



DMHAS Update

Summer 2023

Message from Commissioner Nancy Navarretta



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Welcome to the Summer 2023 issue of the DMHAS Update. As we approach the midpoint of summertime and the long hot days continue to roll on, several important observances occur during this time. In June we observed LGBTQ+ Pride month, a time to celebrate diversity, individuality, and visibility. It also provided an opportunity to have conversations about mental health struggles within the community and resources available for help. In July, we observe National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, which brings awareness to the unique struggles that racial and ethnic minority communities face regarding mental illness in the United States.

These observances are important because they help to raise awareness of the issue while highlighting available relevant resources. Visibility, conversation, and understanding are essential in order to bridge the disparity gap and create equal access to mental healthcare across all genders, sexualities, and demographics. This is something we are addressing on a daily basis as we continue to work towards true healthcare equity.

As always, feel free to reach out with ideas, questions, or feedback. See you back here in August!

CT Partnerships for Hope and Healing Grant Announced

DMHAS recently announced that it has been awarded a 5-year, \$3,675,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to enhance statewide and community-level mental health promotion and suicide prevention, intervention and response capacity. The **CT Partnerships for Hope and Healing (PH2)** youth suicide prevention grant will be co-directed by DMHAS and the Departments of Children and Families (DCF) and Public Health (DPH), the lead state agencies for suicide prevention.

The PH2 grant will utilize comprehensive, equitable, public health approaches and evidence-based practices and strategies to address gaps and reduce suicide attempts and deaths among youth age 24 and under. Planned enhancements include a Training Collaborative, Data to Action Dashboard, 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline co-promotion with the state's 1 WORD, 1 VOICE, 1 LIFE suicide prevention campaign, and the release of Connecticut's Suicide Prevention Plan 2030. The grant will also fund the development of coordinated and sustainable partnerships within five prioritized areas across schools, campuses, community organizations and clinical services to ensure at-risk youth are identified, connected to care/treatment, provided with lethal means counseling, safety planning, and follow-up services. [Click here to read the full press release.](#)

Mental Health Awareness Month Recap

State Capitol Police Department

Connecticut

Luiz Casanova
Chief of Police



The Connecticut General Assembly
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Office: (860) 240-0240
Fax: (860) 240-0247

May 24, 2023

At the request of Commissioner Nancy Navarretta, the accompanying flag of Mental Health was flown over the Connecticut State Capitol on May 21st & 23rd, 2023. The flag was flown in honor and recognition of Mental Health Awareness for Mental Health Awareness Month.

Sincerely,

Sgt. Stanley Masternak
State Capitol Police Department



(Clockwise from top L): DMHAS ABI Services at the legislative Veteran's Resource Fair, letter from State Capitol PD regarding the display of the Mental Health Awareness flag, Fellowship Place's Career Development celebration, Members of Fellowship's Expressive Arts program, the green mental health awareness flag flies above the CT State Capitol.



The LGBTQIA+ Collaborative & OOC's Multicultural Celebrations Committee Honor Pride Month



Pride is a joyful celebration of all of the beautiful identities of the LGBTQIA+ community. Throughout the month of June, spaces are created nationwide where LGBTQIA+ individuals can bring their whole selves to dance and march in the streets and declare: *We are here. We are visible. We are proud!* However, this also a moment of crisis for many in our communities.

Lives are literally on the line. Too many people – trans people, Black and Brown people, people living with HIV & AIDS, people being denied basic care – are facing unprecedented attacks. Despite this, the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies, rise up and continue to fight for equality, justice, and freedom. As we honor and celebrate Pride month, we must never forget that Pride was inspired by the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan.

The Stonewall Uprising was a series of protests led by the LGBTQIA+ community, in which brave individuals stood their ground. Stonewall served as a catalyst for the LGBTQIA+ rights movement in the United States and around the world. On the one year anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, the first Pride Parades were held in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Today, brave individuals are still fighting and will do so until all individuals are able to have freedom without exception, liberation without exception, joy without exception, and pride without exception.

(Sources: [Celebrate Pride With Us: Without Exception! - Human Rights Campaign \(hrc.org\)](#) | [The Trevor Project](#) | [For Young LGBTQ Lives](#))

dmhas **THE STATE OF MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH IN CONNECTICUT**

Hosted by the Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

Speakers:

- Charles Dike**, MD, FRCPsych, MBChB, MPH
DMHAS Medical Director
- Karin Haberlin**, MA
Behavioral Health Program Manager
DMHAS
- Jessica Isom**, MD, MPH
Keynote Speaker
Vision for Equity, LLC
- Nancy Navarretta**, MA, LPC
DMHAS Commissioner
- Taylor Bryan Turner**
Assistant Regional Director
SAMHSA Region 1

Join us for a review of the stats and a keynote address around the use of data to improve health equity across the behavioral health workforce.

27 JULY 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
Virtual Event

REGISTER NOW >

This virtual event is a technical assistance activity of the DMHAS Office of Multicultural Health Equity (OMHE), supported by the New England Mental Health Technology Transfer Center. Our virtual platform is open to DMHAS state-operated facilities and DMHAS funded private non-profit providers.

For more information, contact OMHE Director Samia Hussein, MPH.

Minority Mental Health Awareness Month Event

The DMHAS [Office of Multicultural Health Equity \(OMHE\)](#) in collaboration with Yale [Program for Recovery Community Health \(PRCH\)](#) and supported by the [New England Mental Health Technology Transfer Center \(MHTCC\)](#) would like to invite you to join us on Thursday, July 27 from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. for a webinar in honor of Minority Mental Health Awareness month.

Please [click here](#) for speaker information, registration, and further details. We hope you are able to join us as we discuss the "State of Minority Mental Health in Connecticut".

For questions or more information, contact OMHE Director, Samia Hussein at Samia.Hussein@ct.gov.

EAP Mini-Grant Awards

In the Spring of 2023, DMHAS-funded providers were invited to apply for EAP Mini-Grant Awards, which were funded through the SAMHSA CT COVID-19 Behavioral Health Response and Assistance program. These one-time grants were meant to assist providers with developing or enhancing their employee assistance programs (EAP) or to cover the cost of new or additional EAP service needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc., the DMHAS administrative services agency, processed and reviewed applications and issued payments directly to providers.

The grants proved helpful to providers in offering additional support to their staff. “Family CT employees work tirelessly with families impacted by violence, trauma, substance use, and so much more. We would be naïve to think that the vicarious trauma and burnout our staff experience does not take a toll on them. While we encourage staff to take time off to recharge and take care of themselves, we have never before had an opportunity to provide mental health services to our staff in the form of an EAP. I am grateful to be able to offer our staff a tangible resource to use when they are experiencing burnout, secondary trauma, or otherwise needing to seek support in their personal or work life. The EAP Mini-Grant we have been awarded will allow us to implement and sustain a much-needed employee assistance program at our agency for the next two years,” said Jodi Baloga, Director of Community Programs for [Family Centered Services of CT](#).

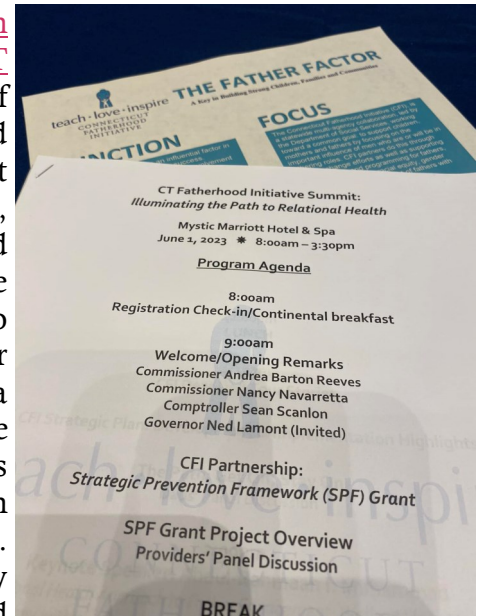
Cora Grandy, Business Manager for [McCall Behavioral Health Network](#), added “the overall health and wellbeing of staff is paramount to the exceptional care we at McCall Behavioral Health Network provide to our clients every day of the year. Being able to provide a solid means by which our staff can maintain a healthy work-life balance helps to ensure that our staff, clients, and community as a whole are getting the best possible care from McCall Behavioral Health Network.”

In all, seventeen grants totaling nearly \$135,000 were awarded to different providers to support program staff in making them healthier, happier, and more capable to work with individuals and families on their journey to recovery.



CT Fatherhood Initiative Summit

On June 1, 2023, The DMHAS [Prevention and Health Promotion Division \(PHP\)](#) partnered with the [CT Fatherhood Initiative \(CFI\)](#) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) to host the CT Fatherhood Summit at the Mystic Marriott in Groton. This event brought together leaders from the state legislature, agency commissioners, state department heads and staff, fatherhood program participants, youth service bureau and prevention coalition staff and fathers to learn about the work and goals of the CFI. Senator Sean Scanlon, DMHAS Commissioner Navarretta and DSS Commissioner Barton-Reeves opened the event with comments about the importance of fathers and how all of the people-serving work being done in the state should uniformly support men being fathers. Two keynote speakers, Abdul Muhammed (My People Clinical Services) and Shari Doherty (Child Find of America), shared their experiences and perspectives on celebrating and empowering families—in particular men—to be healthy and impactful dads. Diana DiTunno (DSS) offered an overview of the CFI's strategic plan. Video testimonials from individuals commenting on their own fathers or being a father were recorded for the CFI's "Dear Dads" project throughout the day as well.



The day sparked new connections and ideas for agencies and organizations to collaborate and further support fathers and families in our state. The [Governor's Prevention Partnership](#) has scheduled Abdul Muhammed to conduct a workshop specifically for the Fatherhood Prevention staff. [DMHAS Problem Gambling Services](#) also will be working with the Fatherhood Prevention staff to provide information and resources. The [Change the Script](#) van as well as the multitude of resources offered by the [CT Clearinghouse](#) have also reached new audiences as the result of this summit.

If you would like more information on the CFI visit the [Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative](#). If you have questions about prevention and fatherhood please contact Sarju Shah, PHP Director, at Sarju.Shah@ct.gov.



[CT Fatherhood Initiative Summer 2023 Newsletter](#)

Upcoming Events

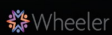
INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

Save the date

AUGUST 31, 2023 - 11:00-3:00PM

Walnut Hill Park, New Britain

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY IN
HONOR OF THE LIVES LOST TO OVERDOSE IN CONNECTICUT.



Join us on Thursday, August 31, 2023 at Walnut Hill Park in New Britain for our annual International Overdose Awareness Day remembrance ceremony.

International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) is the world's largest annual campaign to end overdose. This is a day for us to remember those who have died from drug overdose and acknowledge the grief of the family and friends left behind.

The event will feature speakers, mobile harm reduction resources, memorial displays, and much more. For more information, please contact Art Mongillo at Arthur.Mongillo@ct.gov.

Join us on September 22, 2023 for the annual DMHAS/Connecticut Women's Consortium Harm Reduction Conference, which will bring together a variety of stakeholders to address racial disparities in overdose deaths and share approaches to reduce risk for all people who use drugs.

More information coming soon.



The Harm Reduction Conference

September 22nd, 2023 | 9:00am - 4:00pm

Virtual & Omni Hotel New Haven

6 CECs Available

Save the Date

The national opioid crisis continues as disparities in opioid overdose deaths worsen for communities of color despite increased availability of enhanced treatment services, recovery supports and prevention initiatives. Harm-reduction remains a practical and necessary strategy that offers a supplemental or safe alternative to traditional service approaches. This annual conference brings together experts to discuss enhancing equity and approaches to reduce risk for all people who use drugs.

Additional information will follow!

Sponsored by The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and The Connecticut Women's Consortium