

Disparities Elimination Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 15, 2024
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Committee Members Present:	
Nikki LeClaire	Sarah Schiele (co-chair)
Alejandro Aguilera	Calvin Hillary Hylton
Jay Orne (co-chair)	James Velek
Oceane Lune	
Committee Members Absent:	
Gage Urvina	
Guests:	
Emily Reimer, DHS	Cody Raasch, Hennepin County
Carissa Weisdorf, Hennepin County	
Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:	
Eriika Etshokin	Thomas Blissett
	Amy Miller
MDH (Prevention) Representative:	
McKinzie Woelfel	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 January 18 meeting and proposed agenda

- The meeting minutes from the January 18 meeting were reviewed and approved with noted changes below.
 - Alejandro made several corrections to the minutes, including making it clear that the committee is working on a directive and not just a recommendation.
- The agenda for today’s meeting was reviewed and approved.

III. Review of Psychosocial Support (PSS) Service standard

Carissa Weisdorf, Hennepin County Public Health

- Carissa presented a PowerPoint titled, **PSS and Standards Revision**.
 - PSS is more flexible than mental health services because they do not require a diagnosis for an individual to receive care.
 - PSS are most often delivered in through support groups in Minnesota.
 - PSS standards are scheduled to be updated this year.
 - Questions/comments:
 - Carissa clarified that there is no current definition of “peer.”
 - Jay asked if the proposed directive that the committee is working on is passed by the council, would providers be made aware about why changes to the service standard were proposed.

- Carissa replied that this would happen during the provider input meetings. Part A will offer readiness assessments and technical assistance, as needed. If a provider is not meeting the standards, a corrective action plan would be developed, and additional support is available at that time.
- Alejandro asked if there were deadlines to corrective action plans. Carissa indicated that providers have 45 days after the site visit letter is issued. Part A will also check in at regular intervals to make sure providers are resolving issues.

IV. Discuss & finalize draft recommendation to PAC

- Audra displayed the ***Recommendation from the Disparities Elimination Committee to the Planning and Allocations Committee (PAC)***.
 - Questions/comments:
 - When should the draft recommendation be sent to PAC?
 - Audra indicated that there is some time flexibility, but PSS will be revised this year so to keep up with that timeline, this should be sent within the next few months. The directive should also be final by the PSRA (priority setting and resource allocation) process in August. In addition, since it involves the RFP (request for proposals) process, it would ideally be approved soon.
 - Nikki noted that this is a great opportunity to better define the bar for peer support.
 - Jay agreed and added that peers could be defined as someone who has some lived experience with HIV and mental health, PSS, or substance-use services.
 - Nikki added that Recovery Alliance Duluth (RAD) has a great model for peer support training. RAD helps people get the skills they need to provide peer support.
 - Nikki wondered if it would be possible to allocate funds for one-time or short-term transportation assistance like a bus pass.
 - Alejandro suggested adding "LatinX" in the last paragraph of the recommendation to make it more fully inclusive.
 - Audra clarified that this is a recommendation for a directive to be developed by the Planning and Allocations Committee because PAC, according to the council bylaws, is responsible for service standard revisions.
 - Audra noted that the directive wouldn't require a recipient to implement the peer model if they received psychosocial support funding. Government recipients are hesitant to require it because there are some subrecipients that already have very robust psychosocial support service models. With this directive, the goal is to have a new model that a subrecipient could choose to implement.
 - Calvin suggested that the language might make more sense for providers if it refers to peer support personnel or just peers rather than "staff peers" because they may already have general staff who can deliver peer support.
 - Jay noted that the current service standard only addresses peer volunteers. Members wondered if there is a need to bring the standard in line with the idea that peers are paid support staff.

- Calvin suggested that the standards should leave room open for volunteers because some providers can only afford that. He noted, however, that most peer support staff are paid.
 - Nikki wondered if "certified peer support" can work to differentiate from "peer support volunteer."
 - How do we define certified? Is this right word to use?
 - Certification may can create an unnecessary barrier.
- Alejandro suggested making the peer support model a requirement rather than optional for those applying to PSS RFPs. "What is the point of the directive if providers can opt out of the peer support model?" Alejandro suggested that providers can apply for Part B funding if they do not want to do it or are unable to budget with the extra money allotted.
 - Eriika noted that the service standards apply to both Part A and Part B funded providers and that the RFP will be identical for Part A and Part B.
 - Thomas added that service standards are minimum requirements that every provider will need to produce to provide the service. He suggested that the committee should be careful about putting interventions into service standards.
 - Calvin noted that the proposed peer support model may not be the best option for every provider, so he would be reluctant to make it a requirement.
 - Jay added that the idea is to provide a larger menu of options in PSS.
- Audra clarified that the council can only direct Part A, and recommends to Part B.
- Recipient staff are currently aiming to issue an RFP in late summer, but the timeline is still being worked out.
- Audra reviewed three changes made to the draft recommendation to PAC.
 - In the first paragraph adding, "DEC also recommends directing the Part A recipient and recommend the Part B recipient to collaborate and better define peers within the service."
 - In paragraph three adding, "DEC also recommends directing the Part A recipient and recommending to the Part B recipient to include a prompt in the fiscal year 24 multi service RFP for any proposals requesting psychosocial support funding to outline how the proposal will involve peer support staff and the delivery of their psychosocial support services."
 - Adding "LatinX" to the last paragraph.
- Calvin wondered if it is ideal to have a service standard that highlights one model or if it's better to have a list of interventions for providers to choose from.
 - Audra noted that it's hard to implement a pilot without it being included within service standards.
 - Calvin noted that the peer support model is a type of PSS and wondered if the directive would force providers to implement one

type of PSS over other options. He added that providers should be able to provide the service that is best for the people they serve.

- Eriika emphasized that the service standards are the floor and PSS can be delivered using peer support, but not every provider will need to have peer support. Those that do will need to deliver services with how they are described in the service standards.
- Alejandro suggested that the recommendation to PAC include a proposal to allocate additional funding for PSS to help providers deliver peer support models.
 - Jay noted that the council will have the opportunity to make additional allocations at the August PSRA, and including this in the recommendation to PAC might prevent the directive from moving forward. The current ask for PAC is to include the peer support model in service standards.
 - Audra clarified that though the directive idea originates in DEC, PAC will officially make the directive because that is in the purview the committee's work.
- **MOITON:** Alejandro Aguilera moved that this topic be tabled until the next meeting. There was no second. The motion failed to advance.
- **MOTION:** Alejandro Aguilera moved that the recommendation include data on substance use disorder outpatient and inpatient treatment. There was no second. The motion failed to advance.
- **MOTION:** Alejandro Aguilera moved that PAC include additional allocations for PSS. There was no second. The motion failed to advance.
- Nikki suggested that any ask for funding should be very specific and include peer support.
- **MOTION:** Nikki LeClaire moved that finalizing the draft recommendation to PAC be tabled until the next meeting. Alejandro Aguilera seconded.
- **DEBATE:**
 - Alejandro agreed that the recommendation is not yet ready to be sent to PAC.
- **VOTE:** With 4 ayes and 0 noes, the motion carries.

V. 2025 Needs Assessment gender identity questions

Emily Reimer, DHS and Cody Raasch, HCPH

- Due to time, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

VI. New business / Unfinished Business

- None.

VII. Set agenda for next meeting

- Co-chair election
- Review workplan
- PSS directive
- 2025 NA gender identity questions

VIII. Announcements

- Jay and Sarah are at term limits as Co-Chairs; please consider running if interested.

IX. Adjourn

- Sarah Schiele adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Meeting Summary

- The committee reviewed the Psychosocial Support Service standard.
- The committee reviewed and made edits to the draft recommendation to PAC.
- The committee approved a motion to table finalizing the draft recommendation to PAC until the March meeting.

Documents shared before the meeting:

- 2024.0.15 DEC Agenda
- 2024.01.18 DEC Minutes
- Draft directive recommendation from PAC to DEC for PSS
- NA2025 Gender Question Proposal

Documents shared during the meeting:

- Draft directive recommendation from PAC to DEC for PSS 02.15.2024
- Psychosocial Support Services and Standards Revision PowerPoint

JS/ag