CDEPs – that they be funded under culturally competent and linguistically appropriate PEI community-defined evidence-based practices – but the Commission makes the ultimate decision. She noted that there are no priorities outlined in the report. The report goes over the need for a broader statewide strategy around PEI that identifies how social drivers of health impact

the inequities in mental health and talks about TAY, LGBTQ, people of color, and low-income families rather than presenting a new defined list of priorities. She asked staff to discuss this point because everyone agrees on the principle of not limiting opportunities to support TAY who are not in college.

Ashley Mills, PEI Subcommittee staff, stated some of the questions that were sent to the Committee Members speak to the tension that staff has heard throughout the process of gathering information around the Commission and the Legislature setting priorities for the state to encourage the identification of needs at the local level and the development of strategies that meet those needs. This is part of the question that the PEI Subcommittee is interested in hearing from the CLCC in terms of how the state can balance between the setting of statewide priorities while maintaining flexibility at the local level to not increase disparities for any groups, especially groups that have historically experienced disparities.

Committee Member Garcia stated the need to learn from the past to reduce and eliminate inequalities that have huge impacts in communities of color.

Ms. Mills stated, along with the CLCC's recommendations to the Commission to add TAY who are not in college as a priority and also to specifically reference CDEPs – that they be funded under culturally competent and linguistically appropriate PEI community-defined evidence-based practices – there were two other recommendations made to include in the report around a diverse workforce.

Ms. Mills stated staff has heard both calls for statewide priorities and also calls for more flexibility at the local level.

Chair Alvarez agreed with the need to discuss the balance between a new set of priorities that then potentially takes away flexibility to respond to local-level needs.

Committee Member Gilmer stated concern about being left out. Committee Members spent a lot of time and formulated recommendations from this Committee to the Commission. The issue has always been whether the CLCC has power or influence. The second draft report makes it seem that the CLCC has no power or influence. The whole issue with reducing disparities is whether the recommendations of the people can be accepted. The CLCC deliberated for two to three months and distilled the discussions down to two recommendations for the Commission to consider. He stated he was disturbed that none of the recommendations were accepted. The recommendations were to help more youth and to accept community-defined practices.

Committee Member Gilmer stated it cannot be questioned that community-defined practices work. The CRDP has 40 projects that demonstrate that and Commission researchers can validate that. He stated the Committee cannot still be at this point. It is time that the CLCC Members are respected and that their recommendations are taken, like every other Committee that he has seen come before the Commission over the years. When it comes to reducing disparities or to people of color, the Commission is indifferent and apathetic. He stated he is tired of being treated this way. He questioned how anyone can turn down recommendations to help more youth and accept community-defined practices. He stated the need for the Commission to accept the recommendations made by this Committee.

Committee Member Teodros suggested hearing Agenda Item 4 to help Committee Members process prior to going through the questions that were sent out last week.

Chair Alvarez moved the Committee to the next Agenda Item.

Agenda Item 4: Information – Committee Input and Progress

Presenter:

- Tom Orrock, Chief, Community Engagement and Grants

Chair Alvarez stated the Committee will hear a presentation on past Committee input and discuss actions taken by the Commission in response to the input provided. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Tom Orrock, Chief, Community Engagement and Grants, reviewed the 2021-2022 CLCC Summary of Activities and Committee Input document, which was included in the meeting materials. He noted that the Committee recommendations to the Commission on the PEI priorities were listed on pages 5 and 6 under the summary of the December 8, 2021, meeting activities. The document indicated that the action taken on these recommendations was that they were included in the draft.

Discussion

Committee Member Teodros asked if there will be an opportunity to discuss Committee Member concerns at another meeting, if there was not time at today's meeting.

Mr. Orrock stated time can be set aside at the November 10th meeting to continue the discussion on Committee Member concerns, if necessary.

Chair Alvarez opened up the discussion to address Committee Member concerns including Committee Member Gilmer's points about the Committee's recommendations and the second PEI draft report. She began by asking staff to verify that there is no defined list of priorities in the second draft report other than what is already in the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

Ms. Mills stated the second draft report calls for additional information to be collected in order to identify priorities going forward in the future. Through the information-gathering process for this report, staff received the recommendations from this Committee, along with recommendations from many other sources that recommend that MHSA PEI funding be prioritized for various different target populations, programs, and areas of need. One of the questions that was sent out to CLCC Members for feedback at this Committee was how to assess and balance that. For every recommendation that the Commission includes as a priority item, it could not include other recommendations for priorities that other interested parties have suggested to the Commission.

Ms. Mills stated the Commission can wade through those priorities through data and information and from learning about the implementation of these priorities. Looking at how counties are currently prioritizing and implementing or not implementing the priorities, there is a lot to learn in terms of how the existing priorities are being implemented, and then how they will be implemented going forward. There is a tremendous amount of information that still needs to be collected in order to evaluate the

implementation of these priorities. Discriminations against any group should be identified and solutions brought before the Commission to ensure that no group is being disparaged by any law or regulation.

Committee Member Garcia stated there are many research studies identifying the groups with huge inequalities in access, utilization of services, and quality of care. It is known that 50 percent of mental health disorders start at age 14 and 75 percent start at age 24, but when looking at individuals in the juvenile system and the Department of Justice who are overrepresented, it is clear where PEI needs to be done. Committee input and feedback was given to help staff with implementation, how to do PEI, and how to reduce disparities.

Committee Member Garcia stated the hope that the Committee is on the right track. Every county in the state of California will continue to have the same issues unless current plans, including the cultural competency plan that was implemented in California 25 years ago, are reinforced. There is a lot of frustration every time the same cycle of looking where to fill gaps repeats. This is a good opportunity to be flexible and to have an open mind. It is important to consider how to reduce inequalities, be more effective in engagement, and provide services for communities.

Chair Alvarez stated the need to be mindful that, in the report, there is no list of priorities, but there is a list of inequities that communities face and that are disproportionately impacting people of color, LGBTQ, and other marginalized communities. She stated she did not believe there is misalignment across the CLCC on the comments that Committee Member Gilmer has shared. She stated the disconnect is that there is no current set of identified priorities, but there is language to influence the direction that the Committee wants the state to go. There is context, and this is what can be strengthened in identifying the communities Committee Members are discussing today. There is opportunity there to receive the Committee's input to improve the content of the report to reflect that.

Committee Member Gilmer stated he understands what the Chair is saying, but the CLCC voted on specific recommendations as a group. They were not accepted. That is the issue. The bottom line is for the Commission to accept those recommendations.

Chair Alvarez agreed but asked Committee Members if there is opportunity to continue to make progress on the work the CLCC wants to do together. She stated it is not all or nothing; imperfect progress is still progress.

Committee Member Gilmer agreed with Committee Member Garcia that this has been going on for many years. Reducing disparities has been discussed since the beginning of the MHSA. He asked when Committee Members will be respected and their feedback valued. The Committee made simple recommendations. He stated he does not understand why they are an issue. He stated the need to address issues rather than deny them.

Committee Member Xiong suggested adding language under the identified priorities in SB 1004 to specifically reference community-defined evidence-based practices as programs that can be funded under PEI. She suggested adding after the language about culturally and linguistically competent services "to support community-defined evidence practices." That way, it defines what culturally and linguistically competent services are and shows that the PEI priorities support the CDEPs approach. Evidence shows that CDEPs

work in communities, but it is not recognized. She stated including that recognition in the report will help counties to accept CDEPs as a strategy.

Public Comment

Anna echoed Committee Member Gilmer's comments. She stated her personal experience with the Commission and its Committees is that public comment does not translate into action. This is concerning because the Commission was created to listen to interested parties, oversee, and advise on MHSA implementation.

Anna addressed PEI services and how they are being implemented in her county. The concern is that, at some point, the First Hope Program in Contra Costa County will no longer be able to serve everyone – only individuals with Medi-Cal and Medicare. The reason was that the private insurers refused to pay for services for individuals who had insurance when they were admitted into those programs. She asked if anyone is looking into that. This defeats the purpose of PEI because young people with Medi-Cal or Medicare already have access to services.

Regina Mason, Co-founder, The Village Project, African American hub, CRDP, strongly urged the Commission to include the two recommendations by the CRDP and REMHDCO regarding PEI priorities: the inclusion of youth who are not in college and CDEPs.

Ms. Mills asked Ms. Mason what is being heard as a response to communities that continue to not be served. There is a community program planning process, robust rules and regulations, and a foundation in the MHSA around community engagement, ensuring that communities that most need these services are being heard and identified. She asked to better understand why certain needs historically have not been met and why there is a call for the state to take action to meet those needs at the community level. A solution to this needs to be put into the law.

Regina Mason stated staff needs to ask those questions to the county but, from the perspective of BIPOC people, it is institutionalized racism. The same people define who they want to fund and they are not looking at the data and evidence in terms root causes. Children are living in communities where the educational system is inadequate and children from BIPOC communities are experiencing learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a matter of not doing due diligence on the part of the counties.

Regina Mason stated there is inconsistency because counties go through an attrition of workers with different ideologies. The Village Project meets individuals where they are from a community-defined perspective and a culturally-appropriate perspective. County workers are uninformed in terms of what that looks like. Part of it is institutionalized racism. Historical data can provide many answers to questions. The Village Project had been asked to come to the table so it organized community members to attend, and then the input they provide was ignored. The speaker stated they would provide more details offline on how CDEPs work. CDEPs have five years of data collected in evidence that community-defined practices work, although counties need to be shaped to be inclusive of the evidence that says these programs work.

Sonya Young Aadam, CEO, California Black Women's Health Project, responded to Ms. Mills's question by adding that there is overcriminalization of behavioral and mental

health experiences of BIPOC youth. The county is not responding to BIPOC youth with services that address the emotional, historical, and systemic trauma they are experiencing. Instead, counties respond with arrests, push-out, pressure, and more stress. That is why codifying it in the language for only college students is an issue. Individuals have learned that something happens at that level that requires more intentional intervention, but the same is true for noncollege youth.

Stacie Hiramoto, Director, REMHDCO, thanked Committee Member Gilmer for his comments. She also expressed frustration about the fact that there is a basic disagreement or misunderstanding between Commission staff and the community about the provisions of SB 1004. She stated she sent a portion of SB 1004 language to Committee Members for their reference. She stated SB 1004 mandates that the Commission shall establish priorities for the use of PEI funds. It provides a list of priorities, including under Number 6, other programs the commission identifies, with interested party participation.

Stacie Hiramoto stated interested parties have been trying to determine and have not gotten confirmation of whether the Commission has established a list of priorities. She stated the belief that the Executive Director believes priorities have been established because an information notice was sent to the counties in January of 2020. This is frustrating because the CLCC has never gone through the provisions of the bill and has never heard an explanation of the view of the Commission as to when the list was established.

Stacie Hiramoto stated, if the PEI list was established in January of 2020, REMHDCO will vehemently object because there was no interested party participation in the development of that list of priorities. At that point in time, the Commission had two meetings that the public was allowed to participate in and they did not ask about the priorities for PEI spending at the local level or what those priorities should be at either of those meetings. This has never been clarified, which is why everyone is frustrated. There is never a clear answer on whether or not the PEI report established the list of priorities. She asked about the purpose of the PEI report.

Stacie Hiramoto added that bending the rules to allow some speakers to speak out of turn and out of time limit while restricting others to that time limit is the type of thing that causes frustration and feelings of being unheard.

Miya Bray, Intern, REMHDCO, graduate student, and TAY, thanked the CLCC for previously voting in support of REMHDCO's two recommendations regarding the inclusion of CDEPs and TAY not enrolled in college. The speaker asked the CLCC to make a formal recommendation to the Commission and staff to include these recommendations. The speaker strongly stressed that the Commission and its Committees include interested parties at the table who are directly affiliated with the research of CDEPs, including the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) and community-based organizations.

Rebecca Gonzales, National Association of Social Workers (NASW), California Chapter, echoed Committee Member Gilmer's and Miya Bray's comments, including comments about prioritizing youth and CDEPs. The NASW urged the CLCC to make a formal recommendation to the full Commission to adopt these two recommendations.

Erica Juhn, Co-Director of Research and Evaluation, Special Service for Groups, thanked the CLCC for previously voting to support the two recommendations. It is important to make a formal recommendation to the full Commission to adopt them. It is often the TAY that are not explicitly identified that get shortchanged in the broadness of the system. It is important to prioritize CDEPs and to clarify the need for support for TAY who are not in college so they can also access the PEI programs.

Laurel Benhamida, Ph.D., Muslim American Society – Social Services Foundation and REMHDCO Steering Committee, stated Committee Member Gilmer's frustration is not misplaced. She echoed Regina Mason's, Stacie Hiramoto's, and Erica Juhn's comments. She stated, if you see people bleeding and starving, you do not do more research; you deliver food and medical care. She stated the need to deliver mental health services to people who are desperate for those and are the walking wounded. She thanked the CLCC for what it has done, but stated now is the time to exert pressure on the Commission to act.

Elissa Feld, Senior Policy Analyst, CBHDA, appreciated the frank and authentic discussion in this Committee. The speaker spoke about what counties need to implement these priorities and noted why it is important to add the two recommended priorities. The speaker stated leadership often changes within counties. While there may be someone who understands CDEPs at one point who leads with the mindset of reducing disparities, leadership changes. Having the recommended priorities identified helps provide additional leadership from the state for behavioral health directors to follow. It helps support the work being done at the local level. There are often different political winds beyond the county behavioral health directors' control. There is a lot of local need, but this can help support the work being done where the needs are the greatest.

Elissa Feld stated the CBHDA noted in its comment that it did not feel that this report aligned with SB 1004 and that the Commission could take a leadership position in identifying some of the work being done in counties surrounding CDEPs and uplifting and spreading those best practices.

Josefina Alvarado Mena, CEO, Safe Passages, and part of the CRDP, stated it is unfortunate that there is such a lack of transparency around this process and that individuals remain uncertain as to what has happened and whether or not priorities have been set. Accountability is equated with transparency. This is troubling.

Josefina Alvarado Mena thanked the CLCC for previously voting to adopt the two recommendations. SB 1004 clearly allows for the setting of additional priorities. Addressing systemic racism is a huge and complex issue. Although it is overwhelming, the speaker suggested focusing on what can be controlled. Language is powerful and systemic racism is maintained through language of the regulations, laws, and practices. Language can be inequitable when it is explicit, but it can also perpetuate inequities when it is vague and broad. The language that is in the PEI priorities currently is vague and broad. It does not help move the needle by ensuring that all TAY are prioritized. Also, including culturally and linguistically appropriate practices helps individuals know and understand in a concrete way what is being discussed and supported.

Josefina Alvarado Mena asked the CLCC to vote to adopt the recommendations put forward and to advocate for those recommendations before the Commission. The Commission has

the decision-making power to add the recommended language to the priorities. The MHSA has been around for 20 years, yet a reduction in behavioral health and mental health disparities has not been seen. The speaker asked the Commission to provide guidance to the counties as they are mandated to do.

Joel Baum, Safe Passages, previously with Gender Spectrum, echoed the comments made about this Committee using its voice and power to influence the conversation. The CLCC voted to support the priorities as they have been revised. He encouraged the CLCC to assume its power in the larger Commission and to emphasize why the recommendations are so critical.

Jose Baum spoke about the critical need of TAY who are not in college. Not being considered in this process does them a disservice.

Discussion, continued

Committee Member Admassu asked about the differences of PEI priority activity in the dates of the CLCC meeting on December 8, 2021, and January, 2020, when a list of priorities was supposedly established. The CLCC was formed as being culturally and linguistically appropriate and the voice of the community. CLCC Members understand what fits and what works for their communities. When the CLCC makes recommendations such as to include CDEPs in the list of priorities, it is because Committee Members know that that works for the communities they serve. She asked, since culturally and linguistically appropriate services is one of the priorities, why CDEPs cannot be added under that. She stated the reason it is different to adopt recommendations from the CLCC over other entities is because the CLCC represents ethnic community.

Chair Alvarez stated appreciation for the comments and work of the Members of the Committee and public. She stated she plans to bring today's discussion to the Commission.

Commissioner Rowlett acknowledged Chair Alvarez's leadership in the facilitation of this meeting. The comments have been very impactful. He stated, although he did not have a public comment, he wanted to listen to all the public comment and let everyone who has made comment know that not only did he note the comments and concerns, but he appreciated the information provided, agreed on many points, and embraced the passion associated with the shared desires for every person's mental health and behavioral health. He thanked everyone again for the impactful and informative conversation.

Chair Alvarez stated the notes on today's meeting will be provided to the PEI Subcommittee for the next steps to the full Commission. She asked staff to summarize next steps around the PEI report to help everyone better understand the process.

Ms. Mills stated staff will hear additional feedback from the Commission's Client and Family Leadership Committee (CFLC) next week. She invited everyone to join in the discussion at the CFLC meeting on October 25, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. Information is available on the Commission's website.

Ms. Mills stated staff will then check in with the Chair of the PEI Subcommittee to discuss possible revisions that would go into the next version of the PEI report. The revised version of the draft report will be sent out for additional public review and feedback and another meeting will be held with the PEI Subcommittee. She stated the hope to complete this

process before the end of the calendar year but this is under the direction of the Chair of the PEI Subcommittee.

Ms. Mills stated the full Commission will review this draft report once the PEI Subcommittee has approved it. After the adoption of the report, the Commission will draft an implementation plan, which will provide an opportunity for additional feedback. The implementation plan will have specific strategies around the data monitoring and technical assistance that is needed in order to support PEI. This could benefit from review of Committee Members and others around the specific elements of the plan that need to be built in from the beginning to identify disparities and evaluate the implementation of the priorities and other PEI programs to ensure that all communities are being equitably served. Committee insight into this process will be appreciated.

Agenda Item 5: Adjournment

Chair Alvarez suggested including a robust discussion on the progress of the Committee's work at the next meeting. The underlying goal for that discussion is to put mechanisms in place that hold the Commission accountable for Committee work moving forward such as ensuring transparency about the work being done and the impacts being made and what happens with these discussions to set the CLCC up for success in 2023 and beyond.

Chair Alvarez stated appreciation of the transparency and honesty of the conversation today and stated the hope that everyone walks away from this conversation knowing that they are all on the same team as far as trying to work in a direction that addresses inequities and promotes the wellbeing of all Californians, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. She stated she appreciated the leadership of everyone who came to be a part of and created the safety for this conversation, and for the work being done.

Chair Alvarez stated the next CLCC meeting will be held on Thursday, November 10, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.