

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

**250 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02108**

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

VIA WebEx

12:30 PM

GENERAL SESSION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

(Open Session)

Board Members

Present:

Brittany Brown, Chair | Commissioner's Designee
Joanne Calista, Vice Chair | Community Health Worker Training
Organization Representative
Morgan Parker | Community-Based Community Health Worker Employer
Shanina Rosado | Massachusetts Public Health Association Representative
Hugo Santos | Community Health Worker
Geovanni Vazquez | Community Health Worker

Board Members

Not Present:

Anissa Ray | Community Health Worker
Nikki Simpson | MS, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
Representative

Board Staff Present:

Lauren Nelson | Deputy Director, BHPL
Steven Joubert | Executive Director, Multi-Boards, BHPL
Tracy Tam | Assistant Executive Director, Multi-Boards, BHPL
Kayla Mikalauski | Management Analyst, Multi-Boards, BHPL
Mireilly Montanez | Office Support Specialist, Multi-Boards, BHPL
Heather Engman | Chief Board Counsel, Office of the General Counsel,
DPH
Gillian Coffey | Health Communications Manager, BHPL, DPH
Jonathan Dillon | Director of Policy, BHPL, DPH
Sophia Emidy | Regulatory Affairs Intern, BHPL, DPH
Shana Kaplan | URAMP Intern, BHPL, DPH
Mark Waksmonski | SARP Coordinator, BHPL, DPH

Public Member Kaille Carthy | OCHW
Present: Alyson Frigdon
 Wendy Gothan
 Stephen McLeod | Cape Cod Community College

I. Call to Order | Determination of Quorum

At 1:08 p.m. Ms. Brittany Brown, Board Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the meeting to order. Ms. Brown reminded Board members the meeting was being recorded and asked for a roll call vote to determine quorum.

Roll call as follows: Brittany Brown: present; Joanne Calista: present; Morgan Eldredge: present; Shanina Rosado: present; Hugo Santos: present; Geovanni Vazquez: present.
Absent: Anissa Ray; Nikki Simpson.

II. Approval of General Session Agenda | Conflict of Interest

The Board reviewed the September 10, 2024, General Session Agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Steven Joubert notified the board that Item A of the agenda is a duplicate and was approved last month, therefore, the agenda is as amended.

Ms. Brown clarified that it was Item IV: A for the continuing education application.

ACTION:

Ms. Brittany Brown made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, which was seconded by Ms. Morgan Parker, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Brittany Brown: approved; Joanne Calista: approved; Morgan Parker: approved; Shanina Rosado: approved; Hugo Santos: approved; Geovanni Vazquez: approved.
Absent: Anissa Ray; Nikki Simpson.

Document: September 10, 2024, General Session Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the August 06, 2024, General Session Minutes.

DISCUSSION:

None

ACTION:

Ms. Joanne Caliste made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Shanina Rosado, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Brittany Brown: approved; Joanne Calista: approved; Morgan Parker: approved; Shanina Rosado: approved; Hugo Santos: approved; Geovanni Vazquez: approved.
Absent: Anissa Ray; Nikki Simpson.

Document: August 06, 2024, General Session Minutes

IV. Unified Recovery and Monitoring Program

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Jonathan Dillon, Director of Policy, provided a presentation on the Unified Recovery and Monitoring Program (URAMP) as follows:

In Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022 - An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health, comprehensive legislation continuing the process of reforming the way mental health care is delivered in Massachusetts, ensuring that people get the mental health care they need when and where they need it. Within the legislation URAMP is established as a voluntary program for monitoring the rehabilitation of licensed health care professionals who seek support for their mental health or substance use or who are referred to the program by a licensing board. The legislation establishes three key components to the service: the Advisory Committee, Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee (REC), and the URAMP Operational Team.

The primary goal is to promote patient safety while respecting a licensee's condition. This is a monitoring program with a focus on public protection, it will remain confidential (unlike disciplinary proceedings), and allows disciplinary proceedings to be dismissed without prejudice when the incident(s) are found to be a direct result of the licensee's Substance Use Disorder (SUD) or Mental Health Disorder (MHD), and the licensee successfully is admitted to URAMP. Upon admission of a licensed health care professional into the program, the licensing board may dismiss any pending investigation or complaint against the participant that arises from or relates to the participant's mental health or substance use. The licensing board may change the participant's publicly available license status to reflect the existence of non-disciplinary restrictions or conditions.

In Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022, a board of registration that is required to establish a similar rehabilitation program by another requirement of this chapter shall fulfill that requirement by formally adopting the program in lieu of establishing its own. The Bureau has two existing alternatives to discipline programs: the Pharmacy Substance Use Disorder (PSUD) Program and the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program (SARP). They are both successful programs designed specifically for their professions. URAMP unites the current SARP and PSUD programs but also expands the scope to be available to licensees under all 21 boards, to increase the scope of admissions, and to ensure the confidential monitoring program will help licensees practice safely. Over time, because of these factors, the alternative to discipline caseloads is forecasted to at least double.

The URAMP Advisory Committee will assist the department in the development and implementation of the program. The Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee (REC) consists of members with a knowledge base in mental health and substance use disorder. The REC will review admissions and make recommendations for individualized plans; review and approved gradual return of practice, return of privileges and successful graduation for successful progression in program; review and approved plans for participants that have non-successful compliance; and review and approved non-successful discharge and license surrender for repeated non-successful progression. URAMP staff will manage in-program administrative matters pursuant to Bureau policies and the URAMP staff action policy. REC and URAMP staff lead the program for BHPL, allowing licensing Boards to focus on their core mission. Any changes to a restriction or condition shall be subject to the approval of the participant's licensing board to review and approved de-identified reports upon successful program completion. URAMP is expected to launch by the end of the year.

Mr. Mark Waksmonski, SARP Coordinator, explained that URAMP staff are authorized to modify/ease a participant's program requirements for return to practice and compliance monitoring. Mr. Waksmonski presented a chart detailing the return to practice conditions.

Ms. Calista asked what happens in the event of a positive CORI finding, and if it would be an appropriate referral to the program? Mr. Mark Waksmonski replied that a positive CORI can be matched to a particular program policy, however if it is determined that the applicant does not meet the criteria, they will need to go in front of the board for review. Mr. Jonathan Dillon clarified that a positive CORI with regards to substance about disorder or mental health disorder would not disqualify an applicant from the program, but in certain cases a referral would be up to the discretion of the board.

Ms. Calista asked if someone already holds certification and came up with a positive CORI during the renewal process, who will oversee the review process? Mr. Mark Waksmonski replied that the CORI result would be reviewed per the current policy, or if the board would like to hear the case based on the findings of a complaint process, then the case would be referred to the board for review. Guidance of the board would be critical to determine acceptance into the program.

Mr. Jonathan Dillon added that all entries have a six-month suspension, and the program is not designed for everyone with reasonable accommodations followed by a gradual return to practice. The program is designed for those who's health condition is a concern, and if they were not entered into the program it would lead to a suspension. The matter is serious however it is clearly the result of a health condition and therefore needs monitoring.

Document: URAMP Presentation

V. Continuing Education applications

B. Brookline Center for Community Mental Health-Based Telebehavioral Health
4 CEUs

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Brown noted application was complete, and asked if there were any questions from the board. There were none.

ACTION

MS. Joanne Calista made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Morgan Parker, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Brittany Brown: approved; Joanne Calista: approved; Morgan Parker: approved; Shanina Rosado: approved; Hugo Santos: approved; Geovanni Vazquez: approved.
Absent: Anissa Ray; Nikki Simpson.

VI. CHW Education & Training Program Applications

A. Cape Cod Community College

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Brown noted application was complete, and asked if there were any questions from the board members.

Ms. Calista had a question with regards to who would be teaching the program. There were many resumes included in the application and a great coalition that supported the program, but it was not clear if there would be CHW trainers. Most applications have had specific individuals that were identified, was there any elaboration on that?

Mr. Joubert noted that he believes there are CHW instructors on the application, but we can follow up with them to ensure that CHW presence is there. He made a comparison to the University of Massachusetts program, which is ninety hours and forty-five of those will be towards peer counseling. The Cape Cod Community College program is being offered free to the community.

Mr. Calista found their application very impressive, especially the free of charge for the program. Mr. Calista pointed out that Mr. McCloud raised his hand to answer the question with regards to CHW trainers, because minimum participation is at least 40 percent.

Mr. Joubert asked Ms. Brown if it would be okay to invite Mr. McLeod to the meeting so that he may answer the question, to which Ms. Brown agreed to have him on the call.

Mr. McCloud thanked the board and stated that he has been with Cape Cod Community College since the start of the program development and assessing the community needs. The instructor is Jess Wilson who is a CHW and certified instructor at Cape Cod Community College.

Ms. Brown noted that this program is located in Cape Cod which is an area that doesn't have much access to CHW core competency training, this program would open up a lot of opportunities.

Ms. Parker said that she's been in a several meeting where they have been promoting this program and are really excited about it. There has been a push in the outer Cape and lower Cape for this program and training, and she's excited to see this program go through.

ACTION

MS. Brittany Brown made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Morgan Parker, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Brittany Brown: approved; Joanne Calista: approved; Morgan Parker: approved; Shanina Rosado: approved; Hugo Santos: approved; Geovanni Vazquez: approved.
Absent: Anissa Ray; Nikki Simpson.

B. University of Massachusetts Boston

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Brown noted application was complete, and asked if there were any questions, or comments from the board. There were none.

ACTION

MS. Joanne Calista made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Morgan Parker, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Brittany Brown: approved; Joanne Calista: approved; Morgan Parker: approved; Shanina Rosado: approved; Hugo Santos: approved; Geovanni Vazquez: approved.
Absent: Anissa Ray; Nikki Simpson.

VII. Discussion on CHW Reciprocity

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Joubert pointed out that Ms. Calista had requested this topic be brought to the board to discuss further. In anticipation of what is currently happening nationwide with regards to CHW reciprocity, and if we would have language added to our current regulations.

Ms. Calista stated that this issue that has been looked at nationally and within New England, the current language in the regulations does not support or negate it. This is a pressing issue in her opinion, and those she has spoken to within the federal government say the covid CHW fiscal cliff and COVID funding coming to an end has seen many CHWs lose their jobs or being reassigned. Since we are relatively a small region in New England, the consideration of reciprocity would allow us to look at different standards and maybe allow a CHW that lives in Rhode Island have a job in Massachusetts or have a position in New Hampshire and it would allow potential movement. It is still being discussed nationally, there is a model that does exist between Kanas and Missouri as they are contiguous states and share metro areas, they have developed a standard of reciprocity

informally around curriculum. Connecticut accepts Massachusetts curriculum for the core competencies, but the type of things that states have considered are: 1) what are the essential specifications for certification; 2) what are the core competencies; 3) are they similar across states; 4) the total number of hours of training and hours of practice; along with a few other things. Ms. Calista wanted to raise the issue, as it could potentially help to support the work force across the region, especially with states that are side by side as part of the CHW New England coalition discussion.

Ms. Parker stated she is totally in agreement with this, and we should work on this policy in reciprocity as our organization works across all states and on the Atlantic coast and looking to expand to other states with CHW. She would love to have the ability to accept CHW from other states for our continuing work in New England and mid-Atlantic states.

Ms. Calista brought up that very early in the CHW board of certification there was lots of research to do in terms of outreach to CHW to get their thought on different aspect and research around the country. The one thing they did have was a working group that lasted for about a year, it was not necessarily board members but having a subset of folks that helped with the research and come up with recommendations was very helpful, and she wanted to mention that as a proposed model.

Ms. Brown chimed in and agreed to explore this further, as she thinks it's a great opportunity to acknowledge other people's experience in other states and bring that to Massachusetts so that folks have better access to certification.

Ms. Rosado is also in agreement with this, she pointed out that when it comes to other professions this kind of thing is already happening. To standardize the workforce for CHWs as they work very hard and, everyone looks and acknowledges CHWs as the professionals that they are, and this is a good step in the right direction.

Mr. Joubert notified the board that this will be brought up to senior leadership and will talk to our legal department as well. We will draft a proposal and regulation as it is a very lengthy process, we will also have some input from the public as well, and once that's all gathered, we can take it to the Commissioner's Office to decide whether we can move to the next steps. He will relay or comments and interest to move forward with this initiative.

VIII. Triage: N/A

IX. Flex Session

Ms. Joubert asked for the attendance at the next board meeting scheduled on November 12, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. All Board members present stated they would be able to attend.

Mr. Joubert wanted to bring another topic to the boards attention and pointed out a document in the board packet labeled "quick wins and long-term care". A few months ago, the Bureau partnered with Accenture which is a consulting company worldwide to help us identify some areas of improvements with our application process. Specifically,

how the application is laid out on the website, the application itself to identify redundancies and barriers to licensure. The landing page has been redesigned so that in terms of certification everything can be found on one page, and all the links will be added along with the criteria needed to get certified. The department has partnered with Accenture to make those changes in our system in order to help the applicants. The quick wins implementation plan to be completed in six months and is to include the three professional references, as well as the work experience field on our website. This is an effort to reduce processing time and reduce waste, by letting applicant know what they need before they start the application, and providing links to NPBD, and for CHWs on Mass.gov site with board approved training centers. The department is currently working on these changes internally and have submitted them to the Commissioner's office for review. The changes include making the work experience form a required field online to eliminate the upload forms and approval steps. We are trying to be as efficient as possible and do away with paper, so we partnered with JDS to input user experience information. For training and experience pathways, don't require professional references as they have taken the core competency training which references attest to. Also, staff action policy to be created to reduce the number GMC cases going in front of the board, this is something that is being implemented across the entire Bureau and we are in the process of adopting the same. The actions identified are, reducing the number of pages in the application, draft a design on how to apply, have a list of questions that CHWs frequently have that have been enhanced further, GMC common questions, and the staff action policy which will be brought to the board for approval. The current timeline for this to be implemented from start to finish is about two years, we have made significant progress to improve efficiency and remove barriers.

X. Adjournment

There being no other business before the Board, Ms. Brittany Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ms. Joanne Calista, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Brittany Brown: approved; Joanne Calista: approved; Morgan Parker: approved; Shanina Rosado: approved; Hugo Santos: approved; Geovanni Vazquez: approved.
Absent: Anissa Ray; Nikki Simpson.

Let the records show the meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Certification of Community Health Workers is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. via WebEx.

Respectfully submitted by:
The Board of Certification of Community Health Workers