Statewide Advisory Council
September 10, 2020
6:15 - 8:15 pm

Attendees:

Acting Commissioner Tricia Ford
SAC Chair Michelle Motta Dardeno

Evan Brunnell
Zinma Camelia
Brock Cordeiro
Stephanie Hakulin
Betsy Ireland
Leah McGaughey
Ellen Perkins
Linda Sakin
Lori Seidman​
Kerry Thompson

Community Members:
Officer Brennan Bulger, Bristol County Sheriff's Office Canine Officer

Communication Procedures:

\* Closed captioning is available, or attendees can access CART through the stream text link.

\* Non-video participants can be hidden.

\* Interpreters can be pinned from the right hand corner of the photo box.

Minutes: June 11, 2020:

\* Minutes Approved.

Chairperson's Report:

\* MCDHH 35th Anniversary will be July 2021.

\* Virtual State House Day for 2020 recognition of award winners will be developed.

\* A survey will be distributed to SAC members to collect topics for future meetings, collect particular interests and passions of members.

\* October 15th meeting will include information presentations from the MCDHH Executive Team: Tricia Ford, Sehin Mekuria and Karin Eddy; also the Communications Liaison, Aurora Wilber. MCDHH projects and organizational chart will be shared.

Commissioner's Report:

\* Tricia Ford is Acting Commissioner per Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EHS) Secretary MaryLou Sudders.

\* As of March 16th, MCDHH staff have been working remotely.

\* MCDHH is working closely with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to address challenges of providing remote learning. MCDHH Children's Specialists are working closely with families to access remote learning, technology strategies and resources.

\* Racial injustice and inequality is a priority for all EHS agencies. Each staff member has taken training; MCDHH is planning on working with a Deaf presenter for EHS to have a training on diversity from a Deaf perspective. MCDHH continues to develop their Diversity Plan and has begun offering financial support to mentors and mentees involved in racial justice rallies. MCDHH is also working to mentor interpreters to expand the pool of qualified and comfortable interpreters to provide press conference coverage.

\*MCDHH is awaiting the release of the FY21 budget to see if funding specific for ASL and CART Workforce Development has been included.

\* MCDHH has recently hired two Referral Specialists; also David Del Pizzo was hired as Referral Supervisor. MCDHH has also hired Karran Larson as a Statewide Substance Use Disorder Coordinator through an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) with the Department of Public Health. Emily Graves-Harrison has now been transferred to Children's Specialist for Western MA. Currently vacant is the Director of Communication Access and Community Engagement; this position under discussion to determine next steps.

\* There will be a few vlogs filmed soon. One will be an announcement of MCDHH staffing and another an update on MCDHH's work in connection to racial injustice and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. MCDHH focus has been internal during the summer months.

\* Follow-up: Tricia will discuss with Zinma Camelio and MCDHH Communication Access, Technology and Training (CATTS) staff member Jon O'Dell on improving connections with Veteran's Affairs. Officer Brennan may also be able to assist with connections.

Legislative Task Force:

\* Bills of Interest (document attached.) Only four bills had action; two had their deadlines extended; two have been reported out of committee.

\* The next legislative session will begin January 6.

Old Business:

\* CATTS trainer Jon O'Dell has been working with Senior Centers (prior to COVID closures) to provide trainings. MCDHH will be developing a strategic plan and working with elders will continue to be included as a priority area. Currently EHS is developing guidance for Congregate Care settings; once released it will be shared with SAC members.

\* COVID ASL card has had international exposure and is now available on the MCDHH website in a few languages thanks to Steward Health.

Announcements:

\* MCDHH's Victims Service Program (VSP) is working on securing funding to move the program forward. Originally funding was awarded from the MA Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) with the focus on assisting the @90 people with hearing loss due to the Marathon Bombing.

\* MCDHH's Referral Department is currently working, with developers, for new software to assist the department. This would be to replace the current software system, Avianco. Members are currently working to identify gaps and important improvement areas for the new software.

\* MCDHH is working with the Graduation to Certification (GTC) project as part of the workforce initiative priority.

\* An upcoming SAC meeting will include a training from Legal Counsel, Josh Mendelsohn, and will focus on the role of SAC membership and communicating the coordinated efforts for the SAC and MCDHH to work on issues of concern to community members. For instance, MCDHH cannot be involved in legislative activities; other than responding directly to legislative inquiries. Training will also become part of the initiation and orientation for new members to the SAC. SAC members should bring information and announcements to their community groups and communicate community concerns with MCDHH.

\* Sept. 13, 10 - 1130: MSAD will host their bi-weekly community chat; Sunday's topic will be Systematic Racism.

\* Sept. 26: MSAD's annual meeting.

Next SAC Meeting: via Zoom, October 15, 615 pm.