



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
WOMEN AND GIRLS INITIATIVE  
GOVERNING COUNCIL**

**Monday, May 24, 2021**

**1:00 PM**

Virtual Meeting

**Governing Council Members, staff and the public attended meeting via Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing or by phone.**

Roll Call and Review of Meeting Logistics - Alisa Williams (21-2124)

**Chair Bea Stotzer called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.**

**Alisa Williams, Chief Executive Office (CEO) Analyst called the roll. Among those present were Women and Girls Initiative (WGI) Governing Council staff: Abbe Land, Executive Director, Porsha Potts, Senior Sec. III, and Alisa Williams. Also, in attendance were Jackie Filla, Ph.D., WGI Research Consultant, and Marissa Ayala, Sheila Kuehl Policy Fellow.**

Present: Chair Bea Stotzer, Vice Chair Wendy Greuel, Kafi Blumenfield, Anita DeFrantz, Perla Hernandez-Trumkul, Chris Hershey, Sandra Mendoza, Alice S. Petrossian, Jennifer Quan, Dr. Carmen Schaye, Sharon Shelton, Kathy Spillar and Jane Templin

Absent: Araceli Campos and Angela Underwood-Jacobs

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER**

1. Approval of Minutes April 26, 2021 (21-2125)

**On motion of Member Jane Templin, seconded by Member Anita DeFrantz and unanimously carried by the following vote, the WGI approved the meeting minutes from April 26, 2021.**

**Ayes:** 13 - Chair Bea Stotzer, Vice Chair Wendy Greuel, Kafi Blumenfield, Anita DeFrantz, Perla Hernandez-Trumkul, Chris Hershey, Sandra Mendoza, Alice S. Petrossian, Jennifer Quan, Dr. Carmen Schaye, Sharon Shelton, Kathy Spillar and Jane Templin

**Absent:** 2 - Araceli Campos and Angela Underwood-Jacobs

**Attachments:** [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

## **II. PRESENTATIONS**

### **2. Mental Health for Women & Girls**

Emily C Dossett, MD, MTS  
Associate Medical Director, Women's Health and Reproductive Psychiatry, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Imee Perius, Head of Marketing and Communications, Department of Mental Health (21-2127)

**Emily Dossett, MD, MTS, Associate Medical Director, Women's Health and Reproductive Psychiatry for Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH), stated unfortunately, Ms. Imee Perius, Head of Marketing and Communications at DMH, sends her apologies as she was unable to attend today's meeting.**

**Dr. Dossett reported that she introduced gender specific mental health care approximately two years ago. As indicated in the PowerPoint presentation (see Supporting Document), certain types of mental illness are much more prevalent in women versus men. From about the age of 12 the rates of depression in women starts to rise, by the age of 16 it doubles, and it remains high through most of the women's childbearing years. The depression probably stems from physiology and hormones however, social constructs, victimization, and the lack of support around traditional women's roles can also be a contributing factor. The Department of Public Health (DPH) directs the Los Angeles Mother and Baby (LAMB) program that issues a self-report survey to pregnant and postpartum women within the County to evaluate depression. The aggregated data indicators are by racial or ethnic groups, service area, supervisors district, etc. The data shows the disparities between black women and other women across the County; secondly it shows that rates of depression are just as high if not higher in pregnancy than after the baby is born spanning most of the perinatal stage.**

**Dr. Dossett stated reproduction and childbearing years are highly vulnerable times for mental illness in women, she covered common assumptions about reproduction and mental illness for women. Dr. Dossett also covered the two-year-old initiatives based on the four pillars of Reproductive Justice. Dr. Dossett further stated that gender informed mental health care is essentially education and training of providers both within and outside of DMH. It is important that gender specific care for women and girls is integrated in all forms of mental health care within and without DMH. Therefore, a Reproductive Mental Health Care Advisory Board was established with 12 members whose expertise ensures the work is gender informed. Gender informed mental health care is about training other County agencies on a variety of mental health and health care issues. For example, there is little to no gender intersectional training within the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and for persons caring for foster children.**

#### **Reproductive Options and Mental Illness**

**Dr. Dossett reported reproductive goals for patients with mental health needs require inclusiveness and the incorporation of the person's whole self. People value conversations about their reproductive lives and mental health. DMH conducted a two-year research project in collaboration with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) that involved interviews with staffers, physicians, and patients on how to incorporate reproductive goals counseling into outpatient mental health care because it was completely ignored. From the study, policies were written to support providers and clients around reproduction because for some people who come to DMH clinics, DMH is considered their primary care physician. DMH has incorporated an oral contraceptive pill into their pharmacies and pregnancy tests in DMH clinics which is designed to empower girls and women to consider their own reproductive life goals.**

#### **Reintegration Program for Women Departing Jail**

**Dr. Dossett runs the Women's Community Reintegration Program for Women coming out of jail that focuses its work around trauma and resiliency informed care. The program counters the high amount of domestic violence and untold trauma most of the women confronted. What has made a huge difference in the basic premise of trauma and resiliency informed care is the providers has stopped asking the question, "What is wrong with you?" and changed the narrative to, "What happened to you?" The resiliency piece comes into play when you ask "What is strong about you." This changes the whole lens from a deficit based thinking to one that**

is strength based which makes a tremendous difference in terms of repour, treatment and outcomes.

Dr. Dossett reported there is a breach in the system that provides mental health care to the pregnant and new parent. Historically, expectant women requiring mental health services were mostly neglected therefore, efforts to expand services for expectant mother and the new parent are growing within DMH. A Maternal Mental Health Network trained essentially 13 clinics or programs in all service areas within the County in order to provide maternal mental health care to its constituents. In Antelope Valley the support groups are a huge success. Dr. Dossett stated an email consultation line was created to support providers. In addition, DMH will start consultation groups and develop an online perinatal mental health training program that will become accessible within DMH and across the entire County. UCLA Center Prevention of Excellence website will oversee the online perinatal mental health training with hopes that the Board of Supervisors may possibly mandate the training for certain County agencies that have contact with clients who may be pregnant and are starting families. For older women, mental health care is barely being offered to address isolation, the lack of social support, and their complex medical needs and how they interact with mental health.

#### LGBTQ Plus Specialist

Dr. Dossett reported Rebecca Gitlin, Ph.D., DMH Psychologist, PowerPoint slides were added to the presentation. Dr. Gitlin is the LGBTQ+ Specialist at DMH and spearheads the LGBTQ+ mental health initiatives. She is training DMH clinicians on how to provide letters of support to individuals needing gender affirming treatment, which is very difficult to obtain. Dr. Gitlin has contributed largely to the recruitment of clinicians to train and make available to support the LGBTQ+ community which is a tremendous accomplishment and previously unavailable in DMH. Furthermore, Dr. Gitlin works hard to launch nondiscrimination policies and has established a workgroup to develop a LGBTQ+mission statement for DMH. In the year and a half she has been with DMH, Dr. Gitlin has conducted a survey on sexual orientation and gender identity data to determine whether DMH clinicians were aware of the data and how training can best be utilized. Once the results from the survey becomes available, DMH will provide the results to the WGI.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

### III. REPORTS

3. Chair Report - (Bea Stotzer) (21-2129)

**Chair Stotzer requested staff to forward the Mental Health PowerPoint presentation to the Governing Council. Chair Stotzer reported that by the next meeting the Sheriff's Department study and the final report of the Community Engagement virtual town halls may come up for review by the Governing Council. Also, a special meeting will be held with the Chief Executive Officer Fesia Davenport on July 1, 2021 to access her opinion on the next steps for WGI and will report the outcome at the July 2021 Governing Council meeting. Lastly, the WGI was invited to attend the Second Supervisorial District Juneteenth Resource Center Fair at the Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area on June 18, 2021. The WGI and the CEO will share a table and Executive Director Land will extend the invitation to the Governing Council.**

4. Homeless Women Ad Hoc Committee Update (Wendy Greuel) (21-2130)

**Vice Chair Wendy Greuel, Chair of the Homeless Women Ad Hoc Committee, reported their first meeting was an overview of the County of Los Angeles (County) homeless program. Their second meeting presenters were the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the Downtown Women's Center and Eve Sheedy that reported on domestic violence, homelessness and where they intersect. The next meeting will include a woman who has experienced homelessness as well as a provider. Also, reviewed are the reports on governance and its structure from the viewpoint of the County, City of Los Angeles, Greater Los Angeles and LASHA. The Ad Hoc Committee's primary focus are the recommendations and how the Governing Council can impact activities within the County. In addition to studying the outcomes of women and homelessness, the Ad Hoc Committee seeks to find the most impactful way to alleviate women from experiencing homelessness across the County by looking at preventions and supportive housing.**

5. At-Promise Girls Ad Hoc Committee Update (Anita DeFrantz) (21-2131)

**Member Anita DeFrantz, Chair of the At Promise Girls Ad Hoc Committee, reported the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Public Policy Master's Program students submitted their first draft and obtained feedback from the Ad Hoc Committee. During the first week of June 2021, the students will host a video presentation describing their methodology and findings. Following the presentation, two students will answer questions. In addition, the Ad Hoc will discuss, at an upcoming meeting, whether to**

**continue the work of the students by delving deeper to develop the most comprehensive recommendations possible.**

**6. WGI Final Report Ad Hoc Committee Update (Chris Hershey) (21-2134)**

**Member Chris Hershey, Chair of the WGI Final Report Ad Hoc Committee, reported she was in contact with Governing Council Members over the last month and at this point has a rough outline of the final report. Member Hershey is working with staff to frame details, the Ad Hoc Committee will have an opportunity to provide feedback before the Governing Council's review and prior to writing the report in earnest.**

**7. Executive Director's Report**

**Employee Climate Survey**

**ARDII (Anti-Racism Diversity Inclusion Initiative) (21-2137)**

**Executive Director Abbe Land reported on June 15, 2021, California Governor, Gavin Newsom, may potentially roll back the emergency order restrictions relating to the Covid 19 pandemic. This may also allow the WGI, other boards and Commissions governed by the Brown Act to meet in person. Once the decision is made, the determination of where to meet must be vetted which may include locating a venue to retain social distances and the wearing of masks.**

**Employee Climate Survey**

**Executive Director Land reported the Employee Climate Survey II was distributed and as of last week, 21 percent of the County's workforce responded. The goal is to obtain a 35 percent response rate by the end of this week however, if needed the survey deadline will be extended. By the middle of June 2021, WGI partner, the Department of Human Resources, will begin cleaning up the data. Jackie Filla, Ph.D., WGI Research Consultant, Marissa Ayala, Sheila Kuehl Policy Fellow and potentially an intern will begin analyzing the data to ascertain how it compares to the Employee Climate Survey I. Hopefully, a report becomes available for the Governing Council to review sometime in September 2021. Executive Director Land mentioned several people taking the survey gave the WGI really positive feedback.**

**ARDII (Anti-Racism Diversity Inclusion Initiative)**

**Executive Director Land also reported the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative (ARDII) was established in July 2020 by Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas who raised the issue and identified racism as a public health issue in Los Angeles County.**

A part of that initiative is for ARDII to prepare a strategic plan. Four committees comprised of County staff were formed to provide recommendations for the strategic plan: Planning and Data Committee; Engagement Committee; Culture and Climate Committee; and a Narrative and Communication Committee. The WGI is a participant of the Culture and Climate Committee (Committee) that addresses training. This Committee's duties include changing the culture within the County, which is a part of the Governing Council's mission for the County to use a gender lens. What the WGI expertise brings to the Committee is important especially, when talking about changing the culture. Currently, training is focused on having County employees understand implicit bias and build on that language when using an intersectional lens and to recognize its impact on gender and race.

Presently, under the CEO direction is the Women and Girls Initiative, the Sustainability Initiative, the Homeless Initiative and now the ARDII Initiative.

Executive Director Land stated County Counsel submitted a letter to the Board last week and is unsure what the outcome will be on adopting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) into County ordinances.

In response to Member Templin question, Dr. Filla reported the industry standard for an Employee Climate Survey is a 22- 25 percent response rate, so we did much better than that the first time. For Employee Climate Survey II, the WGI is hoping the few County departments that are holding competitions will increase the percentages.

#### **Economic Mobility Resiliency Report**

Dr. Filla met with Chair Stotzer to discuss the end result of the report. Currently, the delayed release of census data and traditional data that the government collects may become available in the fall as opposed to the summer. For the interim, Dr. Filla will create a work plan using the WGI's fourth Economic Resiliency recommendation, access to social protection systems and mechanisms, that address common risk across the population. Identified were areas for applying a gender lens through programming, access and collection of data, and use of data to recognize the status of the County and where the gaps are located. The goal is to utilize data from the County and the economic data that will become available later in the fall to identify gaps. Presently, the WGI is working on an interview guide for the departments that engage in economic development activities and will conduct a literature review on identifying the specific economic hardships that the Covid 19 pandemic has created for women.

## Juneteenth Resource Fair

Executive Director Land will send information regarding the June 18, 2021 Juneteenth Resource Fair that will be held from 11:00 to 3 p.m. Executive Director Land asked the Governing Council if anyone was available to staff the table to let her know. Executive Director Land thanked the Governing Council Members for their input that was incorporated in the WGI progress report. The Board and the Governing Council will receive the finalized report today or tomorrow as well as today's DMH PowerPoint presentation will be included for the Governing Council to review.

### IV. MISCELLANEOUS

8. Announcements (21-2140)

There were no announcements.

#### Public Comment

9. Public Comment (21-2142)

A member of the public, Diane, addressed the WGI.

#### Adjournment

10. Adjourn June 28, 2021 1:00-2:30 (21-2143)

On motion of Member Jane Templin, seconded by Member Chris Hershey, and unanimously carried by the following vote, the Governing Council approved the meeting adjournment at 2:18 p.m. for a Regular Meeting scheduled for June 28, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

**Ayes:** 13 - Chair Bea Stotzer, Vice Chair Wendy Greuel, Kafi Blumenfield, Anita DeFrantz, Perla Hernandez-Trumkul, Chris Hershey, Sandra Mendoza, Alice S. Petrossian, Jennifer Quan, Dr. Carmen Schaye, Sharon Shelton, Kathy Spillar and Jane Templin

**Absent:** 2 - Araceli Campos and Angela Underwood-Jacobs