

Meeting assets for Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health Zoom Meeting

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The meeting began with administrative matters including voting on committee names and welcoming the presenter, followed by discussions about health equity and cultural responsiveness. Elsa Ward presented on Connecticut's new Certified Peer Support and Recovery Professional credential, which integrates recovery support specialists and coaches under one certification administered by the Connecticut Certification Board. The group explored peer support certification differences and discussed potential name changes due to grant restrictions, while maintaining their mission focused on providing equal access to behavioral health care with cultural competence.

Next steps

- [Co-Chair Alice Forrester: bring up Kelly Phenix's question about disclosure requirements for community health workers to the CHW group and get answers](#)
- [Alice: work with team internally and Co-Chair Brenetta Henry to set up voting system for the 14 committee name options and send out to group](#)
- [Alice: present voting results for committee name at next meeting in January](#)
- [Alice: put the committee mission statement on top when doing the choices for the 14 names](#)
- [Rob Haswell: follow up on police departments using peers in crisis outreach work and report back to the group at next meeting](#)
- [Robert: check in on how many police departments have adopted or are utilizing peer support and follow up with Brenetta and the group](#)
- [Alice, Yvonne Jones, and Bernetta: arrange for community conversation presentation at next meeting in January](#)
- [Group: use next meeting in January to synthesize information and make recommendations to the Behavioral Health Oversight Council for legislation support in February](#)
- [Tanja Larsen and others: spend time in January discussing whether voted name choices capture what the group is trying to do and how it fits in scope of Oversight Council](#)

Summary

Committee Voting and Inclusive Practices

The meeting began with a discussion about voting on committee names using Mentimeter, with 14 options presented. Alice explained the voting process and shared a QR code for participants to vote online. The group welcomed Elsa Ward, who was scheduled to present, and discussed the

importance of inclusive decision-making processes for families. Co-Chair Brenetta Henry expressed her commitment to improving health outcomes for diverse communities. The conversation ended with a reminder about the culturally responsive time policy, which allows for a 5-minute leeway in Zoom meetings.

Connecticut's New Peer Support Credential

Elsa Ward presented on Connecticut's new Certified Peer Support and Recovery Professional credential, which integrates recovery support specialists and coaches under one certification administered by the Connecticut Certification Board. She explained that the credential, developed since 2018 through collaboration between DMAS, Yale Perch, and the recovery community, requires completion of SAMHSA's 12 core competencies and DMAS's Peer Ethics and Values. As of October 2025, 598 people have received the credential through grandparenting, with the process remaining open until October 2026, while new training organizations will begin using a standardized curriculum starting February 2026.

Peer Support Certification Discussion

The group discussed peer support certification and its differences from community health worker certification, with Elsa explaining that peer support credentials are managed through DMAS rather than DPH and focus on mental health and addiction recovery. They explored how peer support services are currently utilized in emergency departments and discussed concerns about liability, with Elsa clarifying that certified peer supporters work within organizations rather than independently. The group also discussed the need to potentially change their name due to grant restrictions on using terms like "DEI," and agreed to vote on new names at their next meeting in January while keeping their mission focused on providing equal access to behavioral health care with cultural competence.

Possible names:

- 1. Family Integration Management**
- 2. Committee on Responsive Care and Workforce Development**
- 3. Committee on Responsive Care and Practice Advancement**
- 4. Committee on Workforce, Care, and Practice Advancement**
- 5. Integrated Health, Workforce & Community Services Committee**
- 6. Health & Community Workforce Strategy Council**
- 7. Community Health, Talent & Services Committee**
- 8. Community Engagement & Workforce Empowerment Committee**
- 9. Health Care & Community Outreach Committee**
- 10. Workforce & Community Outreach Council**
- 11. Community Health & Workforce Advancement Committee**
- 12. Health & Community Partnership Council**
- 13. Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) & Community Engagement**

14. CLAS Integration and Development