

Workforce and Employment Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2023

Committee Members present: Vera Calloway – Chairperson, Christine Frey – Chair-Elect, John Black, Walter Shwe, Deborah Pitts, Arden Tucker, Jessica Grove, Dale Mueller, Sutep Laohavanich

WET Steering Committee Members Present: Olivia Loewy, Tara Gamboa-Eastman

Presenters: Elizabeth Knight, Jason Navarro, Melissa Barton, John Madriz

Staff present: Ashneek Nanua, Justin Boese, Jenny Bayardo

Others present: Deborah Starkey, Tony Vartan, Diane Shinstock, Theresa Comstock, Maria Aliferis-Gjerde

Planning Council Staff present: Ashneek Nanua, Justin Boese, Jane Adcock

Meeting Commenced at 1:30 p.m.

Item #1 Welcome New Council Leadership

The Planning Council's new Officer team attended the WEC January 2023 Quarterly Meeting to learn more about the work and goals of the committee. The committee answered the following three questions:

- 1) **How does the committee align with the Vision and Mission of the Council?**
- 2) **How does this committee align with the Council's mandates in Welfare and Institutions Code?**
- 3) **What does the committee hope to accomplish in the coming year?**

Committee responses:

- The Planning Council's mission is to serve the people of California. The workforce is integral to the mental, behavioral, and economic health for the state of California. The WEC has three strategic goals in the [2022-2023 Work Plan](#) to support the mission and vision of the Council.
- Strategic Goal 2.0 aims to ensure and sustain gainful employment for individuals with seen and unseen disabilities in California. There is no empowerment without employment. Individuals need jobs to lead productive lives.
- People that want jobs should be trained and be put into difficult-to-fill positions such as clinicians, peers, etc. with the use of recovery and wellness models.

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- The system and state are better when there is representation from individuals from diverse backgrounds and individuals with disabilities including behavioral health disabilities. WEC members expressed wanting to see care delivery system and state where these individuals are represented in the workforce and decision-making as it is a key to effective recovery.
- There are multiple prongs that the WEC is looking at which is vision for the state, recovery for the individual, and strength of the system that is effective and reflective of the individuals being served.
- The WEC has a detailed Work Plan. Strategic Goal 1.0 supports the behavioral health workforce in all areas, Strategic Goal 2.0 is to offer employment support to behavioral health consumers across the state and Strategic Goal 3.0 is centered on the broader issue of equity in the behavioral health workforce. There is a question on how to give the youth hope for the future and assist individuals coming out of incarceration into jobs. There is also a need to have alternative work arrangements for individuals who have creative talents.
- There is a hope to develop a white paper on Peer Support Specialists in the workforce.

Action/Resolution

N/A

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

Item #2 Employment Services Consumer/Provider Panel

Betsy Knight, Behavioral Health Program Coordinator from San Diego Behavioral Health Services Department (SDBHSD), and Jason Navarro, from Turn Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Employment Solutions presented to the committee on employment services in San Diego County. The presenters brought a consumer of Turn BHS Employment Solutions, Melissa Barton, to share her experience as a consumer of employment services and the impact it made on her life.

San Diego County utilizes the Individual Placements and Supports (IPS) model as well as the Clubhouse model (transitional employment and supported employment), employment-only services, and Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Cooperative Agreements. Betsy shared that challenges at SDBHSD include job availability for remote vs. in-person jobs based on consumer preference, lack of readiness to return for work in the midst of the pandemic, and staff turnover. Recommendations were to have data tracking systems to track relevant data points, develop specific goals and outcomes to align with fidelity, create networking opportunities, and have a diversity of support.

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Turn BHS Employment Solutions is an employment-only organization which means that there are not integrated treatment teams within the organization. Turn BHS assists approximately 180 individuals with behavioral health conditions per year secure apprenticeships and create consumer-owned businesses. The organization is evaluated based on the IPS fidelity scale and typically reach high fidelity in the evaluation process. Jason Navarro highlighted several apprenticeship programs and highlighted a few organizations. He mentioned the Kitchen for Good paid apprenticeship program for underserved populations such as justice-involved and immigrant populations interested in working in food and hospitality. Turn BHS also works with retail organizations such as Goodwill's paid training programs to help provide individuals with job training.. There are also career centers that assist with an assortment of jobs offered to clients such as office administration.

Jason then reviewed various programs to help consumers start their own businesses and offered to provide the committee with a page of links for various programs. He highlighted that many clients engage in gig work such as Lyft, Uber Eats, Fiver, and Up Work for subtracted enterprise opportunities. The Department of Rehabilitation also has start-up business financial assistance for clients with disabilities.

Melissa Barton shared her experience as a transgender person with anxiety and consumer of employment services. She expressed struggles with anxiety, family struggles, and employment during the pandemic. Melissa stated that her therapist introduced her to Turn BHS Employment Solutions and was assigned to an employment specialist and peer specialist who have supported her in job interviews, transportation, resume-building, and status of job searches. Melissa stated that this support broadened her job prospects and secured a manufacturing job in 2021 and was still able to connect with her employment specialist after securing employment and going through periods of unemployment. She recently secured a new job under the guidance of the Turn BHS team and expressed gratitude and the importance of not giving up as the individuals on this team are there to help people.

The presenters concluded their presentations and engaged with a question and answer session with committee regarding the employment services and models in San Diego County. Committee members expressed the desire to be open to any model that assists an individual to secure and maintain employment and discussed employment services in regards to equity considerations and various diverse communities.

Action/Resolution

N/A

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

Item #3 Discussion Re: SDCBHS Employment Services Model

The WEC had a discussion to evaluate each employment service model and raised questions on why the IPS employment model is favorable in comparison to other models. Betsy Knight, SDBHSD, stated that the IPS model was appealing to San Diego County due to it being an evidence-based best practice with a fidelity model which allows the county to measure progress and gives individuals the tools they need to do their jobs. Additionally, the philosophy of “a day worked is better than a day not worked” is a welcoming component of the model. She stated that San Diego County had an agency that developed a Social Enterprise through Mental Health Services Act funding 10 years ago which is still in operation and giving back to the community while meeting the needs of the community.

The WEC raised the limitations of the IPS model. IPS is evidence-based based on the highest amount of randomized clinical trials but other employment models also have an evidence-base. IPS does not have a facility component while Social Enterprise and Clubhouse requires a space, equipment, and materials so the costs are different between models. A criticism of IPS is that it helps individuals gain employment but not necessarily help with establishing a social network or community for clients. Additionally, there are individuals that the IPS model is not appropriate for. The committee raised the question of what happens to individuals who are not successful in the IPS model. Jason Navarro stated that most individuals that enter Turn BHS Employment Solutions have been deemed ready by their clinician to search for employment but individuals who are not reaching their goals or are deactivated from the program are referred to other agencies or continue their job search on their own. Committee members clarified that the intent of supportive employment was to eliminate the self-search process for employment and to help individuals who would like to work rather than being cleared by their clinician.

The WEC raised the issue that employment has been favored by counties and organizations as compared to productive roles such as non-work activities that may better meet the needs of individuals. Committee members expressed the importance of meeting clients where they are at in the employment and recovery journey, and to offer a different model if it is more aligned with a consumer’s life goals.

Action/Resolution

The WEC will continue to evaluate various employment models at subsequent committee meetings.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway, Christine Frey – June 2023

Item #4 Approve October 2022 Draft Meeting Minutes

The Workforce and Employment Committee (WEC) reviewed the October 2022 Draft Meeting Minutes. Walter Shwe motioned approval. Dale Mueller seconded the motion. There were no committee members that abstained.

Action/Resolution

The October 2022 WEC Meeting Minutes are approved.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

Item #5 Approve WEC 2022-2023 Charter (Action Item)

SMC staff reviewed the added and changed language to the WEC 2022-2023 Charter to reflect the current scope of the committee. John Black motioned approval of the updated WEC 2022-2023 Charter. Arden Tucker seconded the motion. The Charter was approved by the committee.

Action/Resolution

The WEC 2022-2023 Charter was approved with the proposed edits. The updated Charter will be posted to the Workforce and Employment Committee webpage.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua – April 2023

Item #6 2020-2025 WET Plan and HCAI Behavioral Health Update

John Madriz, Grants Management Section of the Health Care Workforce Development Division at the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), provided an update on HCAI behavioral health programs as well as status of the 2020-2025 Workforce Education and Training (WET) Plan. Upon conclusion of the update, the committee engaged John Madriz in a Q & A session. The committee raised concerns regarding the lack of Peer Support Specialist positions open at the county level. John Madriz described HCAI's various peer programs and requirements from the grantees including the training requirement which will assist individuals in the hiring process.

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Committee members requested written materials containing the names of various programs and where to find the information as well as a presentation at the subsequent committee meeting that provides detail on each of HCAI's behavioral health programs. John Madriz referred the WEC to the HCAI website for additional information about their programs and grants.

Action/Resolution

WEC staff will ask HCAI staff to provide an update on their behavioral health workforce programs for the next quarterly meeting. Staff will provide committee members with web links that HCAI provided regarding information about HCAI's programs and grants.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua – January 2023

Item #7 Discussion Re: Occupational Therapists as 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 appears to have support from DHCS to move forward with this request and will have to track the outcome of this effort in the next few months. WEC staff indicated that DHCS has not provided a written response to the committee's letter.

Committee members held a discussion regarding next steps for efforts to expand the services that OTs may provide and be paid for in the Medi-Cal system as they are qualified to do so. The WEC agreed to have staff contact DHCS regarding a response for the letter and have staff provide a status update during the April 2023 Quarterly Meeting. Committee members expressed interest to determine if the issue of Occupational Therapists should be added to the committee Work Plan based on the response provided from DHCS at the subsequent quarterly meeting.

Action/Resolution

WEC staff will request a status update in regards to the letter requesting Occupational Therapists to be considered LMHPs and LPHAs and provide an update during the subsequent quarterly meeting.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway, Christine Frey, Deborah Pitts – April 2023

Item #8 Peer Certification Update

WEC staff summarized the WEC’s process to present DHCS with the committee’s concerns regarding the implementation of Senate Bill 803, as well as the request to bring this issue to the full Planning Council body. Staff indicated that DHCS, California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), Cal Voices, and California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations (CAMHPRO) will present updates during the General Session of the January 2023 Quarterly Meeting regarding the Peer Support Specialist Certification Medi-Cal Benefit followed by a Q & A session with presenters. There will be an additional Q & A session on the second day of General Session for Council members to discuss issues around Senate Bill 803 implementation.

Action/Resolution

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

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway, Christine Frey – Ongoing

Item #9 Wrap Up/Next Steps

The WEC discussed next steps for the April 2023 Quarterly Meeting. Chairperson Vera Calloway stated that she will review the Work Plan and would gather input from the WEC to narrow the items on the plan. Vera also expressed interest for the committee to write a white paper on the transition for California to have state-certified Peer Support Specialists compared to other states. Additional action items are provided in the section below.

Action/Resolution

WEC staff will conduct the following steps for the April 2023 Quarterly Meeting:

- Invite HCAI representatives to provide a PowerPoint presentation on each of HCAI’s behavioral health programs.
- Invite the Regional Partnerships within the 2020-2025 WET Plan to present an update on the challenges and successes of implementing their programs per the Five-Year Plan.
- Follow-up with DHCS regarding the status of requesting Occupational Therapists to be included as LMHPs in the SMHS and LPHAs in the DMC-ODS.

Responsible for Action-Due Date

Ashneek Nanua, Vera Calloway, Christine Frey – April 2023

Item #10 Public Comment

Theresa Comstock, California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions (CalBHBC), stated that an 1115 Demonstration Project is another way of informing and changing Medi-Cal so that it can increase services. Supported employment is one of the areas that federal guidance mentioned. DHCS closed the initial comment period but may open another comment period that the Planning Council may consider commenting on.

Action/Resolution

N/A

Responsible for Action-Due Date

N/A

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.