



## CAN Board of Directors Meeting

5/13/22 Minutes

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Present:** **Tamara Atkinson**, Capital Area Workforce Solutions; **Moin Baig**, Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce; **Chris Cervini**, Austin Community College; **Emily Cicchini**, One Voice Central Texas; **Devon Darden**, Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; **Amy Einhorn**, St. David's Foundation; **David Evans & Hal Katz**, Integral Care; **Simone Talma Flowers**, Interfaith Action of Central Texas; **Vanessa Fuentes**, Council Member, City of Austin; **Suchitra Gururaj**, UT Austin; **Rachel Hampton & Donovan DePriest**, CAN Community Council; **Liz Johnson**, St. Edward's University; **Jeremy Martin**, Austin Chamber of Commerce; **Jo Anne Ortiz**, Capital Metro; **David Smith**, United Way for Greater Austin; **Ingrid Taylor**, Ascension Seton; **Jeffrey Travillion**, Precinct 1 Commissioner, Travis County; **Ofelia Zapata**, Austin ISD Trustee.

**Other guests:** Sundal Ali, AISD; Sara Barge, Office of Austin City Council District 2; Caitlin Brown, Office of Travis County Precinct One; Nora Comstock, CAN Community Council; Mary Dodd, Integral Care; Nancy Gilliam, CAN Community Council; Sharon Guess, NAMI Austin; Dulce Gruwell, NAMI Austin; Lawrence Lyman, Travis County; Ara Merjanian; Pilar Sanchez, Travis County HHS.

**CAN staff in attendance:** Raul Alvarez, Carlos A Soto, Jelina Tunstill

**Call to order and Introduction:** Board Chair Tamara Atkinson called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm and introduced the meeting.

**Minutes:** The 2/11/2022 CAN Board minutes were approved, after a motion submitted by Suchi Gururaj, which was seconded by Chris Cervini. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Community Council Update:** Rachel Hampton mentioned that the most recent Community Council meeting featured a subcommittee work session focused on the mental health report and recommendations that the CAN Board will receive today. One work group is working in concert with the Language Access Action Team on an outreach and communication campaign for mental health awareness, and another work group is looking at data and systems in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness. More grounding work will be carried out in both work groups at the next meeting. The Council is also changing the structure of the meetings to better accommodate work group collaboration, which will now take up about half of the meeting time. Selecting action items for each group will be a major focus of the next meeting.

**CAN Executive Director's Report:** Tamara Atkinson briefly announced the formation of the CAN Membership Committee, formed because of an action in the CAN 2022 Work Plan, which is charged with: analyzing current membership to determine if and where it might be expanded; developing strategies for engaging other jurisdictions; and evaluating member contributions for budget optimization. Members will be contacted individually about participating in this committee, and any members interested in participating can also reach out to Tamara or CAN staff. David Evans mentioned that as we talk to organizations who are potential collaborators in the future that we highlight or estimate the return on investment is regarding the membership contributions. There are many benefits. If we can outline these benefits in something like a one-pager, it would be compelling.

Raul Alvarez mentioned that the work to establish CAN as a Non-Profit continues, and we have started sending member agreements to CAN organizations to proceed with it. CAN will also launch a new training opportunity in June called "Race Equity Principles in Practice" that makes use of research conducted by CAN and tools created by CAN. We have also conducted 3 Expanding Opportunity Forums. We will review the learnings from the regional summit and these forums at the June Board meeting. Moin Baig of the Greater Austin Asian Chamber mentioned that there has been a traumatic effect on many business owners and wondered how to channel our information to

provide access to their members and inform them on how to get involved. The mental health work group may be a good place to start, and the soon-to-be-created expanding opportunity work group.

**Community Council Mental Health Report Presentation:** Nancy Gilliam mentioned that mental health was a pressing issue before COVID exacerbated it. Mental health issues and traumatic experiences can begin affecting people from a young age. The first set of short-term recommendations are intended for school & at home. These are: early/rapid assessment and referral by school districts, expanding service capacity and capabilities in schools, expanded tele-health and technology supports during in-school and out-of-school times, and tutoring/mentoring during the school day (regular or summer) as well as after school.

Short-term recommendations in health clinics include: expanding to reach all youth through pediatric screening; and maintaining the access to care that has been made available through health insurance reimbursements for tele-health services. Long-term recommendations for addressing community needs include: the development and launch of a public information campaign; and the promotion of self-care and use of support groups & technology to connect with different services & supports. Additional long-term community recommendations are: developing a seamless, one-stop-shop that integrates enrollment/referral; improving access to peer-based approaches and strategies to promote community mental wellness, civic engagement, and social cohesion; addressing data gaps; making program improvement; and facilitating community conversations. The council's goal is to align with CAN values and frameworks and sustainably innovate without "reinventing the wheel." There will also be special attention towards access in three languages other than English, to help ensure the information reaches the people who are most vulnerable or in need.

Moin Baig mentioned that the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce can offer CAN members special access to their database with their chamber members contact information. The GAACC can also cross-promote messages through their newsletter and social media. There is also the possibility of accessing potential volunteer translators through their network.

David Evans commended the City and the County for creating, through their use of inter-local use agreements in board appointments, the flexibility that allows for such a broad spectrum of approaches to be available. Ofelia Zapata mentioned that mental health is a high priority area, with out-of-school-time support posing a significant challenge that also needs collaborative attention. David Evans mentioned the help line (512) 472-HELP that can help with navigating the system and connecting with clinics.

Suchi Gururaj mentioned that UT frequently talks about wellness, and all the different aspects of wellness that contribute to a person's peace of mind (including, for instance, scholarships and financial aid for students). She also mentioned that, in addition to mental health awareness month, it is also Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Since students are in a period of mental health crisis, they are seeking culturally competent and aligned therapists. UT is also in collaboration with the Dell Medical School Department of Population Health to create a Community Mental Health Council.

Commissioner Travillion mentioned that mental health is a critical issue of importance in the African American community. Individualized diagnosis and care plans are essential, as well as the ability for schools to screen students and refer them to services. Too often children who are going through tough family situations or other challenges are steered towards Special Education instead of counseling and support. The County is also focusing on increasing after school program offerings at Title 1 schools.

**Community Stakeholder Perspectives:** Sharon Guess of NAMI Central Texas, the local National Association on Mental Illness organization, briefly introduced herself and NAMI's work. While doing their work, they encounter many misunderstandings, misconceptions, or myths about mental health. Eliminating stigma is an important area of

focus for them. They are currently in the process of updating their workplace presentations. Topics they are working to update include stress management and work-life balance. Dulce Gruwell mentioned that NAMI Central Texas started offering programs in Spanish this year. Her role is a Peer Support Specialist, who supports the work of therapists, case managers, and other members of the treatment team. Different forms of peer support include one-on-one or group-based approaches. NAMI offers several kinds of peer support for individuals as well as their families. Dulce mentioned something she would like to work on is a mental health peer support specialist internship.

**Language Access Presentation and Budget Adoption:** Raul mentioned that this proposal (the Language Access Project for Mental Health and Wellness – LAP MHW) will support work at the intersection of language access and mental health and will be supported with funding from the Central Texas Language Access Fund that CAN established a few years ago at the Austin Community Foundation. We have now developed a budget ready for adoption to clarify how the funds for the LAP MHW project will be used. Key points for consideration are that the project: relates to a CAN priority (mental health), is consistent with CAN work, will last one year, is phased, and its impact on staff capacity will be limited. An updated itemized budget featured three new line items (printing, media campaign development, and paid media). The funding for this work originates from a significant award from St. David's Foundation. The following deliverables will be produced: mental health toolkits for language communities served; a web platform to serve as information clearinghouse; facilitation of Community Advisory Teams; and a multimedia Spanish messaging campaign. The Executive Committee and the Tri-Chairs previously reviewed this proposal. Emily Cicchini submitted a motion to accept the budget as proposed, Jo Anne Ortiz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**CAN Member Survey Small Group Discussion and Report Outs:** Councilmember Fuentes reported that the group she was in discussed services and programs offered at existing CAN member organizations. Some report significant changes, especially when looking at revamping paid time off policies and offering the ability to roll over unused days. Another important change is eliminating the distinction between sick days, holidays, and mental health days, and instead just calling it personal time off. Another interesting incentive was a \$100 monthly wellness package to encourage employees to engage in self-care or activities promoting their wellness. This group also discussed management practices that do not email or call employees after hours or on weekends, underscoring the importance of distinct boundaries. Modeling best practices can be helpful in changing work culture. Employee engagement was also discussed as an important factor in developing and ensuring the continued success of potential initiatives. Targeted trainings for supervisors and targeted trainings for employees might be helpful too.

Raul reported that the group he was in discussed similar issues. The idea of return to work, and flexibility in work schedules, is an issue many organizations are having to contend with. The group also discussed the EAP and how employees need help to navigate and use it, since employees may not really know how to make the most of it. Co-pays were also a topic of discussion as something that might act as a barrier to seeking help. The language aspect of the mental health issue was also an item of discussion. Partners such as Cap Metro have unusual work hours and have agreements with employee unions, and it's important to consider these kinds of schedules and relationships when creating resources, trainings, or sessions available. Another CAN partner noted that they intentionally decided to allow more breaks and wellness opportunities during the workday and "at their desk," and that those opportunities continue coming out of the pandemic. Establishing an Employee Advisor Group was also mentioned as a way to get feedback from employees about their needs.

Ara Merjanian underscored the importance for organizations to carry out their work within a context of communications and change management strategy, taking into account all of the changes happening within the organization and how those are communicated to employees (to help them understand the impact of those changes and give them a genuine opportunity to be involved early in the process). This will empower employees to shape the future of the organization instead of just being a recipient of change. David Evans suggested it might be a

good idea to check-in organizations that have improved support they provide. One Voice working with CAN, Mission Capital and others has been working on mental health issues for non-profit employees, so it might be interesting to hear from them. The Austin Chamber also has worked to support employers. Simone Talma Flowers added that, when funding organizations, it is important to provide sufficient funding so that the work can be effectively completed. Partial funding can lead to inequities that may be hard to overcome for smaller, more grass-roots organizations.

**Adjournment:** Tamara Atkinson adjourned the meeting at 2:57 pm.