

# Summary

## Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Ongoing Planning Council

January 27, 2022

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Department

Teleconference via Zoom

### Present:

Fernando Granados, Sharon Jones, Monica Adrian, John Aguirre, Misty Rose Bautista, Danielle Beliveau, Vong Chang, Jamie Dorsey, Glenn Galman, Daniel Garibay, Melyssa Hintz, Patti Kishi, Cindy Mattox, Rebecca McMullen, Jennifer McQueen, Ismael Muñoz, Jenna Nunes, Maria Ocegueda, Jesse Ornelas, Maria Orozco, Rocio Ortega, Nancy Ortiz, Nancy Reding, Stefani Rosas Soto, Jeff Sabeau, Sandra Sandoval, Cari Urquiza, Pangcha Vang, Griselda Vasquez, Kayla Zoliniak

### Presentation and Discussion:

*All Members*

#### I. Call to Order / Roll Call

#### II. Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes for October 21, 2021 was motioned/seconded (Nancy Reding /Misty Rose Bautista) and carried.

#### III. Update Planning Council Contact List

Fernando Granados, Chair, encouraged all attendees to confirm their attendance via chat or by emailing Maria Orozco.

#### IV. Notice to the Public

Pangcha Vang, with the party of socialism and liberation, requested that this recording be posted online on the Merced County website for transparency. She also asked that the time of this board meeting be moved from 9:00 AM on Thursday to 6:00 PM instead so that the public can come and meet, especially people who don't have childcare, transportation, or who are working at this time. She is also wanting to include community input for the MHSA Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Update and Innovation Plan: Pangcha is requesting for an FSP (Full-Service Partnership) for the immigrant refugees and undocumented, including their children population this program would provide linguistic and cultural services and it would also help the people to adjust to American life, to navigate and get resources, and help apply for citizenship and medical help, to help with housing, school and access to work and healthcare, as well as provide transportation. This program would also have a Flex Fund to help these families with economic costs, with the SCC goal of reducing disparage in service access. She is also asking for a full-service partnership for the LGBTQ population. This program would be able to provide case management services to help this population with name and gender change services, to help access with hormones, surgery letters, transportation, housing, school, and health. It is very important that these populations have a full-service partnership because these are populations that are falling through the cracks. Pangcha is asking for a prevention for drugs and alcohol, for the youth in unincorporated areas like Delhi, Livingston, Winton, Atwater, and Santa Nella – these cities need a youth prevention center. She is also asking MHSA to require every BHRS program to have a family and client advocate, or youth advocate as well. She said they should be required to have it and once a month there should be a steering committee and the client and youth advocate go to these steering committees to advocate on what changes they want on a program. Another thing she is requesting for is to remove the law enforcement from the Livingston School Program. She is asking to remove the probation officers off the campus of the mental health programs such as the CSOC and AOD – she is also asking them to be removed as it seems it is a school to prison pipeline and the mental health programs seem like a mental health to prison pipeline. Pangcha is asking for the Marie Green 5150 hold to stop giving people prison food as they deserve a lot better, and she is asking for them to have a policy that they have to use people's pronouns and people's real names – the transgender deserve to be called by their real names and pronouns. She is asking for MHSA to somehow have accountability with the Board of Supervisors as they are spending very little of their money on mental health, and the BOS should match how much MHSA is spending on mental health.

Vong Chang, Turning Point, announced that they are hosting the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Virtual Mental Health and Aging Conference. This conference is free and available to anybody. The link was sent out to the MHSA team – Melyssa might be able to send it to everybody. The topic this year is Aging and the LGBTQ Community: Unique Later Life Challenges. It is from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, February 10, 2022. They are also offering CEUs for those who may need it. Vong invited everyone to join at no cost.

John Aguirre, the Executive Director of the Central California LGBTQIA+/2S Collaborative, briefly introduced himself and informed that they are contracted with BHRS and they are doing a partnership with the Merced Pride Center, and some other queer groups in the area to develop the Queer-Peer Network. This will consist of setting up various support groups throughout the county and for LGBTQ populations. They will also be doing a series of trainings for BHRS and other groups on Cultural Competency with LGBTQ clients.

Jennifer McQueen, the new Executive Director of the Merced Pride Center, located inside the Mac on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, room 5. They invite anyone and everyone to visit. She expressed how happy she is to be here and be joining with John and the Collaborative, as well as the Alliance, GLSN, and other partners in Merced to really advocate and do some great work for the LGBTQIA+ Community.

John Aguirre added that all this is possible with MHSA funding through BHRS.

Stefani Rosas, Golden Valley Health Centers, announced that they are currently working on vaccine boosters if anyone in the community is interested. This Saturday they will be at UC Merced from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM and on Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup> they will be at Merced College from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Fernando Granados asked if there was a flyer available with the information to send to the group. Stefani does not have a flyer but she will email the information. Fernando requested that it be emailed to Maria Orozco to ensure they all receive a copy.

## **V. Chair's Report**

Fernando Granados did not have a report per se. He asked the group to continue being champions and reducing the stigma of mental health. They did have tragedy that occurred in the small community of Le Grand and one of the things that is constantly being brought up is the individual's mental health. Fernando feels that mental health is being portrayed in a very negative and stigmatizing way – we don't know the circumstances of that, but it is another example of when something happens out in the community automatically it goes into mental health. We don't know if this individual suffered from mental health issues or not, but again it is something that as people are having conversations, mental health is coming to the forefront in a very negative way. He encouraged everyone to continue educating individuals on mental health and the reduction of stigma.

## **VI. BHRS Report**

Sharon Jones, MHSA Coordinator, reported that some of the things happening at Behavioral Health & Recovery Services that first of all is the CalAIMs and the reorg of the infrastructure. There are many information notices that are coming out – those can be accessed on the Department of Health Care Services website. A lot of the core areas they are addressing is documentation, the way that specialty mental health programs are going to document the services they provide. They are looking at medical necessity and how it's currently looked at; there may be a change in the medical necessity framework as well. Also, they are looking at having a northside clinic in the north area of Merced County like Winton, Livingston, Delhi, and Hilmar – those areas would access this clinic. Sharon will have more information on these topics. For the CalAIM topic, Jennifer Mockus, with Central California Alliance, is scheduled to present at future meetings. Sharon will find out more information about where they are in the process for the northside clinic. Also, there will be an electronic health record change. They are switching electronic health records and a lot of work is on the back end to get it up and running and changed to Credible.

## **VII. COVID-19 Update**

In terms of COVID-19, everyone here at Behavioral Health & Recovery Services is required to wear a mask indoors. Also, they have testing twice a week for individuals who have not received their vaccines, and of course they're practicing safety using hand sanitizer, and wearing masks – if you are not feeling well, let your supervisor know so you can stay at home and be safe instead of feeling like you have to come in.

## **VIII. Update on Community Program Planning Process**

Sharon Jones thanked Pangcha for her feedback and all of her input because we are still in the middle of the Mental Health Services Act community planning process and during that time we ask for your feedback. Pangcha demonstrated a beautiful way to give feedback and to provide suggestions. It is welcome from everyone because we are in the community planning process. Also, if anyone would like to host a focus group, there are some more upcoming focus groups. Sharon said to please reach out to Maria Orozco so that feedback is collected because it is about the voice of the community – MHSA says "there is nothing about us without us." As a part of this stakeholder committee, we have to hear the voices so that transformation can occur. She noted that all the time we might not get everything that we want and all the changes, but how will we even move forward if we don't know what the suggestions are. Once again, if interested in setting up a focus group, reach out to the MHSA team. If there is feedback you want to provide away from a focus group, it can be sent in an email, feedback /comment cards, and through this monthly meeting. Sharon informed that they are on track – they have to get the Annual Update to the state before June 30<sup>th</sup>. A part of that are focus groups, key informant interviews, ay feedback, and any changes that are going to occur. Of course, also the public hearing. Once the draft is ready, then it has to be posted

for 30 days. After the 30-day posting, there is a public hearing where they take a look at it, and from there it goes to the Board of Supervisors.

Nancy Reding, LGBTQ+ & GLSN, commented that when she started this council, there was absolutely zero amount of grant going to the LGBTQ+ community. After Sharon's assistance and a lot of persuasion, they got their first grant – it continues to increase. Nancy said to keep in mind that focus groups do work. She thanked Sharon for being an ally and for her support.

Sharon Jones thanked Nancy Reding for all of her participation on this committee. Of course, they can still receive her feedback even if she doesn't attend the committee, but she is no longer going to be the co-chair. Sharon extended her gratitude to Nancy for all of feedback, for being courageous and speaking out, as well as for advocating. She noted that there is nothing more powerful than advocacy, especially for individuals that are unserved, feel that they don't have a voice, or feel like the systems don't support them. Sharon thanked Nancy once again because she has demonstrated a beautiful job and she will continue because that's the Nancy that Sharon knows. Sharon asked for everyone to thank her for all the hard work for this committee.

Fernando Granados asked if focus groups are being conducted in person or virtually? Sharon explained that it depends on the individual. She shared that before she went on vacation she facilitated a few in person, keeping the mask on and social distancing. Sharon would say either way would work within safety guidelines. Fernando mentioned that he was not sure if they were back to doing in person events or not.

Nancy said she would like to keep the March 2<sup>nd</sup> LGBTQ focus group on Zoom; she thinks they could reach a wider community of people. Sharon agreed and said that Zoom helps people to adapt. John Aguirre asked if Sharon could share that information on that focus group with him and the Merced Pride Center so that they could promote it. Nancy explained that MHSa will be working on the flyer. Nancy requested that Maria send John and Jennifer any information about that. She noted that she communicates closely with them but would like to make sure that they are on any type of lists.

#### **IX. Presentation: RDA Capacity Needs Assessment Report**

Sharon Jones briefly introduced Resource Development Associates. She explained that they would be presenting on the Capacity Needs Assessment – this came out of the Mental Health Services Act audit in 2019 and was part of their plan of correction to identify what the needs were. Sharon is grateful that they have met the requirements for the plan of correction.

Jamie Dorsey presented a PowerPoint presentation to the council regarding the BHRS Capacity Needs. The presentation included information such as the capacity assessment background and activities, BHRS consumers and demographic information, service awareness, service access and delivery, cultural competence and responsiveness, as well as service provider staffing and capacity.

Pangcha Vang asked if there was any data on the undocumented population, the formerly incarcerated population, or the LGBTQ+ population. Jamie explained that unfortunately they don't have data around the undocumented population – that is not something that was disclosed or people's prior incarceration history. They do have some information just on the number of folks who participated in forensic programs like Behavioral Health Court or justice involved programs. Jamie added that unfortunately, the LGBTQ+ population was another area where they didn't have a ton of information on Anasazi; it was mostly underreported. Most people declined to answer or it just wasn't consistently captured across the population. They do have some information from the survey. At least 10 percent of those who participated in the survey reported that they were LGBTQ+, but unfortunately the information was pretty scarce on the population itself. Pangcha requested if in the future they could get information on the formerly incarcerated population, not in the court behavioral program, but in quality mental health program. Jamie took note of that.

John Aguirre asked a question in regards to SOGI (Sexual Orientation Gender Identity Expression) data. He knows the county struggles in collecting the SOGI providers – is there a plan or recommendation in this report to work on that to make it easier to collect, as well as to train staff and service providers on how to collect that data in a sensitive manner so that people will be comfortable answering that question about sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. The federal government, their medical, is a binary system where they only give the option of male or female. There is very little room to add for LGBT, but in California we are a non-binary state – we have male, female, and a non-binary option. John asked, how are we working on that locally to make sure to cross those systems to work together and collect their data locally. He also asked, with the due certification of peer to peer workers that is coming in 2022, how is the county integrating that? what model is the county going to follow and will they have trainings?

Sharon Jones explained that in terms of the peer-to-peer certification, no determination has been made on that yet, but we will definitely be selecting one of those options. Within our system, we've had peer-support for quite a long time, since the 14 years Sharon has been here. She noted that we definitely will be building capacity. Sharon thinks that what has started already is training to document in the electronic health record for peers. In terms of the data, a lot of the work as they move forward, will be on the Cultural Humility, Health

Equity and Social Justice Committee Agenda to see how we can inform those decisions and move toward a change and better improvements.

## **X. Discussion on Community Needs**

Nancy Reding commented that this has always been an issue ever since she has been involved, as far as collecting data. She thinks there needs to be some type of group to address this – how we can or how you all can gather accurate data. When Nancy first came on about 5 years ago, there was zero data of LGBTQ people in the system. Nancy said we also have to address the stigma that many cultures deal with. She is not sure how to do that but she would suggest to work with John and Jennifer, and possibly with GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) on a school level to successfully raise the accurate information data. Nancy thinks Merced would benefit from the accurate data.

Sharon Jones asked Nancy if it was possible to have GLSEN present at the Cultural Competence meeting, or even this meeting.

Nancy said it might be but she is really not working there and noted that they are all educators. Sharon suggested that maybe John Aguirre can present at the Cultural Competence meeting to start moving towards the conversation on data, stigma and sensitivity. Sharon asked John if he could possibly do a workshop for the committee. John agreed and suggested maybe doing one on the importance of SOGI data. Nancy also suggested that maybe they can collect data at their events. She really thinks there needs to be some collaborative work between Sharon and the other group. Without collecting the data, going into Behavioral Health & Recovery Services it might be safer. Sharon stated that moving forward this will be a standing agenda item on our Cultural Humility Committee agenda.

John Aguirre shared that he reviewed a few Cultural Competency plans throughout the state, and when he reviewed Merced County's plan, there was quite a bit of SOGI data compared to other counties. John expressed that he was really impressed by that because some counties don't even mention LGBTQ relations at all as if they don't exist. John thanked Sharon for being able to provide the numerical data.

Nancy Reding added that she is not connected in any way except for just working different events with John and Jennifer. She stated that they are the best to connect with to do outreach and data gathering. Sharon will be emailing John.

Fernando Granados noted that he really liked John's suggestion that training be provided to providers to get some of this information – they have to be able to feel comfortable in asking questions and making the client feel comfortable to disclose.

John mentioned that it's not every day that you ask people about their sexual orientation. It's not a comfortable subject for people or for providers; there is stigma with that on their end that is picked up by clients which will make them not want to respond.

Nancy shared that she started in mental health in the 80's, and she knows it has changed somewhat in Merced. She thinks the response it's very important when somebody does identify with the LGBTQ community, and the training among the staff at BHRS. She said there are multiple ways that they have to work together.

Fernando said that is one of the things he likes about that report, that it says it is important that BHRS works with community -based organizations because we are all really providing services to the same population and we want to be able to provide good services to them. He added that we are constantly having fear with our staffing that if they go to BHRS and from there to a different system, it is very difficult. Fernando mentioned the superintendent's report in which he is saying he wants 10,000 mental health workers into the school systems throughout California. When we are looking at 10,000 mental health workers, then we are thinking that they are going to take our workers away; it is a big number and Fernando doesn't think we have that many individuals or clinicians in the state to be recruited in a different area. He thinks the collaboration with other organizations is very important. Nancy agreed with Fernando.

## **XI. Administrative Updates and Changes**

No updates or changes.

## **XII. Announcements**

Sharon Jones thanked Jamie for her presentation, for sharing it in a really transparent manner and speaking to it – she said they did a very good job with the report. They have also given something to further build out and build upon with the Cultural Humility Committee and the Ongoing Planning Council.

Fernando noted that a copy of the Power Point presentation and full report were provided in an email from Maria.

John Aguirre shared that they have partnered with Merced Probation to provide a monthly support group starting next month for LGBT Adults coming out of probation, as well as other community members. They will be meeting monthly – a flyer will be shared later. Sharon asked John to go through Maria Orozco, point person for this meeting.

**XIII. Possibilities and Success Stories**

Fernando noted that Pangcha has requested a time change for this meeting twice. He asked if Sharon would like to add it as a future agenda item for further discussion. Sharon agreed and said that sometimes it is a continuum of her being able to attend the meeting, which is why it was moved previously. She knows that Pangcha suggested evenings; they do accommodate in the evenings to get the big voice of the community. This will be added to the future agenda. Fernando added that for the future agenda we will also need to do the co-chair as Nancy Reding is resigning with this being her last meeting. This will be added to the agenda as well.

**XIV. Next Steps**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 24, 2022.

**XV. Adjourned**

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 am