

# March 3, 2026 Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health Zoom Meeting

## Meeting Summary

### Quick recap

The meeting focused on renaming the committee and discussing mental health training for police officers. Co-Chair Alice Forrester led a vote to rename the committee to the "Cultural and Linguistic Services Committee," which received the most votes. The group then discussed concerns about police training regarding mental health, particularly in light of recent incidents involving people with mental health issues. They explored existing training programs like Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and discussed the need for more comprehensive training. The conversation also touched on the importance of addressing mental health care within the judicial system and carceral settings. The conversation ended with plans to gather more information on police training requirements and explore potential presentations on community conversations about mental health in recovery.

### Next steps

- [Co-Chair Alice Forrester: Report the committee's new name \(Cultural and Linguistic Services Committee\) to the Behavioral Health Oversight Council and bring it up at the Executive Committee meeting tomorrow and at the Oversight Council meeting on March 4th.](#)
- [Amy Soto \(DPH\): Inquire with DPH and report back on any updates or issues regarding the LMSW test, including processing times and recent legislative activity.](#)
- [Tanja Larsen: Reach out to contacts in the mental health field \(specifically clinicians who work with police and firefighters\) to gather information on current police training related to mental health, and report back to the group.](#)
- [Co-Chairs Alice Forrester and Brenetta Henry, Yvonne Jones, and Lois Berkowitz: Coordinate with Stephanie Springer, Rob Haswell, and Alexis Mohammed \(state contract managers\) to get approval and schedule the community conversation/peer support presentation by Caroline's group for a future meeting.](#)
- [Yvonne Jones: Send Alice a summary of the proposed peer support/mental health in recovery presentation for distribution to Stephanie Springer, Rob Haswell, and Alexis Mohammed.](#)
- [Tanja Larsen: Look into resources or contacts \(e.g., Communities That Care\) for post-incident community trauma support and consider inviting them to present or educate the group.](#)
- [Alice Forrester: Look into the requirements and frequency of police \(state and local\) and firefighter training on mental health, including whether it is mandatory and how often it occurs, and report findings to the group.](#)
- [Alice Forrester: Bring up the issue of police and firefighter mental health training \(including frequency and requirements\) at the Executive Committee and consider inviting relevant trainers or organizations \(e.g., CIT, CABLE, Communities That Care\) to present to the group.](#)
- [Alice Forrester: Request a report from justice system representatives \(if available\) regarding mental health support and services within carceral settings and consider inviting adult justice/DOC representatives to future meetings.](#)

- [Alice Forrester: Follow up on the status of the community health worker state plan amendment advocacy and report updates at the next meeting.](#)
- [Tanja Larsen: Monitor and report back on the outcome of the proposed legislation regarding LMSW test changes and processing times.](#)
- [Sabrina Selk: Review the recent emergency legislation to determine what specific police training/mental health provisions were included and report back to the group.](#)

## Summary

### NSAW Licensure and Meeting Updates

Co-Chair Alice Forrester apologized for canceling last month's meeting due to a family medical emergency and mentioned that she has narrowed down the choices for titles to four names. Alice discussed the need to redo the NSAW licensure for the master's, which expired in January, and considered reaching out to Amy Soto (DPH) for assistance.

There was a hearing on 2/13/2026 H.B. # 5166 [AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE.](#)

### Committee Renaming Decision Meeting

The group discussed and voted on renaming the committee, ultimately selecting the "Cultural and Linguistic Service Committee" as the preferred option. Alice reported that the Executive Committee of the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council would be informed of this decision. The meeting also touched on the previous recommendation to delete the LMSW test due to its negative impact on Black and Brown test-takers, particularly women, noting that the test had resumed in January 2023.

### Nonprofit Hiring and Legislation Discussion

Alice discussed hiring issues in the nonprofit sector, including proposed legislation and concerns about processing times for test dates. Amy agreed to investigate further and report back on licensing and DPH matters. Alice mentioned a PowerPoint presentation and recommendation to the Behavioral Health Oversight Council for legislators. Co-Chair Brenetta Henry raised questions about peer support and community health workers, and Alice acknowledged the need to coordinate a meeting with Yvonne Jones to present on community conversations with peers.

### Mental Health Training for First Responders

The meeting focused on mental health training for police officers and firefighters, with concerns raised about the adequacy of current training and its impact on communities, particularly in urban areas. Participants discussed the need for mandatory ongoing training, the role of mobile crisis teams, and the importance of addressing mental health issues in both law enforcement and carceral settings. The group agreed to investigate the requirements and frequency of police training, explore post-release support for individuals leaving incarceration, and consider inviting experts to present on

CIT training and community-based interventions. They also planned to follow up on legislation related to police training and behavioral health and to review the process for renaming the committee.

DPH - [OEMS - EMS Education and Training](#)

Some towns use this for their police force. [CIT International - CIT Guide](#) 40-hour course.

### **Community and Law Enforcement for Addiction Recovery (CLEAR)**

CLEAR is a collaborative initiative with the Granby Social Services, Granby Police Department, and the McCall Behavioral Health Network. Through CLEAR, individuals impacted by substance use are connected with compassionate support, resources, and connections to care. Through this partnership, CLEAR offers a proactive and non-punitive approach to addressing substance use and overdose.

When someone experiences an overdose or has a substance use-related interaction with police, CLEAR steps in to offer help. Highly trained Community Engagement Specialists and Family Recovery Coaches connect with individuals and their families to provide support and guidance tailored to their needs. Participation is voluntary and focused on trust, dignity, and respect.