

Disparities Elimination Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 18, 2024
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Committee Members Present:	
Nikki LeClaire	Sarah Schiele (co-chair)
Alejandro Aguilera	Gage Urvina
Jay Orne (co-chair)	Calvin Hillary Hylton
Oceane Lune	James Velek
Guests:	
Emily Reimer, DHS	Cody Raasch, Hennepin County
Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:	DHS (Part B) Representative:
Eriika Etshokin	Thomas Blissett
	Amy Miller
MDH (Prevention) Representative:	MDH (Surveillance) Representative:
None	Hannah Giles (MDH – Epi)
MCHACP Staff:	
Audra Gaikowski, Council Coordinator	Jeremy Stadelman, Admin Specialist (minutes)

Quorum Present? Yes

I. Welcome and introductions

- Sarah Schiele called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

II. Review, approval of minutes from December 21 meeting and proposed agenda

- The meeting minutes from the December 21 DEC meeting were reviewed and approved.
- The agenda for today's meeting was reviewed and approved.

III. Mental health report back

- Jay presented a PowerPoint presentation, titled **Sample directive idea** (sent to the committee by Audra on 1/18/24).
- The proposed sample directive idea has 3 parts:
 - Direct the recipient to revise section [8.3 of Psychosocial Support Services](#) (PSS), which already contains a peer component.
 - Directive could be that "PSS be revised to include an enhanced peer model that include client referral, group facilitation, behavioral health navigation services, accompaniment, etc".
 - For Bucket #3 service standard revision, feedback is gathered from consumers and from providers.
 - Directing or recommending a question to be included in the FY24 RFP process.
 - If it's in the standard, providers who apply for the PSS RFP *could* include an innovative model that meets the requirements of the PSS service standard and would implement the model at their agency.
 - The recipient would be able see through sub-recipient reports if the model contributes to higher rates of viral suppression and retention in care.
 - Ex/ How would you involve peers in delivery of your psychosocial support services?

- Depending on feedback from service standard revision, DEC could make a recommendation to PAC for additional allocations to PSS.
- Jay asked the committee for feedback on the proposed directive idea.
 - What is it that the committee wants out of a directive?
 - Jay responded that they would like to close the gap for those that are reporting not being able to access needed mental health services despite the feedback that there are services and resources available.
 - Oceane emphasized that the committee should think about what is actually accessible. Individuals may want to access resources, but if they have to miss work or if other barriers get in the way, including negative consequences for seeking mental health care, they are not likely to access the service.
 - Alejandro added that services are unknown to a lot of eligible people. People don't know that resources exist, this is a big barrier to care.
 - James noted that many people are not accessing services because they don't know about services, and some are fearful of coming into an office to access care.
 - Jay added that peer navigators are crucial in helping people understand what services they qualify for. It is helpful to have someone there to check into see if an individual has successfully connected to mental health care services.
 - The committee hopes that a directive will be flexible enough so that providers can implement what works for them.
 - What does the committee want to achieve with behavioral health that we are not achieving now, and how would they like the recipients to do that?
 - How is the directive related to disparities? What is the disparity reduction goal?
 - Part A strongly recommends that DEC thoroughly review the service standards (mental health, PSS, and substance use services)?
 - Nikki wondered what this will look like for the committee. Would it make sense to have a meeting dedicated to reviewing the service standards?
 - If the committee wants to prioritize this, it can be added to the workplan.
 - Alejandro wondered if the committee plans to reach out to PSS, harm reduction, and/or substance use-outpatient providers.
 - Independently from the committee, service standards are reviewed by providers during the service standards review process.
- Thomas asked that the committee narrow down what they want to do. What specifically does the committee want to do?
 - Jay replied that the focus is on the sample directive idea and not on a comprehensive directive to integrate mental health, PSS, and substance use-outpatient services.
- Jay asked if any committee members had an objection to following the proposed process for implementing the sample directive.
 - There were no objections.
 - Members requested that the proposed directive be written so that they can review it before the next meeting.
 - The peer accompaniment element must be implemented via PSS because of licensure requirements within the mental health standards.

IV. 2025 Needs Assessment questions around mental health

- Audra displayed ***Questions asked on NA2020.***

- Cody reviewed questions about mental health that were included on the 2020 Needs Assessment and on the Minnesota and TGA Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan 2022-2026 and asked committee members what additional questions should be included on the 2025 Needs Assessment.
 - For question 2.8a (“percent of people with HIV who report they were able to access needed mental health service”), Jay wondered if it’s possible to ask follow up questions about why people were not able to access needed mental health services.
 - Emily suggested that an open-ended qualitative question might be useful.
 - Alejandro noted that not all questions that are proposed make it into the survey due to length issues. Alejandro suggested that the data analysts review questions that were cut in 2020.
 - Emily suggested that questions about peer support might be useful to the committee; which demographics have the highest need for PSS?
 - Jay suggested additional questions:
 - Is mental health keeping people from working?
 - From maintaining secure housing?
 - Alejandro suggested adding the following question:
 - Do people know they can access mental health providers that are not Ryan White specific providers through insurance provided by Program HH?
 - Nikki suggested adding the following question:
 - What would make accessing mental health services easier? This could be an open-ended question.
 - Jay suggested adding a question about the perception of the availability of providers and telehealth services.
 - It was noted that there are data divides and internet access issues in Greater MN.

V. Native American data discussion

- Jay Orne took over facilitation.
- Cody reminded members that the conversation was about how Native American data is presented. Native American populations are smaller and there are issues relating to small groups because these samples may not be representative and may be identifiable.
 - Hennepin County has tried to address this by including the categories Native American-alone or Native American-with combo data.
 - Nikki wondered if there are Tribal nations collecting their own data. Can there be better collaboration around data collection?
 - Hannah added that MDH follows CDC guidelines around data collection (Native American-alone and multi-racial).
 - Thomas announced that DHS is working with the Fon Du Lac Reservation to do an opt-out testing program, which will help with data collection. Fon Du Lac owns the data, so DHS has to be careful about this information and what gets to MDH. Aggregate data on testing will be available. DHS hopes to expand this program to all Sovereign Nations in Minnesota in 5-10 years.
 - DHS offers trainings on how to work with Tribal nations. DHS will look into whether council members and/or providers can take part in these trainings.

VI. Housing directive discussion

- Eriika provided an update on the housing directive.

- To date, the provider has served 9 individuals with this funding through rental assistance and short-term housing facilitation.
- Part A has guaranteed funding through FY2024 so that they can continue to build partnerships in the community.

VII. Co-chair succession planning

- Audra displayed the ***Committee Co-chair Position Description***.
- Sarah and Jay have reached their term limits, so new co-chairs should be elected.
- The election will be held at the March meeting.

VIII. New business / Unfinished Business

- None.

IX. Set agenda for next meeting

- Mental health care directive review/approval
- Approve NA2025 gender identity questions
- Review PSS service standards

X. Announcements

- The Aliveness Project is going to be analyzing how providing unlimited bus passes for those experiencing homelessness affects viral suppression, etc.

XI. Adjourn

- Sarah Schiele adjourned the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

Meeting Summary

- The committee reviewed and discussed next steps of a sample directive idea around improving access to Psychosocial Support Services.
- The committee reviewed 2025 Needs Assessment questions around mental health and made suggestions for additional questions to ask.
- The committee discussed how Native American data is presented.
- The committee received an update on the housing directive.

Documents shared before the meeting:

- 2024.01.18 DEC Agenda
- 2023.12.21 DEC Minutes
- Disparities Elimination Committee Co-Chair Position Description
- NA2020- mental health questions
- DEC directive research

Documents shared during the meeting:

- Sample directive idea PowerPoint

JS/ag