



CONTRA COSTA
MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION

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**Mental Health Commission
Executive Committee**

Tuesday, March 23, 2021 from 3:30 – 5:00 pm

Via: Zoom Teleconference:

<https://cchealth.zoom.us/j/6094136195>

Meeting number: 609 413 6195

Join by phone:

1 646 518 9805 US

Access code: 609 413 6195

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order/Introductions**
- II. Public comments**
- III. Commissioner comments**
- IV. Chair announcements**
- V. APPROVE minutes from the February 23, 2021 meeting**
- VI. RECEIVE update on the first county-wide Crisis Intervention Rapid Improvement Event (RIE), Commissioner Barbara Serwin**
- VII. DISCUSS Civil Grand Jury inquiry posed to the Mental Health Commission**

The Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury is requesting information pertinent to our work. As you are aware, Grand Jury proceedings are confidential. The sources of information we gather will not be revealed outside the Grand Jury.
- VIII. DISCUSS communications with Supervisor Karen Mitchoff regarding process for selection of new MHC Commissioners**
- IX. DISCUSS and Vote on proceeding with 4.1 Ad-Hoc Committee to review applicants**

(Agenda Continued on Page Two)



The Contra Costa County Mental Health Commission is appointed by the Board of Supervisors to advise them on all matters related to the county's mental health system, in accordance with mandates set forth in the California State Welfare & Institutions Code, Sections 5604 (a)(1)-5605.5. Any comments or recommendations made by the Mental Health Commission or its individual members do not represent the official position of the county or any of its officers. The Commission is pleased to make special accommodations, if needed, please call ahead at (925) 313-9553 to arrange.

- X. **DISCUSS** proposed by-law to permit absences to Mental Health Commission meetings due to unforeseen, extraordinary circumstances, proposal submittal by Commissioner Leslie May, dated February 24th, 2021.

XI. **DETERMINE** April 2021 Mental Health Commission meeting agenda

- “Get to know your Commissioner”
- **RECEIVE** presentation on the 9/29/20 County settlement with the Prison Law Office regarding improvements at the Martinez and West County jails, including in the area of mental health, required medical and mental health plans to improve treatment of inmates, and improvement already made to date, David Seidner, Mental Health Program Chief, Detention Health (from Justice Systems Mtg)
- **RECEIVE** update on the first Crisis Intervention Rapid Improvement Event (RIE), speaker (preferably) Duffy Newman, Health Services and/or Aisha Banks (not sure what department), if not available, Erika Jennsen, Health Services, and if not available, Commissioner Barbara Serwin
- **RECEIVE** update on Hume site visit test and work on building a site list, Commissioner Laura Griffin and Commissioner Barbara Serwin, Quality of Care Committee
- **DISCUSS** and **VOTE** on by-laws changes:
 - ✓ **Mandatory committee membership**
 - ✓ **By-law change in how period of absences is defined**
 - ✓ **Potential by-law on excused absence from MHC meeting due to unforeseen, extraordinary circumstances**
- **Behavioral Health Services Director's Report**

XII. **Adjourn**

Mental Health Commission (MHC)

Meeting Date: April 7, 2021

Time: 4:30pm – 6:30pm

Current Member(s):

Committee Member Name: Leslie May

Proposal Date: February 24, 2021

RE: Mental Health Condition Bylaw Amendment

Currently the commission's 'attendance' bylaws do not address equity justice.

On January 20, 2021, an Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government was issued by President Joseph R. Biden Jr. Of particular importance is the definitions section listed below:

Sec. 2. Definitions. For purposes of this order: (a) The term "equity" means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

(b) The term "underserved communities" refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of "equity."

This hereby solidifies that Equity Justice has become a major movement in our nation. In keeping with the shifts in law it is unclear why an amendment has not been made for committee members facing serious physical harm and/or enduring emotional stress, based on the color of their skin?

Such provisions should include:

Excusal without bias or fear of repercussion due to tardiness or absence from a meeting during an uprising, threat of perceived harm, or emergency. Hence, the aforementioned

absence should not be counted against the individual that is undergoing serious emotional distress but happens to be a member of any body of government, whether paid or unpaid.

Racial inequality, injustice, and mental health disparities affect every committee member and can trigger sudden emotional stress that is unhealthy for the individual and/or their family.

Example:

On January 6, 2021, our capital building was attacked by a group of uncivil individuals who sought power through insurgence. An MHC meeting was scheduled; however, I did not attend because my family took priority. As the head of household, it is my responsibility to place the safety of my family above all other obligations. My decision was based on racial banter used within my own neighborhood by neighbors that had already expressed contempt for people of color as well as media warnings of potential attacks on people of color. There was absolutely no way that I should be expected to sit in a Zoom meeting while addressing the emotional turmoil that my family was facing. As a result of circumstances beyond my control, this missed meeting should not be held against me as the current by-laws would suggest.

As has been the case for most of my life, not many people can relate therefore it remains overlooked. I realize most of the commissioners do not have to worry but the point is to address those most susceptible in order to ensure equality for all. People of color are constantly under attack, which means that they must use all of their resources to remain safe and to protect their emotional wellbeing. Otherwise, productivity at work or as a member of any committee/commission would be impossible.

The proposal is as follows:

- 1) An addendum should be added to the prepared document to address an absence:
 - a) due to racial threats
 - and/or-
 - b) racial attacks in our communities and nationwide.

As a commission designed to address mental health, this should include its committee members.

- 2) Additionally, there should also be a provision made when a person is seriously ill and is unable to attend meetings because they are incapacitated or have a loved one incapacitated.
 - a) The exception of this rule should be a prolonged absence.
 - i) Hence, if the commissioner's absence will exceed 45 days, **they should be asked to consider their communities representation and we request an alternative take their place until the issue is resolved.**
 - (1) An alternative to this measure would be a temporary commissioner that is assigned until the appointed commissioner returns or resigns due to health issues.
 - b) Another exception would be temporary assignments such as employment, deploys, etc.

*****Add language addressing types of leave, i.e. sabbatical, FMLA, leave of absence*****

This could possibly address the issues we have securing commissioner openings which are currently vacant. We need to be progressive with commissioners who are appointed and serve on the executive

board and committees. There are several unknown variables that can happen to an individual that affects their life, and this should be considered when rendering decisions which affect commissioners. Hence, why it is important to account for unforeseen circumstances such as emergencies which prevent us from attending meetings or cause us to have a late arrival.