

Northern Virginia Refugee Mental Health Council  
Organizational Meeting  
Room 409A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor , Fairfax CSB Merrifield Center  
8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Dr., Fairfax, VA 22031  
Friday, August 19, 2016 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Present:

|           |          |   |
|-----------|----------|---|
| Saara     | Amri     | Northern Virginia Family Service                      |
| Christine | Brennan  | NCS   |
| Rosetta   | Dupree   | FHD/CCDA-MRS  |
| Rosita    | Ebadat   | Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area |
| Olivia    | Faries   | NVFS  |
| Patricia  | Garcia   | Fairfax County Health Department                      |
| Jill      | Grumbine | Virginia Department of Health                         |
| Susan     | Jacobson | City of Fairfax Human Services Committee              |
| Patricia  | Maloof   | Catholic Charities Diocese of Arlington               |
| Nhat      | Nguyen   | Fairfax Community Services Board                      |
| Linh      | Nghe     | Arlington CSB   |
| Eva       | Stitt    | DBHDS   |
| Sunpreet  | Dadwal   | NVMHI   |
| Ryann     | Tanap    | NAMI  |
| Betty     | Thompson | Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute             |

**Summary**

1. **Welcome and introductions.** Nhat Nguyen, host of the meeting, welcomed the participants. Thereafter, everyone introduced themselves and the agencies they represent. They also verbalized the reasons for their interest in refugee mental health which can be generally grouped into: personal interest, related to work, previous experiences, desire to help others, providing support, and giving back to the community.
2. **The Refugee Resettlement Program.** Dr. Patricia Maloof, Program Director, Migration and Refugee Services, of Commonwealth Catholic Diocese of Arlington presented brief information about intensive refugee screening before arriving to the country, how refugees are allocated to different resettlement agencies, mandated services for refugees, and the triple trauma paradigm which highlights the need for mental health support.
3. Dr. Eva Stitt from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services provided insight into the Virginia Healing Partnership Initiative with local councils

and mental health referral system in different parts of the Commonwealth, each with its own unique framework based on local resources. She also mentioned several activities that brought positive impact to local and statewide mental health awareness, advocacy, and access to care.

4. **Exploring the Need.** To determine if there is a need to organize a mental health council in Northern Virginia and identify the priority action of the group, the participants were divided into three workgroups. The results are as follows:

a) **In your work, what part of mental health services do you consider the most challenging?**

- Cultural barriers and access to services
- Lack of providers who accept Medicaid
- Encouraging clients/trusting the system
- linguistic capacity and affordability
- Multi-level approaches dealing with cultural issues
- Barriers to cultural understanding

b) **In the short term, what do you expect the council to achieve?**

- Develop plan to identify gaps and issues with access
- Develop actionable steps
- Share best practices
- Addressing gaps in service, including system gaps
- Framework development; identification of goals and objectives
- Better coordination and integration of services
- Psychoeducation for individual, families, and communities
- Engagement of ethnic communities
- Address stigma; more community education
- Creation of workgroups and specialized subgroups

c) **In the long term, what do you expect the council to achieve?**

- Integrated mental health services
- Work directly with community
- Policy change at the state level of Medicaid reimbursement rates
- Regional approach
- Regional resources (better Coordination of resources)

- Prioritize actionable goals
- Home based intervention; Meeting people where they're at
- Put mental health therapist in medical facilities

Based on this activity and the discussions among participants, the group verbalized that there is a need to develop the Northern Virginia Refugee Mental Health Council and Referral System.

5. Other matters

- The directory will be emailed to all participants.
- Nhat Nguyen will take charge of reminders.
- Eva will make the agenda.
- Everyone will take responsibility of inviting individuals who should be part of the council but was not present in this meeting. It was suggested that the council members will not be more than 25. This group will serve as the Steering Committee.

6. Next Meeting. The group decided that the next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 20, 2016, 9:30 -11:30 AM at Fairfax CSB Merrifield Center. The agenda will include developing a framework for the council.