

Committee on Mental Health and the Justice System | Minutes

Monday, March 23, 2020

Virtual meeting

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Present (telephonically): Kent Batty (Chair), Mary Lou Brncik, Brad Carlyon, Amelia Cramer, Jim Dunn, Hon. Elizabeth Finn, Josephine Jones, Natalie Jones, Dianna Kalandros, Cynthia Kuhn James McDougall, Kristin McManus, Dr. Carol Olson, Ronald Overholt, Beya Thayer, Proxy for Chief Deputy David Rhodes, J.J. Rico, Proxy for AHCCCS, Hon. Barbara Spencer, Christopher Staring, Hon. Fanny Steinlage

Absent/Excused: Shelley Curran, Chief Chris Magnus, Dr. Michael Shafer, Paul Thomas

Guests/Presenters: Cathleen Cole

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Staff: Theresa Barrett, Mark Meltzer, Stacy Reinstein, Diana Tovar

Regular Business

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Kent Batty (Chair) asked committee members and guests to briefly introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Members were asked to approve minutes from February 24, 2020, noting they were in the meeting packet and provided electronically in advance of the meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made. Motion was approved unanimously.

Agency News and Updates

Mr. Batty shared with the committee that the Mental Health Summit will be postponed to a later date. Ms. Reinstein mentioned that the House and Senate are trying to pass a skinny budget bill that will be just enough to continue state agencies. She also mentioned that although the other Mental Health bills that were introduced are stuck the one exception is the mental health parity bill (Senate Bill 1523) which has been approved.

Committee Discussion – Current Events

Mr. Batty opened discussion to the committee to share current events happening in their local communities/courts/hospitals that are impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Members shared information from their court and precautions that staff have been taking to reduce large group contact. These steps include eliminating as many non-essential hearings, working with court staff to move to virtual hearings when possible, and granting motions to continue as much as possible and appropriate. Dr. Olson shared that at Valley Wise they have been continuing operations as usual, but they are trying to move to telephonic as allowed by level of patient care needed. Furthermore, the county attorney and sheriffs in Pinal county are opening conversations about releasing non-violent defendants as much as possible to get the jail populations down. In

addition, Mr. McDougall noted that the governor of DES funded the 2-1-1 Crisis Response Network and it has been running 24/7 as a designated Coronavirus hotline.

Mr. Hintze asked the committee to consider being proactive with sharing information/recommendations regarding resources and services such as hospital bed availability and the prospect to use out of county outsourcing. He also mentioned that the AZ Court Care brochure has been a great resource to people in need.

Good of the Order / Call to the Public

Cathleen Cole shared that there is a notary requirement for forms for Title 36 in Pima County which requires an in-person service. Alex from AHCCCS will respond to Ms. Cole about her concern.

Mr. Batty reminded the committee that the next meeting is April 20, 2020 which will also be virtual.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m. by order of the chair.