

RECAP OF MENTAL HEALTH PARITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

December 14, 2020

The inaugural meeting of the Mental Health Parity Advisory Committee (“MHPAC”) was held on December 14, 2020 hosted on a WebEx platform, permitting all public to be in attendance, and a process to control the audio for authorized Committee members and guests. There were 50 attendees on the call.

Dr. Leanette Henagan, Behavioral Health Director, led the Agenda, with support from Erin Klug and Mary Boatright of the Arizona Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions (“DIFI”).

I. Welcome and Introductions:

Christina Corieri from the Governor’s Office was introduced and spoke to the MHPAC on the importance of the initiatives under Jake’s Law to the Governor and appreciation to all for their work in supporting the implementation of the same.

Director Evan Daniels spoke to the group on their commitment to the work and appreciation of Dr. Henagan and support of her and the MHPAC in this work.

Each of the Committee members were introduced and given an opportunity to speak, and included:

- Angela Gamboa – family member, survivor (lost son Jake to suicide at the age of 16)
- Carly Fleege – family survivor of suicide loss (sister Carlene) and Coalition volunteer lobbyist for The JEM Foundation
- David Carnahan – Quail Run
- Dr. Don Fowls – provider / managed care / family lived experience perspectives, Arizona Psychiatric Society
- Jasmine Snipes – family representative / diversity and cultural competence
- Karrie Steving – Mercy Care
- Kathy Busby – Arizona Council for Human Service Providers (lobbyist) (provider organization)
- Monica Coury – Arizona Complete Health
- Dr. Rogers Wilson – CIGNA, psychiatric physician
- Vista Thompson, Esq. – Blue Cross/Blue Shield (compliance officer on federal parity law)

AHCCCS was represented in the meeting by Dana Flannery, attending for Jami Snyder, who had a schedule conflict.

Arizona Department of Health Services was represented by Odette Colburn.

II. Role of the Advisory Committee (ARS 20-3505)

The Committee members were asked for input and comment on the website, consumer education materials, rules, and other tasks ahead.

Web content has a placeholder (<https://difi.az.gov/consumer/i/health/mhp>). Additional web content on parity is expected to be up by January 1, 2021. Please share comments on what should be included and comments on what is posted. The expectation is that this content will evolve over time.

III. Status of Rules

Mary Boatright gave an overview on the rules development. There is an overarching theme of public engagement intended in the process. Ms. Boatright gave an overview of the process as:

1. Open a docket (get exemption from the moratorium on rulemaking from the Governor). Christina has graciously supported the same.
2. Submit docket opening to the Arizona Secretary of State, which must be published in The Arizona Register. Was opened in September of 2020 and will be open for one year.
3. With docket opened, working to write the rules, share exhibits, rules reading. The second notice is what content is filed with the Arizona Secretary of State and published in The Arizona Register. This would normally involve 30-day period waiting to see if there were any comments (public request for a hearing) and a need to open the rules for comment. To expedite the timeline, they are waiving the 30-days and building in a hearing date for 30-days following the publication.
4. Submit final rules to the Governor's Regulatory Review Council. Public hearings are held for comment on final rules.
5. Final rules are published after response to comments.

Goal is to have the proposed rule published after the holidays. May post readable file to the website under rulemaking; working with new website developer on adding content. Mary offered to share the rules upon request; Erin clarified that they can share the rules only after they have been sent to the Secretary of State (not sooner).

IV. Future Agenda Topics

The Committee was asked for topics for future agenda, and offered were:

- Discharge protocols/planning
- Website (tab for Jake's Law, content to come)
- Interaction with AzDHS
- Telehealth expansion (public health emergency)
- Appeals process (consumer-friendly guidance)
- Care transitions
- Bed shortages for adolescents / placement issues

V. Future Meetings

After discussion, it was felt that lunch time was a good time frame for meeting for members of MHPAC. Fridays were a better day of the week because of the upcoming legislative session. The next meeting of the MHPAC is set for Friday, January 15, 2021 at Noon. The meetings are tentatively set to be the third Friday of the month.