

Workforce and Employment Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2023

Committee Members present: Vera Calloway – Chairperson, John Black, Walter Shwe, Deborah Pitts, Arden Tucker, Dale Mueller, Cindy Wang

WET Steering Committee Members Present: Janet Frank, John Drebinger

Presenters: Lucero Robles, Alexandria Simpson, Michael Andrijich, Clinton Ramstad, Samuel Casale, Laura Luna, Angelita Diaz-Akahori, Carla Cross, Jeremy Wilson

Staff present: Ashneek Nanua, Justin Boese, Eva Smith, Jenny Bayardo

Meeting Commenced at 1:30 p.m.

Item #1 Approve January 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes

The Workforce and Employment Committee (WEC) reviewed the January 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes. The minutes were approved by the committee with no edits.

Action/Resolution

The January 2023 WEC Meeting Minutes are approved.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

Item #2 Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Updates

Lucero Robles, Director of Quality Assurance and Compliance for the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), and Alexandria Simpson from the Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Policy Division at the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) presented updates on the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Benefit followed by a Q & A session with committee members. Lucero first reviewed the roles of CalMHSA as the certifying entity and then shared a snapshot of applicants for certification including demographics by employment, age, race/ethnicity, language, county, and lived experience. CalMHSA has processed over 3,500 applications and 814 of these applicants have received certification. Lucero shared the following updates:

- The grandparenting application deadline was extended through June 30, 2023.
- CalMHSA received subject matter expert and community input on the areas of specialization and core competencies for each specialization, with Request for Proposals (RFP) released to add training providers in areas of specialization.

- A one-hour, self-paced supervisor training based on SAMHSA’s best practice guidelines is now available at no cost.
- CalMHSA is accepting applications beginning in March 2023 for new training providers to deliver the 80-hour training for core competencies for providers who meet all requirements. The application has a \$300 non-refundable fee.

Alexandria Simpson then shared Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist updates from DHCS and requested insights on federal requirements for rendering providers to submit claims using unique provider identifiers. DHCS will propose guidance to ensure unlicensed providers comply with federal requirements. Alexandria stated that this is a precursor and informal discussion and stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide feedback via a Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) in late Summer 2023.

DHCS is required to use the Transformed Medicaid Statistical Information System (TMSIS) to share information with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Data reported through TMSIS must include a provider number such as a National Provider Identifier (NPI) for a rendering provider and must also submit a billing provider. There is currently no guidance for peers, Community Health Workers, and other qualified providers to have an NPI so rendering Medi-Cal providers must have a unique provider identifier from the state in order to be compliant with federal requirements. The goal is to create a standardized and streamlined approach to create clear requirements for unlicensed providers to render services under Medi-Cal in order to meet federal requirements and accurately bill Medicaid for these services, as well as provide CMS and DHCS with data to track how non-traditional providers render services.

Committee members engaged presenters in a Q & A session regarding the NPI number, peer versus non-peer training providers, and concerns about the preferred qualifications for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists, as well as challenges with eligibility for peer organizations who have trained peers for several years. Committee members also brought up questions and concerns about various linguistic and disability supports for certification.

Action/Resolution

The WEC will continue to track and provide input for Senate Bill 803 implementation.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway – Ongoing

Item #3 Public Comment

Monica Caffey asked if organizations wanting to apply for the areas of specialization must submit a separate application for each specialization. She asked why there was only a 21-day application period for the initial RFP for training providers and inquired what element are included in the cost for the \$300 provider application. Monica stated

that there were previously 21 training providers approved by CalMHSA to implement the training and asked how there are now 22 providers approved after the deadline. She asked if CalMHSA is doing any analysis to ensure that vendors in all counties are being considered for the peer training opportunities because there will be gaps if there is not appropriate representation across counties. Lucero Robles responded to Monica's questions.

Andrea Wagner, California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations (CAMHPRO), stated that part of the input for CalMHSA included CAMHPRO's listening sessions for the areas of specialization. CAMHPRO also conducts monthly SB 803 101 training sessions as CAMHPRO is a training and technical advisor for SB 803 implementation. She invited DHCS to be involved with the SB 803 101 training and keep lines of communication open. Andrea asked DHCS when the test and study guide will be available in other languages. Alexandria Simpson responded to Andrea.

Stephanie Ramos, Cal Voices and California Association of Peer Professionals, expressed challenges for individuals who do not have a social security number holding up the process of individuals obtaining an National Provider Identifier number. Stephanie identified that another challenge is that the NPI number does not follow the individual when they change places of employment. Alexandria Simpson responded to Stephanie's statements.

Elizabeth R. Stone asked what changes were made to the updated template for the Peer Support Specialist areas of specialization. Elizabeth expressed there is a major difference between peers in peer-directed organizations versus peers in clinical organizations. She encouraged the presenters to differentiate between the two when approaching the NPI guidance and policy.

Action/Resolution

N/A

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

Item #4 HCAI Overview of Behavioral Health Programs and Grants

Michael Andrijich and Clinton Ramstad from the Grants Management Section of the Health Care Workforce Development Division at the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), presented on HCAI behavioral health workforce programs. Topics included the Regional Partnership Grant Programs, Psychiatric Education Capacity Expansion (PECE) Grant Programs, Community-Based Organization (CBO)

Behavioral Health Workforce Program, Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs, Health Professions Career Opportunity Program (HPCOP) including the grant award amounts and application cycles for each program. HCAI also announced the Golden State Social Opportunities Program and Behavioral Health Scholarship Program which will launch in May 2023. The presenters provided resources for HCAI's programs including an eligibility tool that applicants may use to determine if they are eligible for the grants they apply for.

Upon conclusion of the update, the committee engaged the presenters in a Q & A session. The committee engaged in topics such as Occupational Therapy coverage in Allied Health Scholarship Programs and Behavioral Health Scholarship Program.

Action/Resolution

The WEC will invite HCAI representatives to subsequent committee meetings to provide updates on their behavioral health programs and 2020-2025 WET Plan.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway – June 2023

Item #5 Public Comment

Imani Lucas, CEO of United and Guided, asked for assistance on finding the HCAI behavioral health programs to determine what grants his organization is eligible for. United and Guided is a small CBO with 5 employees who would like to assist their peers in educational direction and career path.

Stephanie Ramos stated that HCAI is in the early stages of their process of developing certification for Community Health Workers and Promotores. She went on to state that the individuals who are interested in and would qualify for these positions can overlap with individuals also seeking certification as a Peer Support Specialist. Stephanie asked that WEC and HCAI consider cross-certification for these individuals. Many of the pieces of training and qualifications are similar and cross-certification would allow a person to pursue multiple opportunities without having to go through separate 80-hour trainings with the same information.

Katy Sommerfeld, California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations (CAMHPRO), asked if HCAI may consider a recovery model training in the grant programs as well as training on how providers may work more efficiently and effectively together in multi-disciplinary teams especially for areas of specialization. She shared her experience in direct service and peer roles and expressed that she would have been a better-rounded provider if she understood both sides. She then asked HCAI to

consider that future RFPs include a component that builds bridges on these teams. Katy also asked about the deadline for the Peer Personnel grant.

Elizabeth R. Stone asked for clarification on what the Allied Health Scholarship Program included. HCAI stated that the list of eligible professions is on the HCAI website.

Action/Resolution

N/A

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

**Item #6 2020-2025 Workforce Education and Training (WET) Plan
Regional Partnership Panel Presentations**

Representatives from each of the five Regional Partnership (RP) from the 2020-2025 Workforce Education and Training (WET) Five-Year Plan presented on their region: Superior, Los Angeles, Southern, Bay Area, and Central. Each representative provided an overview of their program, and discussed the best practices and challenges of their programs as well as respond to the standardized questions that the WEC provided to the presenters. Committee members engaged in a Q & A session upon conclusion of the presentations. In the Q & A, presenters discussed opportunities for workforce shortages via funding, expanded telehealth options, and Peer Support Specialists, and challenges in the delayed onboarding process and competitive process amongst organizations for county providers and staff, as well as challenges with telehealth.

Action/Resolution

The WEC will continue to track programs in the 2020-2025 WET Plan.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway – Ongoing

Item #7 Public Comment

Theresa Comstock, Executive Director of the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions, stated that priority areas of her organization for 2023 include workforce and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). She expressed that there are areas of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) that the Planning Council may want to look closely at while advising HCAI on the WET Five-Year Plan in terms of incorporating community-defined evidence practices (CDEPs) into training and organizations that provide community-defined CDEPs in workforce development. It can help to reach out

to community-based organizations to do not yet provide mental health services but could do so and contract these organizations with the counties.

Stephanie Ramos stated that a point of consideration is to prioritize individuals with lower incomes, who often come from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, for scholarships. Stephanie said it can be helpful to provide workshops to assist individuals in the scholarship application process.

Action/Resolution

N/A

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

Item #8 Update Re: Request for Occupational Therapists to be Licensed Mental Health Professionals (LMHPs) and Licensed Practitioners of the Healing Arts (LPHAs)

In November 2022, WEC staff wrote a letter on behalf of the committee to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) requesting Occupational Therapists (OTs) be considered LMHPs in the Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) system and LPHAs in the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System. The committee has advocated for this for several years, and wrote a [letter](#) requesting OTs to be licensed persons in the Home and Community Based Services Waiver (September 2019).

Deborah Pitts expressed that her state association and DHCS continue to have conversations on this request. She shared that there is no current plan to do a release of information on the decision but DHCS is currently looking at what regulatory and legislative language changes would be required to identify OTs as LMHPs in the SMHS system and LPHAs in DMC-ODS. Deborah indicated that it would take a year or more before any regulatory language is available, and her association asked DHCS to release a Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) to waive the restriction for the time-frame for the requirements so that implementation may occur sooner but the BHIN is not an option at this time.

Action/Resolution

WEC staff will continue to track status updates in regards to CBHPC’s request for Occupational Therapists to be considered LMHPs and LPHAs and provide an update when available.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway, Deborah Pitts – Ongoing

Item #9 Discussion Re: WEC Participation in CBHPC Workgroups

Vera Calloway, Chairperson, stated that there are now three CBHPC workgroups: Reducing Disparities, Children and Youth, and Substance Use Disorders. Vera shared that the Council’s Executive Committee is hoping that the workgroups have at least one committee members attend each workgroup and report information from the workgroups to the committee. Vera Calloway is the representative for the Reducing Disparities Workgroup. She invited committee members to reach out to her if they are interested in participating and representing the other workgroups, as the Substance Use Disorder Workgroup and Children and Youth Workgroups still need a WEC representative.

Action/Resolution

The WEC will identify representatives for the Children and Youth Workgroup and Substance Use Disorder Workgroup.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway– Ongoing

Item #9 Wrap Up/Next Steps

Vera Calloway stated that this meeting covered all elements of the WEC Work Plan. She expressed a desire to craft a white paper for the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification for next steps.

Action/Resolution

WEC staff will work with the WEC Officer team to determine next steps for the June 2023 Quarterly Meeting.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway – June 2023