



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 13, 2015 – 3:30 P.M.**

The Mental Health Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at 3:34 p.m. in the Administration Building, 1717 N. Indian Hill Blvd. # B, Claremont, California.

**CALL TO ORDER** Vice-Chair Watson called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

**ROLL CALL** A visual roll call was taken.

**PRESENT:** Toni L. Watson, Vice-Chair  
Cheryl Berezny  
Arny Bloom  
Donald R. Perez  
Twila L. Stephens  
Davetta Williams

**ABSENT:** Sylvia Whitlock, Ph.D., Chair  
Paul Capraro  
Joseph M. Lyons, Ph.D.

**STAFF:** Toni Navarro, Executive Director  
Donald Pruyn, Housing Project Manager  
Mark Bellegia, MHSA Program Coordinator -Innovations  
Mica Olmos, Executive Assistant

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 8, 2015 MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING**

There being no comment, Commissioner Bloom moved, and Commissioner Perez seconded, to approve the Mental Health Commission Meeting Minutes of September 8, 2015. The motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Commissioners Berezny, Bloom, Perez, Stephens, and Williams; and Vice-Chair Watson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Capraro and Lyons; and Chair Whitlock.

**II. PRESENTATION**

Mark Bellegia, MHSA Program Coordinator -Innovations, was in attendance to provide information about Tri-City's *Bye Bye Butts* Campaign. He also distributed campaign information for the Commission.

MHSA Program Coordinator Bellegia then provided statistics of the correlation between Mental Illnesses and smoking cigarettes, noting that nearly 50% of the annual deaths from smoking in the United States occur among individuals with a mental illness; that 31% of all cigarettes produced are smoked by adults with a mental illness; and that adults that suffer with a mental illness are 70% more likely to smoke than those adults who do not. He further explained the prevalence of smoking amongst different mental diagnosis.

Executive Director Navarro added that research in the last ten years has shown that nicotine reduces the effectiveness of antipsychotic medication; therefore, those individuals taking antipsychotic medication will require a higher dose of medication, stating that this is another important reason for encouraging clients to stop smoking.

Commission Member Bloom inquired the reason smoking is so prevalent among those individuals that suffer from a mental illness. Executive Director Navarro stated that research indicated that it is a culture within the mental health community as a coping mechanism.

Vice-Chair Watson inquired if there had been any studies that show that certain individuals are more prone to addiction than others. Executive Director replied in the negative.

Discussion ensued regarding the many forming habits of nicotine.

MHSA Program Coordinator Bellegia continued with his presentation and explained that the American Cancer Society has a program called the *Great American Smokeout* that consists having one day per year when they ask people not to smoke. He indicated that Tri-City's *Bye Bye Butts* Campaign evolved from that campaign and also through the collaboration of several MHSA programs including the Workforce Education and Training, Prevention and Early Intervention, and Innovations. He then stated that last year's *Bye Bye Butts* Campaign had been very successful; however, it only concentrated inside the agency and this year the focus also will be to outreach Tri-City's clients and the community, indicating the strategies that staff has developed include outreaching to schools since statistics show that 90% of all smokers began smoking before the age of eighteen.

Discussion ensued regarding how clinicians develop strategies to share with their clients to encourage them not to smoke for the one day.

Commissioner Berezny inquired if the outreach to children includes the discussion of e-cigarettes. MHSA Program Coordinator Bellegia indicated that the campaign promotes not inhaling any substance. He then talked about smoking habits among college students. Executive Director Navarro explained that college students turn to the smoking habit because they are anxious; therefore, it is important to help them understand the connection between smoking and mental health issues because smoking will be more dangerous than if they were not smoking.

Discussion ensued how smoking affects many aspects of live such as employment since it is estimated that people who smoke regularly use up to two hours for breaks per day to smoke at the workplace.

MHSA Program Coordinator Bellegia continued with his presentation and explained the different strategies to promote *Bye Bye Butts Day* on November 19th.

Commissioner Perez inquired if information regarding what causes someone to smoke is provided to clients. Executive Director Navarro replied that there will be a lot of smoking related information on display and for distribution, noting that specific triggers for smoking is shared between clinicians and their clients. She added that by the end of the year, staff agency-wide will be trained in the technique of motivational interviewing which helps people to identify problem behavior and move towards change; therefore, it will be interesting to see how the *Bye Bye Butts* Campaign is modified for next year.

MHSA Program Coordinator Bellegia then announced that the Cities of Pomona and La Verne will proclaim November 19th as *Bye Bye Butts Day* and will present Tri-City with the Proclamations during its City Council meetings in November. He then indicated that another part of the campaign is to have staff, who formerly smoked, to share their story as this can be a powerful tool for the clients to learn about success stories.

Discussion ensued regarding the different activities taking place on November 19th at Tri-City locations and local schools; suggestions for possible venues such as the Armory in Pomona and the Claremont Village; available free resources for those that want to quit smoking; and Tri-City's training efforts to make it more personal for clients.

The Commission thanked Mr. Bellegia for his presentation.

### **III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Executive Director Navarro reported that, unfortunately, a week ago there was a mass shooting in a City College in Oregon resulting in a lot of speculation and reports about individuals with mental health issues. Therefore, the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) issued a Press Release, and provided to all Mental Health agencies, a guide to share with local journalist the facts of mental health and violence. She noted that she found very valuable talking points and wanted to share with the Commission as representatives of the community. She then played a 10-minute video of John Oliver with a powerful message of media portrayal of those with a mental illness in connection with gun violence.

At the conclusion of the video presentation, discussion ensued regarding shooting incidents and the violent portrayal of individuals with a mental illness by journalists. It was noted that after the Oregon shooting, statistics showed that there had been 294 mass shootings in the United States and the only reported shootings were the ones that were perpetrated by someone who suffered from a mental illness.

Housing Manager Pruyn provided a supporting housing update and reported that the Cedars Springs Project in La Verne, and the Parkside Family Apartments by the Related Project in Pomona, were moving forward and are expecting a grand opening in March 2016; that the Holt Family Apartments Project by Clifford Beers received its Federal Tax Credit Financing and is expecting to break ground also in March 2016; that Tri-City opened escrow for a property in Claremont and there had been many inspections to ensure that the property is code compliant, and is exploring mitigating issues related to an existing septic tank in the property; and that the clinic easement issue has totally changed since the City of Pomona has rejected Tri-City's offer to purchase the two strips of property behind the Clinic on Garey avenue, noting that the property belongs to the City Water Department who is not willing to give up any of its existing land; therefore, staff will be meeting with the PUSD and the City of Pomona to reach a solution.

Executive Director Navarro announced that the L.A. County Supervisors had approved having the cold weather shelters opened 7 weeks earlier because of the predicted El Nino season, noting that in the past three years Tri-City had navigators at the Pomona shelter two nights per week, and during the past two years Tri-City has had peer counselor groups one or two nights per week providing services at the shelter; and that this year, in anticipation of possibly having the shelters opened 24/7, Tri-City was asked by the Volunteers of America if Tri-City would be willing to provide any services during the day. She indicated that this is doable since staff was already discussing adding during the night time, in addition to navigators and peer-to-peer counseling, inquiry for one day a week for a couple of hours, as well as a comprehensive referral, to make sure that those that are in need at the shelter get connected to Tri-City's extensive outreach and engagement and get pulled into services sooner than later; as well as establish a cooking class and provide transportation from the shelter to Tri-City. She then thanked Commissioner Don Perez for bringing to staff's attention the annual Village Venture Arts and Crafts Faire held at the Claremont Village on October 24th, stating that Tri-City will be there to distribute Tri-City information. Lastly, she indicated that Tri-City had conducted its first Stakeholders' meeting in October and 79 individuals were in attendance.

Dana Barford, MHSA Projects Manager, reported that of those 79 stakeholders in attendance there were 20 Tri-City staff members and 59 community members; and that 48 were returning members and 31 stakeholders were new members.

#### **COMMISSION ITEMS AND REPORTS**

There was no Commission comment.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 4:46 p.m., on consensus of the Mental Health Commission its meeting of October 13, 2015 was adjourned. The next Regular Meeting of the Mental Health Commission will be held on **Tuesday, November 10, 2015**, in the Administration Building, 1717 North Indian Hill Boulevard #B, Claremont, California.

  
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Micaela P. Olmos, Executive Assistant