**DRAFT**

National Council for Behavioral Health

Association Executives Monthly Teleconference Summary Notes

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. ET

Participants:

Laura Aldinger, Alan Bolter, Matt Brooks, Melanie Brown-Woofter, Danette Castle, Nadia Chait, Shelly Chandler, Ann Christian, Le Ondra Clark Harvey, Thomas Cook, Paul Curtis, Paul Demple, Lori Doyle, Annette Dubas, Josh Evans, Mark Fontaine, Doyle Forrestal, Robyn Garrett, Lauren Grimes, Shannon Hall, Kimberley Higgs, Heather Jefferis, Roland Lamy, Mark Levota, Marvin Lindsey, Brent McGinty, Michelle Ponce, Sarah Potter, Cherryl Ramirez, Flora Schmidt, Robert Sheehan, Chris Stoner-Mertz, Andrea Summerville, Ellyn Wilbur and Mary Windecker.

Invited Guests:

Catherine Finley and Andrea Maresca

Staff in Attendance:

Chuck Ingoglia, Jeannie Campbell, Joe Parks, Reyna Taylor, Tom Hill, Neal Comstock, Frankie Burger, Michael Petruzzelli, Malka Berro, Sophia Majlessi, and Diane Millard.

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Doyle Forrestal thanked everyone for their flexibility to join the call as we all face similar needs and can learn from and help each other.

Chuck Ingoglia said that in this rapidly evolving policy environment, our top priority is supporting our members.

**COVID-19 Policy Related Efforts to Support Members**

Presented by Reyna Taylor, Catherine Finley, and Frankie Berger

Reyna Taylor thanked everyone for joining and said that over the past 2 days we have been gathering resources and have been in contact with the White House, HHS, CMS, and SAMHSA. At both the Federal and State levels, we are focused on priorities from our Association Executives that can guide our advocacy. Reyna asked Association Executives that if they come across success stories of what is going on at the state level to please send them to us. We will collect these and use them as a general resource for everyone during this crisis.

The number one priority that has come across loud and clear from both mental health and addiction treatment providers is the ability to provide telehealth services. We are looking at ways that the Federal Government can lift current restrictions under the state of emergency and what states are doing. The other key issue is to get adequate supplies set aside for our members, especially in residential settings, much like what is being done for nursing homes. Another area we are looking at is financial resource issues – such as those dealing with leave, hiring additional employees, and direct financial support to our members. Yet another area that we are looking at is additional regulatory relief and audit flexibility.

Catherine Finley thanked the Association Executives for allowing her and her colleague Andrea Maresca to join the call. There are a couple of movements afoot on the Hill. First, the House was able to pass a second COVID-19 supplemental bill on Saturday evening and subsequently a technical correction was passed yesterday and is now in the Senate waiting on action. She believes the bill will pass and that a third supplemental bill is going to come. We have heard numbers as high as a trillion dollars for the cost of this third supplemental bill and it is potentially going to be very far reaching. Economic stimulus to prop up the transportation sector may be part of this bill, but most importantly it will likely have a real focus on the healthcare sector. We have been told that the healthcare funding (“extenders”) provisions that expire in May, including funding and reauthorization for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs), could be part of this third supplemental bill and could include CCBHC extension and potential expansion. The Administration has been open to these ideas and willing in many instances to get rid of roadblocks and barriers where they can so that the Hill can focus on items requiring legislation.

Frankie Berger stated that we are hearing similar concerns across the states, which will add more power to our voice to get these things addressed. A letter from Chuck has been posted on the Engage home page that is asking some of the more detailed questions. Frankie said that she and her Federal counterpart, Michael Petruzzelli, are working on a document that will be shared with the Association Executives, which details all the concerns we have heard thus far. It will be a living document and will be updated day-to-day.

Chuck Ingoglia stated that we are working with other associations on common legislative and regulatory goals. He also mentioned that HHS is working on 42 CFR Part 2 relief. Chuck said that the National Council is working on raising donations of telehealth equipment for behavioral health providers.

**Next call**

Doyle Forrestal suggested that we have weekly calls going forward as associations deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Association Executive participants agrees. The next call will be on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 1:30 PM ET.