

ANNEX M

Behavioral Health Operations

San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA)

Theresa Vasquez, Administrative Analyst III
HHSA, Behavioral Health Services

Danyte Mockus-Valenzuela, Health Planning
and Program Specialist
HHSA, Behavioral Health Services

Liberty Donnelly, Principal Administrative
Analyst
HHSA, Behavioral Health Services

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San Diego County Access and Functional
Needs Work Group



Unified San Diego
County Emergency
Services Organization
And
County of San Diego

Operational Area
Emergency Operations Plan

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GENERAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Behavioral Health Annex to the San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan (OA EOP) describes the basic concepts, policies, and procedures for providing a coordinated behavioral health response to any disaster. This annex serves as the unifying behavioral health document for the County of San Diego and the Cities of the OA, as authorized by the Emergency Services Agreement.

Purpose

To establish a behavioral health disaster response system and define responsibilities and actions required ensuring an efficient and effective use of behavioral health resources during a disaster.

Scope

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) are provided to mitigate the effects of acute and longer-term threats to the mental health of the population and to maintain the mental health and safety of responders. Services may include crisis counseling and psychological first aid, and other services to relieve mental health and/or substance abuse problems caused or aggravated by a disaster or its aftermath.

Whole Community Approach

The whole community concept is a process by which residents, emergency management representatives, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their resources, capacities, and interests. Engaging in whole community emergency management planning builds a more effective path to societal security and resilience. This annex supports the following whole community principles:

- Understand and meet the needs of the entire community, including people with disabilities and those with other access and functional needs.

This annex describes the role of the Behavioral Health Division of the Health and Human Services Agency. County Behavioral Health has a role in the field and at the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (OA EOC). Many of their practitioners are trained to assist both disaster workers and people in shelters, who have lost their homes and possessions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- General	1
- Concept of Operations	3
- Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities	3
- Direction, Control, or Coordination	10
- Information Collection and Dissemination	11
- Communications	11
- Administration, Finance, and Logistics	12
- Annex Development and Maintenance	13
- Authorities and References	13
- Attachments	14

- Engage and empower all parts of the community to assist in all phases of the disaster cycle.
- Strengthen what works well in communities on a daily basis.

In keeping with the whole community approach, this annex was developed with the guidance of representatives from the OA Cities and representatives from County departments, law enforcement, fire services, emergency management, the access and functional needs communities, and various other stakeholders. The effectiveness of the emergency response is largely predicated on the preparedness and resiliency of the community.

Community Resiliency Consists of Three Key Factors:

1. The ability of first responder agencies (e.g. fire, law and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)) to divert from their day-to-day operations to the emergency effectively and efficiently.
2. The strength of the emergency management system and organizations within the region, to include Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), mass notification systems and communication systems.
3. The civil preparedness of the region’s citizens, businesses and community organizations.

Focusing on enhancing all three of these components constantly focuses the OA on improving the region’s resiliency.

Disaster Response Levels

For the purpose of this annex, a behavioral health disaster applies primarily to a major emergency situation or potential crisis situation creating sufficient casualties or victims to necessitate a reorganization of day-to-day behavioral health operations, which includes three levels of emergency response.



Disaster Levels	Examples
Level 1	Local suicide(s), celebrity suicide, unusual acts of violence with extensive media coverage.
Level 2	Local mass shooting, local airplane crash.
Level 3	Natural disaster such as an earthquake or terrorist incident with national coverage.

At any level, the Behavioral Health Disaster Response is based on the nature and severity of the situation and the availability of resources.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

BHS responds to the disaster assessment to initiate emergency response as provided by the County Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), as the Director of Emergency Services for the unincorporated area or the Coordinator of Emergency Services for the OA, or a designated representative. In response to direction to activate, BHS will provide staff to respond to hazards commensurate to the level of disaster.



BHS assesses the continuity of services, provided by both County-operated programs and by BHS contractors. Service areas are prepared to continue services according to the BHS Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

BHS is prepared to dispatch staff to Local Assistance Centers (LAC) or other sites for support to the community. All County staff are designated as disaster service workers (DSW) and are to be prepared to respond. In addition, designated contract service providers will appoint staff to respond as DSWs. Staff at LACs or other sites will conduct outreach among disaster victims and first responders and provide counseling services upon request.

ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) is key to successful response and recovery operations. With centralized decision making, personnel and other resources can be more effectively utilized. The OA EOC Director ensures all tasks are accomplished with little or no duplication of effort and with highest probability of success.

Organization

City Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Each City has a central facility designated as an EOC. From the EOC, disaster operations are directed or coordinated. When the EOC is activated, it is staffed by city employees from departments with emergency responsibilities, as well as liaison representatives from other agencies and jurisdictions. In each city, the Mayor, City Manager or their designee is designated as Director of Emergency Services, by ordinance, and directs or delegate emergency operations from the EOC.

Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (OA EOC)

The OA EOC serves the same function as the City's EOC. The OA EOC has the additional responsibilities of coordinating response activities throughout the entire OA including the unincorporated area. The CAO serves as the Director of the Emergency Services for the unincorporated areas and as Coordinator of Emergency Services for the entire OA.

The OA EOC is located at the County Operations Center in Kearny Mesa and is used as the central point for resource acquisition and allocation, as well as coordination. The Behavioral Health section of the OA EOC (Attachment 1) is normally activated when the EOC is fully activated. It is staffed by pre-designated behavioral health personnel who coordinate, plan and evaluate the behavioral health response for the OA. The OA EOC behavioral health staff serve as advisors to the Director/Coordinator of Emergency Services and make decisions about resource allocation, priorities, and other behavioral health matters.

Director/Coordinator of Emergency Services

Directs, or coordinates, the Emergency Services Organization and the emergency management program.

Director, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS)

Reports to the CAO and is responsible for the overall management of all disaster health services to include Emergency Medical Services, Public Health Services, Environmental Health Services, and Behavioral Health Services.

The County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services Director

Reports to the Director of HHS and is responsible for all long-range logistics planning and policy decisions for behavioral health services within the County.

San Diego County Behavioral Health Services Disaster Coordinator

Reports to the Deputy Director of BHS and is primarily responsible for coordinating the provision of behavioral health services in the county. The BHS Disaster Coordinator and designated administrative staff determine the need for behavioral health services and coordinate resource allocation. Additionally, the BHS Disaster Coordinator works closely with medical, health, care and shelter operations, the Administrative Services Officer, other Counties, community organizations and volunteers to coordinate activities.

HHS Departmental Operations Center (DOC)

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) dictates the establishment of an OA for response to an emergency situation. The OA is considered the area that encompasses the unincorporated areas of San Diego County and the 18 incorporated cities, and special districts. For all health related issues the County of San Diego, HHS, Public Health Services (PHS) is the lead agency within this OA. The County Public Health Officer (PHO) will make OA public health decisions.

Once the magnitude of the crisis warrants, the PHO or Director/Coordinator of Emergency Services may request the activation of the OA EOC or the DOC through the OES Staff Duty Officer (SDO). The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Duty Officer or Director/Coordinator of Emergency Services may activate the Multi-Casualty Plan, Annex D, of the OA EOP. Depending on the scope of the event,

potential responders may include local, state and/or federal emergency/disaster, public health, law enforcement and health agencies.

Upon request by the OA EOC, staff at the HHSA DOC can assist with support needed for a variety of public health functions in an emergency situation. The HHSA DOC also handles supply/resource availability, tracking and mutual aid request. The OA EOC representatives shall relay information regarding availability of resources to OA EOC Management.

Assignment of Responsibilities

Behavioral Health Services (Director or Designee)

- Responsible for updating this Behavioral Health Annex and other emergency behavioral health plans and procedures, as needed.
- Coordinates, plans, and evaluates behavioral health disaster operations within the County.
- Coordinates the procurement and allocation of behavioral health resources required to support disaster operations.
- Develops and maintains a capability for identifying behavioral health resources within the County.
- Coordinates all County-operated and contracted behavioral health-related activities among other local and private response agencies or groups, as well as state and federal agencies.
- Coordinates requests and responses to requests with Cal OES Region VI Disaster Medical Coordinator via County EMS.
- Reports to the OA EOC or send representative.
- Designates BHS Disaster Coordinator.
- Coordinates with jurisdiction Public Information Officer (PIO) for the issuance of appropriate behavioral health messages.

Behavioral Health Executive Team (Directors, Assistant Deputy Directors, Hospital Administrator, Clinical Director)

- Upon notification that a disaster has occurred, the disaster coordinator and disaster response leads meet with the behavioral health director to plan appropriate next steps.
- Clinical Director advises and consults on clinical issues related to the disaster.

County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services, Disaster Coordinator

- Responsible, under the authority of the Director of BHS, for the overall coordination and implementation of this annex.

- Coordinates behavioral health related activities among local public and private response agencies or groups with designated administrative staff.
- Establishes pre-disaster response linkages with other agencies such as American Red Cross (ARC), law enforcement, law enforcement crisis counseling staff, fire departments, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), psychological and psychiatric associations, 2-1-1 San Diego, and other community partners including members of the Health Care Association.
- Informs above agencies of County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Operations Disaster Annex.
- Disseminates printed information on psychological effects and management of disaster.
- Participates in disaster exercises.
- Informs community that 2-1-1 San Diego will manage spontaneous volunteers on behalf of the County when the OA EOC is activated.
- Works with Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) to register licensed Behavioral Health Workers, if requested.
- Works with the Administrative Services Officer and 2-1-1 San Diego to assure emergency referral service lines are sufficiently staffed to support behavioral health disaster operations.
- Develops and maintains an inventory of all available trained staff and supplies.
- Develops a network of behavioral health workers to include County staff and staff from other agencies, and private practitioners. These behavioral health workers will work with behavioral health staff in planning and providing behavioral health outreach services during and after a disaster in the field or in mass care shelters. Creates and maintains roster of Behavioral Health personnel.
- Develops and coordinates disaster activities such as data collection for behavioral health disaster relief funding, outreach, and follow-up programs.
- Assures briefings and debriefings of response team(s) occur.
- Prepares Behavioral Health post-disaster summary report to include an evaluation of behavioral health activities and recommendations.
- Maintains list of County Behavioral Health alternate work sites.
- Maintains linkage with the State Department of Mental Health, Disaster Coordinator.
- Establishes a field response, if requested.



- Provides staff to an assistance center if requested.
- Takes necessary steps to meet communication needs for next of kin notification as appropriate.

Behavioral Health Services Disaster Response Team and Site Leads

BHS will provide a BHS Disaster Response Team comprised of County and contracted staff who have been trained in disaster response. Team membership may fluctuate due to staff availability. In addition, a Site Lead will be established at each LAC or other County-designated assistance site. Site leads will manage set up and organization of the counseling services area, provide site-specific supervision of the BHS disaster response team, and facilitate essential communications. Other responsibilities for Site Leads include:



- Provide on-site orientation and oversight of BHS disaster response team members assigned to assist in disaster response and recovery.
- Manage required site statistics.
- Liaise with LAC Manager and managers of other services.
- Facilitate communication between LAC and BHS Administration.
- Provide daily briefings to BHS Disaster Coordinator and the on-site BHS disaster response team members.
- Assure protocols are being followed.
- Make recommendations for alterations in service provision as needed.

Note: Counseling services for First Responders are frequently available through each responder's organization. BHS counseling and referral services may also be accessed via a request to OES. All BHS response activities must be coordinated via OES.

Administrative Services Organization (ASO) Telephone Access and Crisis Line

(Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year for program referral and crisis intervention services)



- Provides emergency telephone counseling and referral to disaster victims seeking psychological services. The ASO provides feedback information to the BHS Disaster Coordinator, as appropriate, including the number of calls, type of calls received and trends.
- Acts as an entry point to the behavioral health system for persons seeking help.
- Reports identified needs in the community for additional disaster-related services, to the BHS Disaster Coordinator. Advise the BHS of critical events.
- The ASO and 24-hour Access & Crisis Line to provide alert information to the Disaster Coordinator of BHS, as appropriate.
- Works with the BHS Disaster Coordinator to identify ASO staff to assist with disaster response, as needed.
- Works with BHS Disaster Coordinator to identify individual practitioners, as needed.

All County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services Programs

- Prepare COOP and functional checklists for behavioral health response to a disaster, including a system for automatic reporting of pre-designated personnel to assigned disaster posts.
- Train personnel and alternates.
- Maintain accurate and complete records of all disaster related activities concerning personnel timekeeping, mission tasking and resource expenditures during the period of any incident that may become eligible for future reimbursement.



Hospital Administrators - San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital and Edgemoor Distinct Part Skilled Nursing Facility

- Activates hospital disaster plans.
- Keeps the BHS Disaster Coordinator informed of the general status of the hospitals and resource needs.
- As able, contributes available staff and resources to meet the larger behavioral health needs in the community.

- May serve as alternate facility for patients evacuated from other local hospitals.

The County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services Staff

- Under California Government Code, Title I, Section 3100, all government employees are Disaster Service Workers who can be called upon in an emergency: “All public employees are hereby declared to be Disaster Service Workers (DSWs) subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law.”



- Be familiar with the contents of this annex.
- Possess a valid County Identification Card, professional license, and other preparedness items, as may be required.
- See to the safety of themselves and their families in a disaster and then be prepared to fulfill their responsibility to the County.
- Be available for callback. Monitor television and radio stations to keep informed of the situation.
- Use discretion in reporting to regular workstations (i.e., road damage, other impending hazards).

Behavioral Health Programs Response

There are a variety of Behavioral Health facilities. During a disaster, the facility management takes the following types of actions:

- Activates facility/program disaster plan.
- Assesses the degree of damage to the facility.
- Determines staffing needs and implements call-back procedures, if necessary.
- Establishes a communication link between the facility and the Behavioral Health Disaster Coordinator.



- If necessary, reorganizes program operations to support County response.

DIRECTION, CONTROL, OR COORDINATION

Plan Activation and Termination

Activation and termination of this annex shall be by the direction of:

1. County CAO in that capacity, or as Director/Coordinator of Emergency Services;
or
2. Designated Deputy CAO; or
3. Director, OES or designated representative; or
4. Director of HHSA or designated representative.
5. The BHS Director or BHS Director of Operations may also activate this annex.

Upon activation, the HHSA Director, will determine the extent of behavioral health services needed for the disaster and notify the appropriate parties. The overall goal of the Behavioral Health Annex is to minimize loss of life, human suffering, emotional aftermath, and subsequent disability by ensuring timely and coordinated behavioral health assistance in time of emergency. The strategies to accomplish this goal are to:

- Coordinate the utilization of behavioral health facilities and the procurement, allocation, and distribution of behavioral health personnel, supplies, and other resources.
- Develop a system for County, ASO, and contracted behavioral health staff to provide emergency behavioral health intervention services for disaster victims, emergency response personnel and the community in general.
- Provide a system for receiving and disseminating behavioral health information necessary for effective response to, and recovery from a major disaster.

Direction of Response

The BHS Director, or designee, will establish an internal command center for the collection of information on the status of programs and contracted program services, the status of staff and facilities.

Coordination

BHS staff will respond according to the Incident Command System (ICS) and provide information to the HHSA DOC, for communication to the OA EOC. BHS will provide support to disaster response as requested. When necessary, BHS will request assistance according to NIMS ICS.

INFORMATION COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

Information and Education

Dissemination of information and education in the aftermath of a disaster with victims, emergency responders, and the community at large is accomplished in several ways:

- BHS Disaster Coordinator working with administrative leads and media staff assures the broadcasting of information about the immediate availability of behavioral health services using Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and other available resources.
- BHS will cooperate with OES and the Disaster Media Team to get public service messages in appropriate formats to the media concerning the types of behavioral health services available and the location of these services as well as educational information to help victims.
- BHS Disaster Coordinator working with administrative leads assures the establishment of an “information line” available for people to inquire about what specific behavioral health services are available and other details.
- The Emergency Alert System (EAS), radio, television, newspapers and the Internet are mechanisms by which disaster information is disseminated to the public. Posters, flyers, and other printed messages can also be used at disaster sites, emergency shelters and facilities (See Annex L: Emergency Public Information).
- BHS will help staff crisis phones, when necessary.
- BHS will deploy community outreach workers (either door-to-door or via community meetings) to ensure all community members know about available behavioral health services and activities, when necessary.



COMMUNICATIONS

The BHS Director or designee will communicate the status of program service delivery, facility status and staffing levels to the HHSA DOC via email , text messaging, fax, phone, as available.

ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, AND LOGISTICS

Under SEMS, special districts are considered local governments. As such, they are included in the emergency planning efforts throughout the OA. The OA Emergency Organization, in accordance with SEMS, supports and is supported by:

- Cities within the OA
- The County of San Diego
- Special districts
- Other Counties
- The State of California
- The Federal Government

NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable Federal, State, local, and tribal governments and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to work together effectively. NIMS also enables these entities to efficiently prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity, including acts of catastrophic terrorism.

Mutual aid, including personnel, supplies, and equipment, is provided in accordance with the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement, and other OA Mutual Aid Agreements.

The private sector is an important part of the emergency organization. Business and industry own or have access to substantial response and support resources. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) provide valuable resources before, during, and after a disaster. These resources can be effective assets at any level. OES has established the ReadySanDiego Business Alliance. The Alliance will have a virtual connection to the OA EOC via a social networking system fed through an RSS feed from WebEOC.

There are some City and County personnel who do not have specific task assignments. They are automatically designated by State Law as Disaster Service Workers (DSWs) during a disaster, and serve in the response effort.

- "All public employees and all registered volunteers of a jurisdiction having an accredited disaster council are Disaster Service Workers," per Government Code Title I, Division 4, Chapter 8, and Labor Code, Part I, Division 4, Chapters 1 and 10.
- The term public employees includes all persons employed by the State, or any County, City or public district.
- Other personnel including volunteers can be quickly registered by OES as DSWs, which provides Workers Compensation and liability coverage.

OES maintains a list of pre-registered volunteers affiliated with volunteer organizations that have been signed up as DSWs.

It is imperative that local government maintain duplicate records of all information necessary for restoration of normal operations. This process of record retention involves offsite storage of vital computerized and paper-based data that can be readily accessible.

Vital records of the Unified Organization are routinely stored in records storage rooms at OES in printed hard copy form, on CD-ROM, and electronically. Computer records are routinely backed up and stored separately from the hard drives. All personnel records are stored by the County Department of Human Resources at several locations throughout the OA.

Administration

The HHSA DOC has the lead for directing all administration, finance and logistics policies supporting the response of BHS in accordance with this annex and the BHS COOP.

ANNEX DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

This annex is a product of the OA EOP. As such, the policies, procedures, and practices outlined in the OA EOP govern this annex. OES coordinates the maintenance and updates of this annex every three to four years, in accordance with the maintenance schedule established for the OA EOP. Record of changes, approval, and dissemination of the OA EOP will also apply to this annex.

Updates to this annex can be made before such time for multiple reasons, including but not limited to changes in policy/procedure, improvements and recommendations based on real life events or exercises, etc. Recommended changes should be submitted to OES at oes@sdcounty.ca.gov

Annex M was developed by County of San Diego BHS is maintained by the BHS Disaster Coordinator.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

This annex is authorized by the Emergency Services Agreement of the County of San Diego, and in compliance with SEMS as California’s emergency response system and the fundamental structure for the response phase of emergency management. SEMS incorporates the use of the ICS, California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement (MMAA), the OA concept and multiagency or inter-agency coordination.

ATTACHMENT 1

Behavioral Health Disaster Operations

