

## **Workforce and Employment Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes**

January 17, 2024

**Committee Members present:** John Black, Walter Shwe, Arden Tucker, Jessica Ocean, Donald Morrison, Maria Sierra, Susie Baker, Diane Shinstock (stand in for Jessica Grove), Dale Mueller, Deborah Pitts, Bill Stewart, Danielle Sena

**WET Steering Committee Members Present:** Marcellus Brookshaw

**Presenters:** Anne Powell, Ellice Ramm, Lucero Robles, Alexandria Simpson, May Vang, Hung Tran, Ericka Mancillas Vargas, Mary Ellen Baracerros

**Staff present:** Ashneek Nanua, Justin Boese, Naomi Ramirez

**Meeting Commenced at 1:30 p.m.**

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#### **Item #1      Nominate Chairperson and Chair-Elect for 2024 (Action)**

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Workforce and Employment Committee (WEC) staff reviewed the responsibilities of the committee Chairperson and Chair-Elect. Walter Shwe volunteered to be the WEC Chairperson for 2024. Bill Stewart motioned for Walter Shwe to become the 2024 WEC Chairperson. John Black seconded the motion. Staff took a roll call vote and the committee unanimously approved Walter Shwe as the WEC Chairperson.

Bill Stewart volunteered as the WEC Chair-Elect for 2024. John Black motioned for Bill Stewart to be the WEC 2024 Chair-Elect. Arden Tucker seconded the motion. CBHPC's WEC staff took a roll call vote and the committee unanimously nominated Bill Stewart as the WEC 2024 Chair-Elect. Chief of Operations, Naomi Ramirez, stated that new Council members are typically not able to serve in committee leadership roles until they have been on the Council for at least one year. Naomi will submit the request to the Council's Officer team for approval.

#### **Action/Resolution**

The WEC Chairperson and Chair-Elect nominations will be submitted to the CBHPC Officer team for approval.

#### **Responsible for Action-Due Date**

CBHPC Officer team – January 2024

**Item #2      Approve October 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes**

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

**Action/Resolution**

The October 2023 WEC Meeting Minutes are approved and will be posted to the CBHPC website.

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

Ashneek Nanua – January 2024

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**Item #3      CBHPC Workgroups Update**

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WEC staff asked the committee to identify representatives for each CBHPC workgroup and stated the responsibilities for the representatives. The role of the representative is to ensure that the committee is informed of the efforts of the workgroup. Don Morrison volunteered for the Substance Use Disorder Workgroup. Susie Baker volunteered to attend the Children and Youth Workgroup to determine if she would like to attend and report back to the WEC at future meetings. Bill Stewart volunteered as a backup representative for the Children and Youth Workgroup. Arden Tucker volunteered as the representative for the Reducing Disparities Workgroup.

Ashneek Nanua, WEC staff, provided an update on the Children and Youth Workgroup (CYW) and Reducing Disparities Workgroup (RDW) meetings. At the January 2024 Quarterly Meeting, the CYW will receive updates from the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC), California Alliance for Child and Family Services (CACFS), and the CA Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) on current initiatives, projects, and efforts for children and youth behavioral health in California. The presentations were requested from the workgroup's youth representatives due to their desire to be informed on current projects and efforts. The CYW has focused on increasing youth involvement in the workgroup and having the youth included in the work of CBHPC.

Ashneek Nanua, WEC staff, provided an update for the RDW. The Reducing Disparities Workgroup will review the current list of priorities for the workgroup and have an opportunity to provide edits. The workgroup will discuss potential topics to focus on in 2024.

The Substance Use Disorder Workgroup is in the beginning phase of developing the work activities of their group and will be meeting on the Thursdays of the quarterly meetings during the lunch hour.

**Action/Resolution**

The workgroup representatives will update the WEC on activities of each group.

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

Susie Baker, Bill Stewart, Don Morrison, Arden Tucker – Ongoing

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**Item #4    Presentation of HCAI Research Data Center Dashboards & Certified Wellness Coaches**

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Ellice Ramm from the Research and Evaluation Section at the CA Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) presented to the WEC on the HCAI Research Data Center’s current workforce data dashboards. The current dashboards are the Race/Ethnicity Breakdowns of the Workforce, Languages Spoken by the Workforce, Education Pathways for all Workforce, and Education Pathways specific to Registered Nurses. Ellice provided a demonstration of how each dashboard functions.

Anne Powell from the Policy Section of the Office of Health Workforce Development at HCAI presented to the WEC on the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) Profession. HCAI is tasked to design, build, and launch grant programs for this profession. Anne reviewed the roles of CWC I and CWC II, scope of services, competencies, career lattice, and examples of sites where CWC may work.

Committee members engaged in a question-and-answer session with the presenters. Topics included questions about the lack of inclusion of Occupational Therapists and Registered Nurses in the career lattice for CWCs. Committee members asked if there is support for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students entering the CWC profession. There were also questions about the data filters for the Registered Nurse dashboard. Additionally, committee members asked how HCAI may collect information on gaps in the data dashboards such as staff shortages and turnover rates, the inclusion of American Sign Language in the Language Dashboard, and the inclusion of specific LGBTQ and sexual orientation identifications in the Race/Ethnicity Workforce Dashboard.

**Action/Resolution**

The WEC will invite HCAI representatives to subsequent meetings to provide updates on initiatives and projects pertaining to the behavioral health workforce and Workforce Education and Training (WET) Five-Year Plan.

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

HCAI representatives, Ashneek Nanua – Ongoing

**Item #5      Public Comment**

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Elizabeth R. Stone from Ventura County expressed the hope for HCAI to link license type and service settings to the data and the impact they are having on the outcomes. Elizabeth also stated that an extensive curriculum was developed for Certified Peer Wellness Coaches 15-20 years ago at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and is still used in New Jersey. She encouraged HCAI to look at the existing Certified Peer Wellness Coach curriculum for the development of the upcoming Certified Wellness Coach provider type.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #6      Update on Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification**

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Lucero Robles, Director of Quality Assurance and Compliance for the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) presented updates on the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification. Lucero reviewed the program components for certification. She then notified the WEC that the DHCS-funded scholarship cycle is now closed. Scholarships have been distributed for certification in the initial certification pathway and grandparenting pathway. DHCS-funded scholarships for training in the Parent/Caregiver/Family Member peer specialization are now closed and have been distributed by region on a rolling basis. Additionally, there are currently 27 approved training providers recognized for the 80-hour competency training; 7 approved training providers for Parent/Caregiver/Family Member Peer Specialization; 5 training providers approved for the Unhoused Specialization; 7 training providers approved for the Crisis Care Specialization; and 6 training providers approved for the Justice-Involved Specialization. CalMHSA has a data dashboard that provides insight to the diverse community of certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists. The Spanish version of the certification exam is now available. For the first quarter of 2024, the Continued Education Training Provider applications will open and CalMHSA will collaborate with the CA Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to bring certification into the institutions.

Alexandria Simpson from the Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Policy Division at the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) provided updates on the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification. DHCS is currently developing a Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) that streamlines Medi-Cal Peer Support Services guidance into a single source as well as clarifies and updates existing policy guidance. Updated guidance topics include program plan submission requirements, oversight roles,

claiming updates, lapsed certification process, county opt-in process, and Code of Ethics to incorporate stakeholder feedback. The new guidance will supersede previous BHIN guidance for the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Benefit. DHCS is also continuing to explore the development of a unique identifier for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist claims and are developing an updated Frequently Asked Questions document. The department is having ongoing partnerships with counties and CalMHSA for implementation considerations. Additionally, DHCS surveyed counties on implementation of the benefit in October 2023 which included questions about county experiences with their provider network, workforce development, experience of the Peer Support Specialists, and benefit's impact on Medi-Cal members. The findings of the survey will be finalized in the first quarter of 2024 to inform future technical assistance and guidance to address implementation barriers.

Committee members engaged in a question-and-answer session with the presenters. Topics included questions about input to CalMHSA on the listening session to develop the certification program and flexibility considerations for individuals with barriers to obtain certification based on the current process. The WEC expressed appreciation and the importance of diverse and inclusive imagery in presentations and outreach, concerns about scholarships no longer being available for areas of specialization and efforts to advocate for additional scholarships. Members inquired about data on how counties are utilizing peers, and asked about how DHCS is addressing challenges for individuals and peer organizations that are already engaging in peer work who are not able to bill Medi-Cal for peer support services due to their current job titles not being recognized as a billable position.

**Action/Resolution**

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

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

Ashneek Nanua – Ongoing

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**Item #7      Public Comment**

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Elizabeth R. Stone stated that she tried to become a training organization as someone who was a trainer for 30 years. Elizabeth shared that she developed an individually tailored training that was rejected without any feedback. She expressed hope for additional providers and individually tailored trainings to meet the guidelines and be approved. She also stated that she founded and runs an organization that is an EPIC grant recipient and is hearing that community-based organizations are losing county contracts and are unable to bill for peer services. These organizations are hoping to stick to peer values as opposed to move towards a clinical focus. Elizabeth encouraged DHCS to attend monthly calls hosted by Advocates for Human Potential (AHP) to hear the frustration of providers who have done evidence-based peer work. She also encouraged DHCS to find creative ways to maintain traditional peer values and allow

non-traditional providers to bill for services to meet the needs of individuals who benefit from peer services.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #8 Presentations on Clubhouse Models (San Diego County)**

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May Vang, Director of East Wind Clubhouse and Hung Tran, Vocational Specialist for East Wind Clubhouse provided an overview of their program focused on the Southeast Asian and refugee population. A majority of the participants in the program are older adults. The East Wind Clubhouse provides vocational, educational, and social supports and uses the Clubhouse International Model Standards to support members through psycho-social rehabilitation rather than providing clinical services. The program is member-directed and includes monthly member meetings and an Advisory Board to collect member input on various topics. The presenters reviewed services that the East Wind Clubhouse offers such as skills classes and application of skills, self-help groups, and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supportive employment services for individuals with Serious Mental Illness. Participants attend and participate in the Clubhouse on a volunteer basis in meaningful work activities, trainings, strengths assessments, and social events. The Clubhouse receives funding through a variety of sources such as grants, partnerships with providers and agencies, and the County of San Diego.

May Vang then discussed the successes, challenges, and best practices of the program. There were successes around increased access to mental health care and community support resources for underserved populations, reductions in hospitalizations and psychiatric crises, educational and vocational skills-building to help members secure living wage jobs and independence, improved coordination between health care, legal, and social services, member empowerment, and unique peer lead environment. Challenges included funding; language and cultural barriers; access issues such as transportation or unstable housing; trust-building with refugees; staffing recruitment and retention; legal documentation limitations for accessing government benefits or seeking employment; diagnosis complexity; and medication adherence due to differing cultural beliefs and stigmas. Best practices included cultural competency training for all staff; peer support provider recruitment; establishment of community partnerships; flexible member participation options; multilingual program materials and interpretation support; holistic wellness approaches; evaluation and responsiveness to community feedback; and creation of a welcoming and supportive environment.

Ericka Mancillas Bargas, Program Supervisor for the Oasis Clubhouse, and Mary Ellen Varaceros, Regional Director for the Oasis Clubhouse, provided an overview on their program focused on the Transition-Aged Youth (TAY) population. The Oasis Clubhouse is part of Pathways Community Service (PCS) which is one of the largest healthcare providers in the United States. They were awarded a contract in 2006 funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). Services include daily groups on topics such as coping skills; job skills; peer support; cooking; recovery; expressive art; and Wellness Recovery Action Plans. Other Services include education assistance, Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) supported employment, housing, community resource linkages, and social, recreational, and wellness outings and activities. Oasis Clubhouse provides volunteer and community service opportunities through local organizations. Successes of the program include connections with the community support partners that provide additional resources for youth, serving nearly 400 TAY members, and supporting 28 members with employment in the past year. Challenges include re-engaging TAY to return to the Clubhouse and integrating within the community. Best practices include a harm reduction approach, centering the Clubhouse around TAY-specific interests such as self-care groups, vision boards, and social interaction, a Program Advisory Group that includes TAY feedback, and collaboration with community partners. The presenters concluded their presentation with some success stories.

Committee members engaged the East Wind Clubhouse and Oasis Clubhouse presenters in a question-and-answer session. Topics included the composition of the Oasis Clubhouse Program Advisory Group, community connections willing to hire Clubhouse members, and encouragement for the presenters to share their programs at their local behavioral health boards and supervisors.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #9      Public Comment**

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Elizabeth R. Stone commended the East Wind Clubhouse for their inclusivity and efforts to translate so all members may understand and participate in their meetings. She asked how Clubhouses are billing Medi-Cal if they have Peer Support Specialists. The Clubhouse presenters stated that they are having conversations about Medi-Cal billing for Peer Support Specialists, but it is not occurring at this time.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #10 Update on Occupational Therapist Provider Types**

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This item has been postponed to the subsequent quarterly meeting due to a time conflict.

**Action/Resolution**

Committee member, Deborah Pitts, will update the WEC on current efforts to establish Occupational Therapists as Licensed Mental Health Professionals in the Specialty Mental Health Services System and Licensed Practitioners of the Healing Arts in the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System.

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

Deborah Pitts, Ashneek Nanua – April 2024

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**Item #11 Wrap Up/Next Steps**

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WEC staff asked the committee if they would like to pursue the issue of peer-run community-based organizations (CBO) challenges with billing Medi-Cal due to not having county contracts and whether the committee would like to work on action items to address this issue. Executive Officer, Jenny Bayardo, added that one potential idea would be to identify and highlight communities where the counties and CBOs are working well together for Medi-Cal billing for Peer Support Services. Committee members expressed agreement to pursue action on this topic for peers in the adult and children’s system of care.

**Action/Resolution**

The WEC will identify ways to improve the connection between peer-run CBOs and county behavioral health departments to bill Medi-Cal for Peer Support Services at the subsequent committee meeting. WEC staff will work with WEC leadership to plan the agenda for the next meeting.

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

Ashneek Nanua – April 2024