

**Maine Health Access Foundation  
Board of Trustees Minutes  
August 13, 2020  
(Held via videoconference)**

Trustees Present: Dr. Connie Adler (Chair); Deborah Deatrack, Roy Hitchings Dennis King, Michael Lambke, Barbara Leonard (*ex-officio*), Edward Miller, Claudette Ndayininahaze, Bruce Nickerson, Grace Odimayo, Susan Roche, Toho Soma, Odette Thurston

Trustees Absent: Tony Marple, Catherine Ryder, Clarissa Sabattis

CAC Member Present: Abdulkerim Said

Guests Present: Lindsey Smith (University of Southern Maine, Cutler Institute)

Staff Present: Margo Beland, Charles Dwyer, Andrea Francis, Holly Irish, Ruta Kadonoff, Dani Kalian (recorder), Jeb Murphy, Frank Martinez Nocito

**Welcome**

Chair Connie Adler called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m., welcomed those present, and introductions were made.

Chair Adler noted that Finance Manager Margo Beland has just celebrated five years at MeHAF and Executive Assistant Dani Kalian twelve years. Dr. Adler expressed appreciation to both for their commitment to MeHAF.

**Consent Agenda**

Chair Adler asked if any items on the consent agenda required discussion. Hearing none, *it was MOVED, SECONDED (Nickerson/King), and VOTED unanimously to approve the following consent agenda items:*

- President's report
- June 11, 2020, Board meeting minutes
- June Treasurer's Report
- June Finance Dashboard

**Evaluation of Addiction Care Program –**

**Dr. Lindsey Smith (USM, Cutler Institute), Mr. Frank Martinez Nocito (Program Officer)**

Program Officer Frank Martinez Nocito welcomed Dr. Lindsey Smith, Senior Research Associate from the University of Southern Maine Cutler Institute, to the meeting. He noted that while Maine responds to COVID-19, it is important to remember the simultaneous epidemic of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and broader substance use disorders that began before the viral pandemic and will continue to be with us into the future. Over the past several years, MeHAF's Addiction Care program has provided funding to organizations across the state to build capacity to provide medication assisted treatment (MAT). While that relatively narrow focus was a strategic decision for what we would fund, grantees are directly doing many more things that advance treatment and recovery. Dr. Smith is one of the evaluators of the program and she shared the focus of the evaluation along with what the grantees have accomplished and learned including highlights from Tri-County Mental Health Services and Penobscot Community Health Center.

Grantee Lessons Learned:

- Grantees felt most challenged by facilitating treatment of co-occurring disorders; increasing staffing capacity, shifting culture around treating OUD, and obtaining buy-in from partners.
- Grantees created strategies to address implementation barriers including focusing on organizational, practice-level, treatment, and collaborative stakeholder engagement components.
- Grantees' strategies to promote patient-centered care included treatment approaches, community partnerships, identifying needed resources, and attention to culture shift.
- Grantees felt most proud of building treatment capacity and increasing patient-centered care.

Trustees discussed these evaluation findings and shared their experiences with relationships developed via the hub-and-spoke model vs. patients transferring to their PCPs and the potential drawbacks that sometimes happen in those situations.

**Phase II COVID-19 Funding –  
Ms. Barbara Leonard (CEO), Ms. Ruta Kadonoff (Director of Programs)**

Directed Grantmaking: CEO Leonard and Director of Programs Ruta Kadonoff reported that MeHAF has released its second wave of COVID-19 funding, noting that this round includes \$987,000 in new directed grants to organizations led by, representing, and advocating for communities and population groups most negatively impacted by COVID-19. Grants have been processed through late July and early August, with start dates of August 15. This grantmaking was framed by the concept memo approved by the Board in June, and the general plan was reviewed and supported by the Community Advisory Committee in July. The Executive Committee approved the specific grants at its July 10 meeting.

In planning this round of directed grantmaking, the staff work group focused on activities that support programs by or for key populations that experience disproportionate impact from COVID-19. Outreach to a wide range of community-based and statewide organizations helped to inform the distribution of funds. At the same time, staff members have been monitoring the evolving situation while being mindful of two additional elements of the concept memo, which prioritize focus on:

- Influencing, foster coordination among major players, and selectively fund strategic COVID-19 response elements such as translation, contact tracing, policy advocacy; and
- Continuing regular grantmaking that positions grantees and partners for the future.

Relative to the first, staff is identifying potential “big bet” opportunities (see below). Relative to the second, plans are underway to reopen the Discretionary Grants program to non-COVID-related projects this fall, and 2021 budget planning includes a return to the two new programs: Community Responsive Grants and Systems Improvement and Innovation Grants.

A detailed summary of all Phase II grantmaking to-date was shared with Trustees, and Director of Programs Ruta Kadonoff highlighted the decision criteria and analysis of grantees that was used by the staff work group to inform funding choices. Ms. Leonard noted that, guided by the parameters set within the approved concept memo, the Executive Committee has been able to act in lieu of the entire Board to enable the rapid processing of grants to organizations in need.

Support for Community-based Organizations as COVID Cultural Brokers: CEO Leonard noted that in approving the second wave of COVID-19 grantmaking in June, the Board also approved

the concept of identifying and funding “big bets” that could change the trajectory of or response to the pandemic here in Maine. She shared that while Maine has had strong success in moving quickly on many fronts, the response has also illuminated deep issues of racial and ethnic inequities in Maine to which Maine DHHS has responded, but in a manner that has not yet been sufficient in speed, intensity, and engagement of the leaders of and organizations within the communities most impacted. MeHAF and other philanthropies have reached out both to community organizations who are our partners and grantees, and to state government, to better understand and identify ways to bridge this gap.

As a result of these conversations, an initial big opportunity that will empower communities most affected by COVID-19 to enhance their efforts to support testing, quarantine and isolation, contact tracing, and social supports, in a manner that leverages state and federal pandemic response dollars and includes a partnership with the Maine Community Foundation has been identified. Each foundation will provide \$150,000 to support this effort. Ms. Leonard outlined the specifics of this opportunity noting that foundation funds will be used to provide grants to immigrant-led and ethnic community-based organizations that have been selected to enter into “COVID Cultural Broker” subcontracts with Maine DHHS contractor Catholic Charities of Maine (CCM) to do the functions described above. Grants will be for general operating support, providing the organizations with up-front cash to help them manage the cash flow issues inherent with cost-settled subcontracts, and to cover costs not covered by federal and state funds.

Also, MeHAF and MaineCF funding can be used for technical assistance to the community organizations to support them in the roles they will be taking on. As part of the negotiations, state government is expected to work on building closer working relationships with the very diverse New Mainer community and to provide technical support to the subcontracted organizations to build their capacity to obtain future contracts from the state.

Additionally, a new opportunity that has emerged since July 13 that is currently under discussion would be a public-private partnership with Maine DHHS, community-based organizations, and other Maine philanthropies to pursue a community-led assessment of COVID-19 assets and needs among Maine’s communities of color. Ms. Leonard noted that the details are still being worked out, and the next step will be for DHHS to convene a meeting at which they, community leaders, and funders can discuss next steps such as the scope and specific purpose of the assessment, what organizations/consultants might do the assessment, etc. This is an evolving situation and the Executive Committee will be updated so that if funds need to be allocated, they will be able to take action.

### **Governance Committee – Mr. Toho Soma (Committee Chair)**

Board and CAC Recruitment Process Update: Governance Committee Chair Toho Soma noted that the Committee is currently planning for 2021 recruitment needs that include the recruitment of up to three new Trustees, and up to six new Community Advisory Committee members. Recruitment criteria has been finalized by the Board and CAC at their June and July meetings, respectively. The Governance Committee will be reviewing the Recruitment Master List at its September meeting in order to prioritize prospects for outreach. Trustees and CAC members, along with current and former grantees, and key partner organizations will be sent a request next week to share the name, contact information, and a brief bio for potential prospects to add to the Master List.

Equity Subcommittee Update: Mr. Soma noted that the Equity Subcommittee, which reports to the Governance Committee, was created to ensure that equity is embedded as an operational approach and as a key element of the organizational culture to identify ways to include

advancement of equity as part of the actions of the Board, the Community Advisory Committee, and all standing committees. The first meeting of the new Equity Subcommittee was held on July 30 led by co-chairs Toho Soma and Gloria Aponte C., with support from Gita Gulati-Partee from OpenSource Leadership Solutions. The Subcommittee is comprised of members of each standing committee (with the exception of the Finance Committee for which representation will be sought). The first meeting had three primary goals of:

1. Building relationships and group identity and purpose as a committee.
2. Creating a shared baseline understanding of how MeHAF thinks about advancing equity.
3. Setting the stage to partner with staff on articulating MeHAF's theory of change for its equity work this fall.

The Equity Subcommittee will next meet on November 10 to continue this work.

### **Trustee Check-In and Meeting Evaluation – Dr. Connie Adler (Chair)**

*Trustees moved into Executive Session at 3:42 pm to gather feedback about the meeting process, solicit suggestions for improvement, or other issues of concern. At 3:51 pm, Trustees left Executive Session.*

### **Next Meeting**

The Board will meet (via Zoom) jointly with the Community Advisory Committee on Thursday, October 8, 2020.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:52.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Barbara A. Leonard, MPH  
President & CEO