

Systems and Medicaid Committee

Meeting Minutes
Interim Meeting – August 22, 2023

Members Present:

Karen Baylor, Chairperson
Vandana Pant
Javier Moreno

Uma Zykofsky, Chair-Elect
Steve Leoni
Noel O'Neill

Walter Shwe
Susan Wilson
Erin Franco

Staff Present:

Ashneek Nanua, Naomi Ramirez

Meeting Commenced at 3:00 p.m.

Item #1 High-Level Overview of BH-CONNECT 1115 Demonstration Waiver

Systems and Medicaid Committee (SMC) staff provided a high-level overview of the California Behavioral Health Community-Based Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment (BH-CONNECT) 1115 Demonstration Waiver Application. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) initiated a public comment period for stakeholders to provide feedback on the waiver application prior to submitting the application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The waiver application was built upon the California Behavioral Health Community-Based Continuum (CalBH-CBC) concept paper. The SMC wrote a [letter of recommendations](#) to DHCS regarding the concept paper in January 2023. In the overview presentation, SMC staff reviewed the BH-CONNECT demonstration goals, key components, waiver authority, requested expenditures, preliminary evaluation plan, implementation timeline, and next steps.

Action/Resolution

N/A

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

Item #2 Create Recommendations for BH-CONNECT 1115 Demonstration Waiver

Committee members provided feedback on the BH-CONNECT 1115 Demonstration Waiver Application. The SMC's key comments are provided below:

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- Ensure a robust continuum of community-based care to reduce institutionalization and the need for Institutes for Mental Disease (IMD).
- Include the concept of recovery in workforce training similar to the recovery provision in the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).
- Request clarification on why residential treatment and inpatient treatment are in the same box in Figure 1 on Page 12 of the demonstration application as these are distinct services.
- Seek clarity on how the Centers of Excellence (COE) will operate and how organizations will be determined as a COE. SMC members recommend that technical assistance provided to implement the evidence-based practices (EBPs) would be a statewide effort or the ability for counties to enable regional models as many small, rural counties may not have the resources to participate in the county opt-in community-based EBP services.
- Seek clarification on whether the definition for the COEs is based on a federal definition or state definition. There are also questions on whether there is a sustainability plan for the COEs to operate on a continuous basis.
- Expand workforce funding as it should not be limited to specific groups or direct providers because there are many workforce shortages that exist outside of providers such as administrative staff and Executive Directors. Workforce dollars should be open to anyone who needs them.
- Encourage the state to engage in meaningful stakeholder meetings.
- If the HUD definition for homelessness is a federal definition, recommend that the state have a state definition for more flexibility as the federal definition often leaves out a large group of people.
- Seek clarification on what happens if an individual resides in an IMD past the 60-day Federal Financial Participation (FFP) reimbursement period.
- Ask the state to set aside dollars to invest in people who have been historically marginalized and people of color to give them opportunities to open programs in their communities as they are the best individuals to understand their community's needs. This would be favorable compared to setting up current funding sources that make it difficult for the average person to tap into dollars.
- Seek clarity on the utilization of Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) versus Full Service Partnerships. Committee members noted that the choice of the EBP used in the demonstration along with its fidelity is tied to issues around the workforce shortage.

Action/Resolution

The SMC Officers and staff will assemble and finalize the committee's recommendations for the BH-CONNECT 1115 Demonstration Waiver Application.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Karen Baylor, Uma Zykofsky – August 2023

Meeting Adjourned at 3:45 p.m.