



**National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging
Draft Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2021**

Welcome, Agenda Review, Approve Minutes

Joel E. Miller, NCMHA Chair and American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) Representative, called the meeting to order at 10:02 am ET, via Zoom.

Joel welcomed the 27 members attending.

Joel reviewed the agenda and moved approval of the Nov, 5, 2020 meeting minutes. Karen Orsi seconded the Motion. Kathleen Cameron will submit corrections. Motion carried.

Kathleen Cameron asked whether Joel had followed up on Willard Mays' inquiry about the American Society on Aging. Joel will contact Willard Mays and the new CEO of ASA.

Update on NCMHA Website

Interim Administrative Assistant Mike O'Donnell reported that Website Administrator Ed Castro added a number of content items, revised the navigation system, and made a few design changes. Ed moved the hosting from inMotion to DreamHost.

Ed will move the host registration by July 18, 2021 when the current domain registration expires. Ed will rebuild the header and footer and create a new homepage to increase usability and make it easier for members to find information.

Mike will update the member directory and post it to the website in March.

Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day 2021

Kathleen Cameron, Vice Chair of NCMHA and representative of NCOA, reported that NCOA will host the fourth Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Event on May 6, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time. It will be a full day of virtual activities. Kathleen Cameron presented PowerPoint slides showing the members of the Program Planning Committee, and topics to be addressed.

The program will feature Keynote Speaker Ashton Applewhite and sessions with presenters from the field of behavioral health and aging.

Topics will include:

- Ageism and Stigma: Barriers to Access to Mental Health Care for Older Adults
- Access in Diverse Populations
- Perspectives on the Lived Experience of Mental Health
- Latest Interventions related to Substance Use
- Socialization and Engagement– What We Know Works
- Best Practices and Funding Strategies from State Partnerships in Aging and Mental Health
- Federal Efforts
- Takeaways and Calls to Action

NCOA will host a landing page for the OAMHA event on the NCOA website, publish the Agenda, and provide a link for on-line registration. There is no charge for participation. NCOA has developed a Save-the-Date notice which will be emailed to all NCMHA members.

Member Survey Results

Kathleen Cameron presented PowerPoint slides summarizing the Member Survey results including the following priority topics for sharing, learning, and technical assistance:

- Financing and sustaining older adult mental health services
- Use/misuse of prescription medications
- Suicide prevention
- Shortage of qualified older adult mental health professionals in responding to older adult needs
- Embedding older adult mental health evidence-based practices in health care
- Behavioral health needs for victims of abuse in later life
- Behavioral health needs for older adults who are homeless
- Strategies to engage state and local coalition members
- Behavioral Health needs of older veterans
- Serious mental illness

Joel Miller reported that he met with Vibrant to discuss posting information on these topics on the NCMHA website. Joel also met with NASMHPD Senior Division about collaborating on reports, white papers and events on behavioral health and aging issues and public policy. Joel provided an update on the webinar series co-sponsored by NCMHA and NCOA.

Guest Presentation: Congressional Medicare Older Adult Peer Support Bills

Presenter: Sarah Corcoran, Vice President of Government Relations, Guide Consulting Services, Inc.

Sarah provided an update on the **Peers Act of 2020 H.R. 8206** introduced 9-11-2020 by Representative Judy Chu (D-CA-27). A copy of Sarah's slide presentation is attached.

This bill specifies that peer support specialists may provide behavioral health integration services with the supervision of a physical or other entity under Medicare. The bill defines peer support specialists as individuals who are recovering from a mental health or substance-use condition and have certain national or state credentials, as specified, to provide peer support services. This bill currently has two co-sponsors: Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE-3) and Rep. Rodney Davis, (R-IL-13).

Sarah noted that this bill provides an opportunity to incrementally provide sources of reimbursement for peer support services.

Joel Miller thanked Sarah Corcoran for her presentation.

Jim Davis asked about the status of **HR 432** that would authorize Medicare Part B coverage for marriage and family therapist services, and mental health counselor services.

Sarah noted that **HR 432** was introduced again in the House on 1-21-21 and referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Kathleen Cameron asked whether the Peers Act of 2020 allows for Medicare coverage for Peer Support Services provided to patients both in individual and group settings.

Sarah noted that the bill does not specify both individual and group settings.

Kathleen Cameron asked what mechanisms states have used to include peer support services under Medicaid, e.g., HCBS waivers.

Sarah researched this issue and found variability among state Medicaid programs. Sarah will send Joel Miller a map illustrating differences among states..

Lorie Thomas in Omaha, NE asked about efforts to change the IMD Exclusion Rule which is a barrier to persons seeking mental health services in skilled nursing facilities.

Sarah noted that the CBO score for the estimated cost of repealing the IMD rule would be \$60 to \$80 billion. She has not seen any recent efforts to address this issue incrementally

Joel noted that CMS had plans to initiate some demonstration projects on this issue. Joel will check on this.

Janet Spinelli also requested further information about the IMD issue in view of the behavioral health needs of residents of long-term care facilities, which have been compounded by COVID-19 pandemic.

Presentation: President Biden's Mental Health and Health Care Legislative Initiatives and Implications for Older Adults and Behavioral Health Conditions

Presenter: Joel E. Miller, NCMHA Chair, and Executive Director, American Mental Health Counselors Association.

A copy of Joel's slides is attached.

Sarah Corcoran and others complimented and thanked Joel Miller for his presentation.

Kathleen Cameron asked how the additional \$4.25 Billion for mental health and substance use services appropriated to SAMHSA have been used.

Joel does not know at this time. He posed this question to the AMHC Board, but they have not heard from state chapter members about how these funds have been distributed. Since the bill passed in late December 2020, it may be too early to know.

Christy Malik with NASMHPD reported that at their meeting a SAMHSA representative noted that states will receive information later this week about how these funds will be allocated.

Member Updates

Mike O'Donnell with the **Illinois** Coalition on Mental Health & Aging reported that ICMHA continues to implement their strategic plan. ICMHA has completed a revision of its bylaws. ICMHA has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Illinois Coalition on Substance Use and Aging to merge.

Lorie Thomas in **Nebraska** reported on a group developing modules to help long term care facilities prepare to work with older adults with mental health disorders, plans for a conference webinar series in August, and plans for the *Aging with Passion and Purpose Conference* free webinar series in March, which will offer continuing education credits.

Karen Orsi representing the **Oklahoma** Coalition on Mental Health and Aging reported that they continue to expand training opportunities on older adult behavioral health.

Christy Malik with **NASMHPD** thanked Joel Miller for making a presentation to the Senior Division and elevating workforce issues affecting older adults.

Chris Herman with **National Association of Social Workers** reported on their recommendations to the Biden-Harris Administration entitled, "2021 Blueprint of Federal Social Policy Priorities," (available on the NASW website), plans for a virtual NASW national conference in June, and talks with members of Congress and staff to support passage of the Improving Access to Mental Health Act to expand Medicare beneficiary services provided by Clinical Social Workers.

Jim Davis, Chair of the **Oregon** Disability Commission and the Oregon Aging and Disability Behavioral Health Advisory Council, noted past success in getting \$2 million in state funding for preventive behavioral health services, and specialists through the Oregon Health Authority who coordinate behavioral health services for older adults and persons with disabilities. Jim reported that the fall special session on the Oregon legislature eliminated \$1.8 million in the budget for preventive services. Advocates will focus on getting these funds restored.

Michele Karel with **Veterans Affairs**, reported on the implementation of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019. Section 201 of the Act, authorizes the VA to award three-year Suicide Prevention Grants to community partners to serve veterans. The VA will publish a Notice of Fund Availability. Under the VA Office of Geriatric and Extended Care there is a program to develop VA-community partnerships in certain regions. Michele will provide further information to Joel abo. The VA program of comprehensive assistance to family caregivers has been expanded. For more information go to: <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers/>

Jake Jackson with **NBCC** reported that the Art Therapy Credentialing Board is seeking a public member director and ethics officers. He will send a notice to NCMHA.

Dominique Marsalek with the **American Counseling Association** reported on plans for their virtual “Hill” day May 10, 2021. They are supporting a counseling compact to allow interstate licensure portability and telehealth services.

Marcia Marshall in **Colorado** reported on University of Colorado School of Medicine Multi-Disciplinary Center on Aging’s 9-week educational series on emotional and mental health of older adults which engages an average of 100 consumers per session. Marcia reported that there is a growing interest in the Colorado legislature to support behavioral health services for older adults as well as school children.

Janet Spinelli from **Rhode Island** is seeking ideas for designing outcome reports to ensure that funding produces the results that older adults deserve.

Joel Miller reported that **AMHCA** is working with NBCC and American Counseling Association to advocate for passage of the Improving Access to Mental Health Act, they are planning a “hybrid” conference.

Joel thanked Mike O’Donnell and Kathleen Cameron and NCOA for their services.

Adjourn

The next meeting will be **May 13, 2021** at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time, one week after the Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day event.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.
