Thursday, May 19, 2022, 7:30 – 9:00AM

Members present: Alexis Babaian, Holly Bellebuono Leslie Clapp, Louise Clough, Cindy Doyle, Betsy Edge, Beth Folcarelli, Michael Joyce, Lewis Laskaris, Bob Laskowski, Paddy Moore, Lisa Nagy, Chantale Patterson, Dan Pesch, Susan Pratt, Kathleen Samways, Susan Sanford, Joyce Stiles-Tucker, Sheryl Taylor-Thompson, Christine Todd, Cindy Trish, Lisette Williams, Mary Jane Williams, Jim Wolff, Marie Zadeh, Claire Seguin, Rachel Vargas, Victoria Haeselbarth, Marina Lent.

**Call meeting to order / Approval of March 17 meeting minutes:** Mary Jane Williams called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM. The April minutes were moved, seconded, and approved.

**Future Council Meetings - Continue on Zoom or Meet in Person** – Mary Jane Williams brought up the subject of meeting in person in the future, or just staying on Zoom. There was discussion about the topic – while many Council members like the idea of meeting in person, they also believe that Zoom is more efficient, particularly those whose schedules don’t allow extra time to travel to meetings. Hybrid meetings were discussed, but it was acknowledged that for a large group these are not always successful, as technology (cameras, microphones, screens) is a big factor. A suggestion was made that we meet in person sometime for a social event, not a Council member. For the present we will continue to use Zoom for the meetings.

**Mental Health Issues and Services Discussion:** Bob Laskowski reminded Council members that today’s presentation was a continuance of last month’s, with the same overall goals for the discussion Dukes County Health Council members will:

* gain an overview of the major mental health issues of Island residents
* understand which issues that the members of the health professional community believe are most pressing
* gain insight into existing resources to address mental health issues
* understand where critical services are lacking or under resourced in the opinions of health professionals
* begin to consider how the DCHC might be helpful in supporting the health professional community and in addressing unmet mental health needs.

Claire Seguin, Chief Nurse and Chief Operating Officer at MVH, began by outlining the crisis in behavioral health boarding in Massachusetts hospitals. On May 9 there were 672 total patients boarding (446 adult, 60 geriatric, and 166 pediatric). This is a multi-factor problem including high behavioral health needs and acuity and shortages of available workforce, some of it related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 the hospital’s Emergency Department (ED) had 413 behavioral health visits, with an average length of stay while waiting for transfer to a more appropriate setting of 93 hours (range: 24 – 504 hours). An MVH SUD team which is available 24/7 performed 103 consults in 2021. The hospital participates in a daily system capacity call with all the MGB hospitals which Claire described as vital to facilitate referrals. Prior to the pandemic MVH and MVCS were working effectively together, and a Recovery Center was opened on the grounds of the hospital.

As part of the hospital’s clinical optimization strategy, there has been a focus on integrating behavioral health into primary care (a patient centered medical home model). A full-time psychiatrist and 2 social workers have been hired, and pediatric telepsychiatry is available through MGH. There is an expanded medication assisted prescription program, SUD education and routine depression screenings. The hospital currently subcontracts with Bay Cove Human Services for support for Medicaid eligible and uninsured patients. Ongoing goals and approaches are based on a balanced partnership with MVCS and MGB. (Note that Claire’s presentation will be sent to Council members and is considered part of the meeting minutes)

**Re-Election of Coordinating Committee Members** – Louise Clough - nominating committee as well as Council Secretary – started by describing the role of the Coordinating Committee, according to the Council bylaws:

The Coordinating Committee facilitates the work of the Health Council and establishes the necessary Task Forces, Sub-Committees, and Advisory Boards and coordinates and reviews their activities. The Coordinating Committee also makes recommendations to the Health Council and coordinates communication with the County Commissioners regarding Health Council business.

She said that the Coordinating Committee consists of 7 members, and we currently have 2 vacancies which we hope to fill by the June meeting. The committee meets monthly, on the first Thursday of the month at 8 a.m. She then asked for a motion to vote for re-election to one-year terms on the Coordinating Committee for:

Mary Jane Williams – Chair

Leslie Clapp – Vice Chair

Louise Clough – Secretary

Bob Laskowski – Treasurer

Christine Todd

The motion was moved, seconded, and passed, and the Coordinating Committee members were re-elected.

**Health Information Committee Intern Introduction –** Jim Wolff said that an intern would be starting in June, Wilvin Lopez,a bilingual PhD candidate at BU School of Public Health. He will be here part-time for 4 or 5 months. His work will include furthering the communication plan, branding, community forums, and transitioning the website to WordPress.

**Health Council Social Media Plan:**Alexis Babaian presented the DCHC Social Media Strategy, beginning with the fact that the Council needs a relevant online presence, specifically on social media where our target audience is active and already having conversations and sharing information related to healthcare and public health. Utilizing social media will allow the Council to have a voice at the table at all times instead of waiting for a community forum or the newspaper to publish a story. It also allows the Council to control the accuracy of the information being shared. Social media goals include public awareness, education, engagement, and building trust. The target audience is the general Island population, the Brazilian community, providers & advocates, and seniors. In developing the plan other health-related organizations were studied and a SWOT analysis was performed. Social media options were considered with an intent to have message consistency across all platforms. Louise asked whether the social media postings would be in Brazilian Portuguese, and Alexis said this a concern, as the Council’s communication committee did not have this ability. Sharon Taylor then said that someone at the public schools will translate our content for us.

The Council’s plan is still in the works, with a timeline of the initial setup of 1-3 months, then maintaining the accounts after the initial setup period. (Note that Alexis’ presentation will be sent to Council members and is considered part of the meeting minutes)

**Rural Scholars:** Dan Pesch said that he had three proposals for Rural Scholars projects and would be calling the team together to review them. He will ask for a vote on a project at the June Council meeting. One of the proposals is to look back at all the past Rural Scholars projects and update them / what is the status of recommendations made?

**The next regular Health Council meeting will be held via zoom on June 16, 2022.**

Respectfully submitted, Louise Clough, secretary