



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

NOVEMBER 8, 2022 – 3:30 P.M.

The Mental Health Commission met in a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, November 8, 2022 at 3:35 p.m. via teleconference pursuant to Government Code § 54953, which allows the continuation to hold meetings without gathering in a room in an effort to minimize the spread and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease of 2019).

CALL TO ORDER Chair Henderson called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL Roll call was taken by JPA Administrator/Clerk Olmos.

PRESENT: Anne Henderson, Chair
Wray Ryback, Vice-Chair
Carolyn Cockrell, GB Member Liaison (joined the meeting at 3:40 p.m.)
Clarence D. Cernal
Joan M. Reyes
Twila L. Stephens
Alfonso "Al" Villanueva
Toni L. Watson

ABSENT: Isabella A. Chavez
Nichole Perry
David J. Weldon

STAFF: Rimmi Hundal, Executive Director
Dana Barford, Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services
Lisa Naranjo, MHSA Program Supervisor -PEI
Brittany Nguyen, Community Capacity Organizer
Mica Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk

REGULAR BUSINESS

I. APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT TELECONFERENCING REQUIREMENTS DURING A PROCLAIMED STATE OF EMERGENCY UNDER AB 361 (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953)

There being no comment, Commissioner Villanueva moved, and Commissioner Watson seconded, to ask the executive director, or designee, to perform all actions necessary to implement the Brown Act provisions regarding teleconferencing in compliance with Government Code § 54953. The motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Commissioners Cernal, Reyes, Stephens, Villanueva, and Watson; Vice-Chair Ryback; and Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez, Perry, and Weldon; and Board Member Liaison Cockrell.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 11, 2022 MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

There being no comment, Commissioner Watson moved, and Vice-Chair Ryback seconded, to approve the Minutes of the October 11, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Mental Health Commission. The motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Commissioners Cernal, Stephens, Villanueva, and Watson; Vice-Chair Ryback; and Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: Commissioner Reyes. ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez, Perry, and Weldon; and Board Member Liaison Cockrell.

At 3:40 p.m., Governing Board Liaison Carolyn Cockrell joined the meeting.

III. PRESENTATION- OVERVIEW OF TRI-CITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY'S COURAGEOUS MINDS SPEAKER BUREAU

Director of MHSa and Ethnic Services Barford introduced Community Capacity Coordinator Brittany Nguyen, who will provide the history and the impact of the Courageous Minds Speaker Bureau Program.

Community Capacity Coordinator Nguyen reported that the Courageous Minds Speaker Bureau Program began as part of Tri-City's stigma reduction campaign that started back in 2014 and which focuses on promoting inclusion, reducing stigma by creating stability through housing, and cultivating a community that made everyone feel welcome and providing space and room for everyone. Therefore, the Program was a way for individuals with lived mental health experience to have a space to share their story and empower others that recovery as possible and, at the same time, reduce the stigma surrounding mental health because it shows others that they are not alone in their struggles, that support is available, empowers people to reach out for help when it is needed, and it brings the community together to engage in positive conversations about mental health. She then stated that since the inception of the Program, there have been twenty-five courageous mind speakers. She then explained the recruitment efforts and selection process; and the assistance provided about presentation skills, public speaking exercises, and workshops that focus on storytelling, to help someone who wants to share their mental health story with others. She then introduced Bureau Speaker Dwight Pennington, who will share his story and his experience about being a courageous mind speaker.

Dwight Pennington, Wellness Advocate I, shared his mental health story, pointing out that he is a philosopher, a mathematician, dabbles in political science, and he considers himself all around academic, and that he has a mental health disorder to which he was completely oblivious when he was growing up. He shared that doctors often said that he was just happy; he also talked about his family's history with mental illnesses, and about the man who helped him time after time; about his passion for music because it puts him in a good mood; and about how he learned about his symptoms and how to manage them, and most importantly, how to ask for help. He said that recovery was hard, but now he has a good job, has his own place, has food in the refrigerator, money to spend, and also has a car to drive. He noted that with the will to succeed and with a strong sense of community, anyone can overcome any obstacle.

Executive Director Hundal thanked Mr. Pennington for sharing his story of recovery, noting that it was a powerful story. She then expressed being proud to call him her colleague; and also thanked him for everything he does for Tri-City, its clients, and the community.

Commissioner Villanueva stated that Dwight Pennington was doing great; encouraged him to feel more proud of his accomplishments with Tri-City; and congratulated him being very articulate during his presentation.

Vice-Chair Ryback inquired if any of the courageous minds bureau speaker's presentations were being recorded and placed online or YouTube, noting that she would love to share with other people Dwight Pennington's story; and inquired if he had thought about sharing his story.

Dwight Pennington indicated that to share his story he usually draft essays, he puts his thoughts in order and writes them down in a way that he could express to as many people as possible, noting that it has been a lot of fun and he highly recommends it for anybody else because it really helps you to look back on where you have been, and where you are now, and although it can be inspiring for other people, it is really great for yourself.

Executive Director Hundal stated that part of the program includes helping individuals draft their story and focus on their strengths and recovery, so that they get this message in the community, and speak at any of your meetings, noting that they will be supported.

Vice-Chair Ryback further inquired if the courageous minds speakers' bureau was going to be posted in social media.

Community Capacity Organizer Nguyen replied in the affirmative; and indicated that in Tri-City's webpage "Room4Everyone", there are some recorded testimonials posted; and that more recordings will be available depending on how comfortable the speakers are being recorded.

Commissioner Watson commented that she was part of the second cohort and it was beneficial to join.

The Commission thanked Wellness Advocate Pennington for his presentation and sharing his story of recovery.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MONTHLY REPORT

Executive Director Hundal reported that Genoa Pharmacy, located inside Tri-City's adult clinic at 2008 N. Garey Avenue and that specializes in mental health and behavioral health medications, had its Grand Opening on October 25th, noting that Commissioner Reyes was in attendance; that the ribbon cutting was performed by Governing Board Chair Jed Leano, who is also the Mayor for the City of Claremont; and that a representative from Supervisor Hilda Solis' Office was in attendance, as well as Tri-City staff. She then talked about the CARES Act, stating that there are seven counties that are a part of the first cohort, but that LA County has not opted-in for the first cohort; that she met with the Interim Director for LA County Department of Mental Health to discuss the implementation; explained that the CARES Act creates a new pathway to deliver mental health and substance abuse disorder services to the most severely impaired, so it is for people that are diagnosed with the schizophrenia or psychosis spectrum disorder; that this can only help a handful of individuals, but these individuals can really benefit from this law; that not everyone experiencing homelessness or mental illness can be a recipient of this service; that it is designed to keep people out of jail or from getting under the conservatorship of either a family member or the court system; that to implement it, funding will be necessary and Tri-City will be observing how Orange County will implement it by using the MHSA resources, pointing out that it is designed as a heavy duty Full Service Partnership (FSP) which will help us collaborate with the

court system, judges, public defenders, the judicial council, and private insurance. She explained that one of the challenges with the CARES Act is the need for sustainable funding; that if Tri-City will use MHSA funding, every dollar is already accounted for, thus, stakeholders will have to decide about programming in order to fund this. She also mentioned that work shortages will have to be taken into consideration because this work requires a specialized workforce since we will be working with diagnosis and performing evaluations.

Discussion ensued regarding NAMI being a proponent of the CARE Act and Tri-City working closely with them; about the need for the CARE Act if someone is voluntarily seeking care; about advocacy for our clients who are unable to think that they need to have the level of help that they need; about the importance of outreach and engagement that will have to be performed by mental health professionals to implement the CARE Act, which Tri-City will do its best to make it happen and make it work for its clients.

Commissioner Reyes commented that CA governor had allocated sixty-three million to help local governments and courts with the CARE Act implementation, noting that when the Act was written, it was assumed that counties already do behavioral work.

Executive Director Hundal explained that there is not much funding for counties, and that funding will be more for infrastructure to get it off the ground; however, there is little money for behavioral health for the implementation process, noting that the first seven counties agreed to go first because they got more money to do this work; and that 63 million is hardly any sustainable funding for 58 counties and two cities doing behavioral health work.

Vice-Chair Ryback inquired if the CARE Act will be available for people who are already incarcerated and get connected to services before they leave jail. Executive Director Hundal replied that it will be for when they leave their hospitalization or incarceration to help them get stabilized; however during incarceration it will be up to the judge and what is happening with their criminal case.

Chair Henderson inquired if this also has the potential for people to make advanced directives. Executive Director Hundal replied in the affirmative, indicating that Tri-City will highly encourage it through its PADs (Psychiatric Advance Directives) program; and stated that the PADs program is currently in the implementation phase under the Innovation Program.

Commissioner Villanueva inquired what level of clinician, psychiatrist or psychologist would be providing the outreach or case management, and if Tri-City will be required to make a report to the court. Executive Director Hundal replied in the affirmative, and that management is envisioning a team to be made up of a clinician, whether a psychiatrist or a psychologist or social worker, paired with a peer staff with lived experience, and a community navigator that is already working with law enforcement.

Discussion ensued regarding validity of pros and cons from different advocacy groups and legal organizations.

COMMISSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Vice-Chair Ryback reported that she submitted the Data Notebook information online; and thanked staff who participated in helping the Ad Hoc Committee put the information together, and to Dana Barford for coordinating all of those activities.

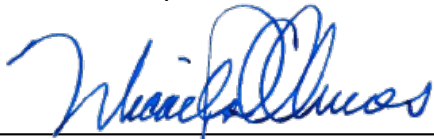
PUBLIC COMMENT

JPA Administrator/Clerk Olmos reported that she forwarded earlier today an email communication from Evan Freund, a City of Claremont resident, submitted under general public, wherein he indicated that “Tri-City has an opportunity to leverage the national implementation of the 988 crisis response line to implement crisis services that can build up on services required for the CARE Act, and that can avoid confrontations with the police untrained to deal with the severely mentally ill citizens.”

Evan Freund commented that the submission that he sent earlier, was regarding the implementation of the 988 number, noting that he understands that the State of California is still considering how the services would be funded through taxes on phones and cell phones; therefore, he thinks that it should be prepared to implement it as soon as the funding becomes available; that the mobile crisis services will be essential because crises do not always happen during office hours, and this kind of service has applications for behavioral crises in schools as well as for the general population.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:28 p.m., on consensus of the Mental Health Commission its Regular Meeting of November 8, 2022 was adjourned. The Mental Health Commission will meet next in a Regular Joint Meeting with the Governing Board to be held on Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. via teleconference pursuant to Government Code §54953.



Micaela P. Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk