**Diversity & Inclusion Workgroup Meeting Minutes June 17, 2021**

**Welcome**

**Participants:** Alyssia Parson, Brigitte Kealy, Sierra Copper, Dawn Phillips, Kim Copper, Nicole Fisher, Maggie Thomas, Kelley Moran, Rebecca Hutchison, Susan Caulk, Katie Dilley, Brandy James, Yvette Hynson, Valerie Williams, Edwin Gibbs

**Review of the Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice**

Sherone created a Powerpoint presentation and encouraged discussion as we crosswalk the Blueprint alongside the Draft FY22 CLC Strategic Plan. It is hopefully that we’ll receive notification soon that the plan is approved, from the Behavioral Health Administration.

What are the CLAS Standards? Link shared to <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov> for review of the fifteen CLAS Standards.

Goal 1, Standard 15: Participants shared how their agencies received trainings (Eastern Shore Crisis Response, Kent DSS), implementing new initiatives (ex. Harm Reduction with Parole/Probation), partnering with a consultant (Equity Consortium-Caroline Co Public School), creating a Policy & Procedure training manual (QA Health Dept.), community outreach via COVID related activities.

Probation experienced challenges with supervising individuals who must report regularly not having access to and learning to utilize technology. Challenges include across age and economic status.

Goal 2, Standard 6: Participant shared concern re translation services not being suitable for different dialects. Caroline Co. School System uses Language Link and is trying to increase the # of staff who speak other languages relevant in the county. Neighborhood Svc. Center encountered an individual who’s blind and has been able to help with their needs. They also have bi-lingual staff members who help with the Spanish speaking population.

Goal 3, Standards 12: Mention of the SEADS project through John Hopkins, for the State of MD. The project reviewed harm reduction from the

\*There will be a survey for the workgroup, to garner more participant interest and to make sure the topics covered are of interest moving forward.

Goal 4, Standards 13: Example given re the county Emergency Operation Centers during COVID. Also the LAA’s had to change their primary role to COVID related tasks (PPE, testing, vaccination, etc). DSS took on other roles usually done by other divisions of the system. Another example is observing monthly Awareness (etc. Recovery Month, Domestic Violence) and sharing information across the mid-shore.

Goal 5, Standard 3: Not just hiring for front desk staff, but having diverse staff at varying levels of the organization (including Board of Directors). Many agencies stepped in to serve the community during COVID, outside of their “normal” services. We hope this continues as an ongoing service, to benefit the community.

Maggie shared a concern of the lack of the “LGBT voice” on governance bodies. Also re individuals who are still in survival mode and are focused on their primary needs. We can address this ongoing. Discussion re services at Chase Brexton in Easton. Deb Dunn is the contact who can present re gender diversity and health disparities.

**Next workgroup topic:** Review survey responses and schedule ongoing workgroups. Date: TBD in August possibly.