



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 11, 2020 – 3:30 P.M.**

The Mental Health Commission met in a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 3:39 p.m. in MHSA Administrative Office, 2001 North Garey Avenue, Pomona, California.

**CALL TO ORDER** Vice-Chair Henderson called the meeting to order at 3:39 p.m.

**ROLL CALL** A visual roll call was taken.

**PRESENT:** Anne Henderson, Vice-Chair  
Cheryl Berezny  
Ethel Gardner  
Rubio R. Gonzalez  
Joan M. Reyes  
Wray Ryback  
Alfonso "Al" Villanueva  
David J. Weldon

**ABSENT:** Toni L. Watson, Chair  
Jeanette Heitmann  
Daniel Rodriguez  
Twila L. Stephens (Approved Leave of Absence from 12/2019 – 03/2020)  
Davetta Williams

**STAFF:** Toni Navarro, Executive Director  
Angela Igrisan, Chief Clinical Officer  
Rimmi Hundal, Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services  
Gamaliel Polanco, Wellness Center Manager  
Nicole Lobato, Clinical Program Manager  
Sara Rodriguez, Clinical Therapist II  
Mica Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 14, 2020 MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

There being no comment, Governing Board Member Liaison Gonzalez moved, and Commissioner Reyes seconded, to approve the Mental Health Commission Minutes of its January 14, 2020 Regular Meeting. The motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Commissioners Berezny, Gardner, Gonzalez, Reyes, Ryback, Villanueva, Weldon; Vice-Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Heitmann, Rodriguez, Stephens, and Williams; and Chair Watson.

## II. PRESENTATION

### A. "RECOVERY MOMENTS" STORY

Anthony Flores talked about his mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, his destructive behaviors and his daily life struggles. He stated that with the help of Tri-City, he learned to cope with his negative thoughts; that he is currently enrolled in college and he is studying to become an addiction counselor; that he is thankful for Tri-City for all the resources they have provided to him, including listening to him and caring for him; that he is a miracle; that now he loves himself and will continue his education and live a life with peace and happiness that he deserves; and expressed gratitude for everyone who played a role in helping him.

### B. AN OVERVIEW OF:

#### 1) THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY GARDEN (TCG)

Sara Rodriguez, Clinical Therapist II, brought an edible flower bouquet grown at the Therapeutic Community Garden to show the Mental Health Commission. She stated that Dr. Nicole Lobato oversees the program; that she works with a Mental Health Specialist who acts as a case manager from TCG, and a community farmer who has agricultural knowledge and the background of planting and growing; that TCG is a Prevention and Early Intervention Program; that they run weekly wellness groups and work with the community, clients, and students from the three cities; discussed the various groups that they have and how they are setup; indicated that the garden is organic, noting that it is not easy, and explained that it mirrors life; that metaphors are very helpful and they have two philosophies: 1) Mindfulness, turning off autopilot and heighten awareness so that you can live on the moment and forget about the stress of the past and anxiety of the future, to find comfort together in the garden space and feel safe; and 2) Therapeutic Horticulture approach which combines nature, gardening and the clinical type setting; and discussed the gardening skills and coping skills that participants learn through the TCG program.

Commissioner Reyes sought clarification for the metaphor of organic gardening and life. Clinical Therapist Rodriguez explained the metaphor and provided several examples of the organic gardening techniques that relate to life; and then invited the Commission to tour the garden.

Executive Director Navarro talked about the Capital Facilities and Technology Needs funds that was approved to improve the garden four years ago, explaining the issues related with a 15' strip of land that was in dispute with the City of Pomona regarding who owned it; and that it was finally resolved. She then explained the proposed improvements, including an outdoor room, and the process for the Commission and Governing Board approval.

#### 2) ACCESS TO CARE (ATC)

Nicole Lobato, Clinical Program Manager for ATC Department and the TCG, stated that in the 2½ years that she has been working for Tri-City, there has been a lot of work into developing a program that would assist individuals accessing services here at Tri-City and making the process seamless as possible to ensure that anybody interested in services is able to walk through our doors and get the help that they need. She indicated that the ATC Department serves as the main entry point for individuals accessing services; explained the assessment process and referral process for the right level care in a timely manner; that the goal for anybody walking through the door is to make sure that they are aware of all the services that Tri-City offers.

She then pointed out that her team consists of three mental health specialists, four clinical therapists, a program support assistant, a supervisor, and a clinical manager; that Tri-City has a large system of care equipped to help people of every age; noting that it is important that ATC team connect and guide persons to Tri-City services as well as other resources available in the area such as shelters or food banks; that Tri-City gets referrals from local hospitals, law enforcements, schools, managed care departments, and local health care providers; that ATC has two locations: one at the adult outpatient clinic on Garey Avenue and another one in the children outpatient clinic on Royalty. She also provided data about for year 2019 and stated that 3,100 service requests were processed by the ATC department; and that it receives on average 265 services requests monthly, noting that approximately 34% of those seeking for services are homeless.

Commissioner Gardner inquired what happens when persons seek care and are not residents within the three cities. Clinical Program Manager Lobato stated that the ATC still meets with them and assess their needs, then they are connected to their managed care and make sure they are linked to appropriate services, noting that community navigators are also of great resource and can link persons to a lot of services.

Executive Director Navarro stated that the ATC has doubled in the last 2 ½ years and commended Dr. Lobato for her vision for the ATC team.

### **III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Executive Director Navarro announced that tomorrow is the grand opening for the LA Department of Public Health's Pomona Wellness Center located at 750 South Park Avenue in Pomona; that they always had an office there for approximately 17 years and recently they had received extra funding from the federal government for drug Medi-Cal to expand services to include mental health providers in-house to do screening and assessments and provide prevention services; that Tri-City will have a therapist there who is trained on family therapy and substance abuse counseling and discussed the services she will provide; pointed out that dignitaries will be in attendance including LA DPH Director Barbara Ferrer, and Supervisor Hilda Solis; and encouraged its Commissioners to attend. She then stated that the Mental Health Commission will host an event next Tuesday and she looks forward to it.

### **COMMISSION ITEMS AND REPORTS**

Commissioner Reyes reported that the LA County USC Medical Center unit will be converted to a village for mental health services and will have pod housing; and that the LA County will buy San Vincent Medical Center and also convert it to housing and services for homeless people.

Executive Director Navarro thanked the City of Pomona, and Board Member Rubio Gonzalez, for approving the 57-unit of affordable low income housing at Mission and Park, noting that 10 of those units will belong to Tri-City.

Commissioner Villanueva expressed concern about culture, provided history about his culture and how it has evolved over the years; and recommended that the Commission receive cultural sensitivity training in the use of political reference to ethnic groups. He also indicated that Amy Crow from the Claremont Library would like Tri-City to train her staff to handle homeless persons during a crisis situations, pointing about that he had talked to the JPA Administrator/Clerk who explained to him the role of the Community Navigators who can assist the Library staff.

Executive Director Navarro stated that she will ask designated staff to reach out to the Claremont Library. She also stated that staff will present a dialogue of cultural awareness to the Commission; discussed the political use of titles that are obsolete but they are not disrespectful for anyone to say it; and that the dialogue will also include the topic of Implicit Bias.

Director of MHSA & Ethnic Services Hundal explained Implicit Bias stating that it is self-awareness of prejudices done in an unconscious level.

Discussion ensued about the history various cultural groups.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 4:38 p.m., on consensus of the Mental Health Commission its Regular Meeting of February 11, 2020 was adjourned. The next Regular Meeting of the Mental Health Commission will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, in the MHSA Administrative Office, 2001 North Garey Avenue, Pomona, California.



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Micaela P. Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk