UNIFIED SAN DIEGO COUNTY
EMERGENCY SERVICES ORGANIZATION
OPERATIONAL AREA EMERGENCY PLAN

ANNEX M

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OPERATIONS

September 2006

UNIFIED SAN DIEGO COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES ORGANIZATION

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UNIFIED SAN DIEGO COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES ORGANIZATION

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OPERATIONS

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ANNEX M

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OPERATIONS

I. General

A. Goals and Strategies

The Behavioral Health Annex to the San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Plan 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 County, as authorized by the Emergency Services Agreement.

B. Purpose

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

C. Plan Activation and Termination

Activation and termination of this Annex shall be by the direction of: (1) the County's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) in that capacity, or as Area Coordinator of the Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization; or (2) a designated Assistant CAO; or (3) the Director, Office of Emergency Services or designated representative; or (4) the Directors, Behavioral Health Services or designated representative.

Upon activation, the Director, Behavioral Health Services, 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:

1. Loss of life
2. Human suffering
3. Emotional aftermath
4. Subsequent disability

By ensuring timely and coordinated behavioral health assistance in time of emergency.

The strategies to accomplish this goal are to:

1. Coordinate the utilization of behavioral health facilities and the procurement, allocation, and distribution of behavioral health personnel, supplies, and other resources.

2. Develop a system for county and contracted behavioral health staff to provide emergency behavioral health intervention services for disaster victims, emergency response personnel and the community in general.

3. Provide a system for receiving and disseminating behavioral health information necessary for effective response to and recovery from a major disaster.

D. Disaster Response Levels

There are three (3) levels of disaster response. 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.

The Behavioral Health Disaster Response is based on the nature and severity of the situation and the availability of resources. **(NOTE: *Except in cases where a disaster affects the Access and Crisis Line it is assumed the line will be fully operational).**

II. ORGANIZATION

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 EOC Director insures all tasks are accomplished with little or no duplication of effort and with highest probability of success.

A. 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 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 City Manager is designated as Director of Emergency Services, by ordinance, and directs emergency operations from the EOC.

B. Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The County **EOC** serves as the Operational Area **(EOC)**. The Operational Area **EOC** serves the same function as the City's **EOC**. The **EOC** (for the unincorporated areas) has the additional responsibilities of coordinating response activities throughout the entire Operational Area. The Chief Administrative Officer **(CAO)** serves as the Director of the Emergency Services for the unincorporated areas and as Coordinator of Emergency Services for the entire Operational Area.

The Operational Area **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 County 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 Operational Area. The EOC behavioral health staff serves as advisors to the CAO and makes decisions about resource allocation and priorities, and other behavioral health matters.

1. Director of Emergency Services - directs, or coordinates, the Emergency Services Organization and the emergency management program.

2. Director, Health and Human Services - 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.

3. The County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services Director - reports to the Director, HHSA and is responsible for all long-range logistics planning and policy decisions for behavioral health services within the County.

4. San Diego County Behavioral Health Services (SDBHS) Disaster Coordinator - reports to the Deputy Director, Behavioral Health Services and is primarily responsible for coordinating the provision of behavioral health services in the County. The Coordinator and designated administrative staff determine the need for behavioral health services and coordinate resource allocation. Additionally, the Coordinator works closely with medical, health, care and shelter operations, other counties, community organizations and volunteers to coordinate activities.

C. HHSA Departmental Operations Center (DOC)

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

Once the magnitude of the crisis warrants, the Public Health Officer or Director of Emergency Services may request the activation of the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or the **Departmental Operations Center (DOC)** through the County Office of Emergency Services (OES), Duty Officer. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Duty Officer or EOC staff may activate the Multi-Casualty Operations Annex, Annex D, of the County Emergency Services Organization Operational Area Emergency Plan (County Emergency Plan). 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 EOC, staff at the HHSA DOC can assist with support needed for a variety of public health functions in an emergency situation. The DOC also handles supply/resource availability, tracking and mutual aid request. The EOC representatives shall relay information regarding availability of resources to EOC Management.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Behavioral Health Services (Directors or Designee)

1. Responsible for updating this Behavioral Health Annex and other emergency behavioral health plans and procedures, as needed.

2. Coordinates, plans and evaluates disaster behavioral health operations within the county.

3. Coordinates the procurement and allocation of behavioral health resources required to support disaster operations.

4. Develops and maintains a capability for identifying behavioral health resources within the County.

5. 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.

6. Coordinates requests and responses to requests with State Office of Emergency Services (OES) Region VI Disaster Medical Coordinator via County Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

7. Report to the EOC or send representative.

8. Designate behavioral health disaster coordinator.

9. Coordinates with jurisdiction PIO for the issuance of appropriate behavioral health messages.

B. Behavioral Health Executive Team (Directors, Assistant Deputy Directors, Hospital Administrator, Medical Director)

1. Upon notification that a disaster has occurred, the disaster coordinator and disaster response leads meet with behavioral health director to plan appropriate next steps.

2. Medical Director advises and consults on clinical issues related to the disaster.

C. County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services, Disaster Coordinator

1. Responsible under the authority of the Adult/Older Adult and Children's Directors, Behavioral Health Services, for the overall coordination and implementation of this Annex.

2. Coordinates behavioral health related activities among local public and private response agencies or groups with designated administrative staff.

3. Maintains list of Behavioral Health Services transportation and communication equipment.

4. Establishes pre-disaster response linkages with other agencies such as American Red Cross (ARC), law enforcement, law enforcement crisis counseling staff, fire department, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), Psychological and Psychiatric Associations, and other community partners including members of the Health Care Association.

   a. Inform them of County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Operations Disaster Annex.

   b. Disseminate printed information on psychological effects and management of disaster.

   c. Participate in disaster exercises.

d. Inform community that spontaneous volunteers will be processed through the American Red Cross spontaneous processing center in a large event.

e. Work with Medical Reserve Corps to register licensed Behavioral Health Workers.

5. Work with Community Access Phone System (CAPS), 911, United Behavioral Health (UBH) and 211 San Diego to assure there is a back up to the telephone system, to support disaster behavioral health operations.

6. Develops and maintains an inventory of all available trained staff and supplies.

7. 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.

8. Maintains a behavioral health disaster library.

9. Develops and coordinates disaster activities such as data collection for behavioral health disaster relief funding, outreach, and follow-up programs.

10. Assures briefings and debriefings of response team(s) occur.

11. Prepares Behavioral Health post-disaster summary report to include an evaluation of behavioral health activities and recommendations.

12. Maintains list of County Behavioral Health alternate work sites.

13. Maintains linkage with the State Department of Mental Health, Disaster Coordinator.

14. Establishes a field response.

15. Provides staff to an assistance center if requested. (Depending on the event the assistance center could be a Family Assistance Center, Local Assistance Center, or Disaster Recovery Center.)

16. Provides support during next of kin notification.

D. Behavioral Health Services, Disaster Response Team - Respective Regional Leads.

The County is divided into six (6) Regional Behavioral Health Services Response Teams.

1. Designated administrative staff assesses level of behavioral health response.

2. Regional Leads for disaster response coordinate and evaluate behavioral health disaster response activities in their region/service area in support of the SDBHS Disaster Coordinator.

3. Regional Leads maintain listings of all Behavioral Health contract agencies within their region for purposes of disaster management.

4. Regional Leads inform the SDBHS Disaster Coordinator of the general status of their region's situation and resource needs.

5. Regional Leads assess the continued day-to-day operations of their regional/service area behavioral health programs.

6. Regional Leads communicate with respective County programs and contractors regarding regions/situations/resources/needs, i.e. Behavioral Health.

7. Regional Leads collaborate with Behavioral Health Services, Disaster Coordinator to foster regional team development, training and team building.

8. Disaster Coordinator gathers day-to-day disaster response information and consults with designated administrative leads for continuation of disaster response interventions.

E. Administrative Services Organization (ASO) Telephone Access and Crisis Line (24-7 hour 365-day access and crisis intervention services)

1. Provides emergency telephone counseling and referral to disaster victims seeking psychological services. The ASO to provide feedback information to the Disaster Coordinator, Behavioral Health Services, as appropriate, including the number of calls, type of calls received and trends.

2. Acts as an entry point to the behavioral health system for persons seeking help.

3. Reports identified needs in the community for additional disaster-related services, to the SDBHS Disaster Coordinator. Advise the County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services of critical events.

4. The ASO and 24-hour Access & Crisis Line to provide alert information to the Disaster Coordinator, Behavioral Health Services, as appropriate.

F. All County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services, Behavioral Health Services Programs

1. Prepare Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and functional checklists for behavioral health response to a disaster, including a system for automatic reporting of pre-designated personnel to assigned disaster posts.

2. Train personnel and alternates.

3. 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.

G. Hospital Administrator - San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital

1. Activates hospital disaster plans.

2. Keep the SDBHS Disaster Coordinator informed of the general status of San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital and resource needs.

3. As able, contributes available staff and resources to meet the larger behavioral health needs in the community.

H. The County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services Staff

1. Be familiar with the contents of this Annex.

2. Possess a valid County Identification Card, professional license, and other preparedness items as necessary.

3. See to the safety of themselves and their families in a disaster and then be prepared to fulfill their responsibility to the county.

4. Be available for callback. Monitor television and radio stations to keep informed of the situation.

5. Use discretion in reporting to regular work-stations (i.e., road damage, other impending hazards).

IV. FUNCTIONS

A. Behavioral Health Programs Response

There are a variety of Behavioral Health Facilities. During a disaster, the Facility Management takes the following types of actions:

1. Activates facility/program disaster plan.

2. Assesses the degree of damage to the facility.

3. Determines staffing needs and implements call-back procedures, if necessary.

4. Establishes a communication link between the facility and the Behavioral Health Disaster Coordinator.

5. If necessary, reorganizes program operations to support county response.

B. 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 three ways:

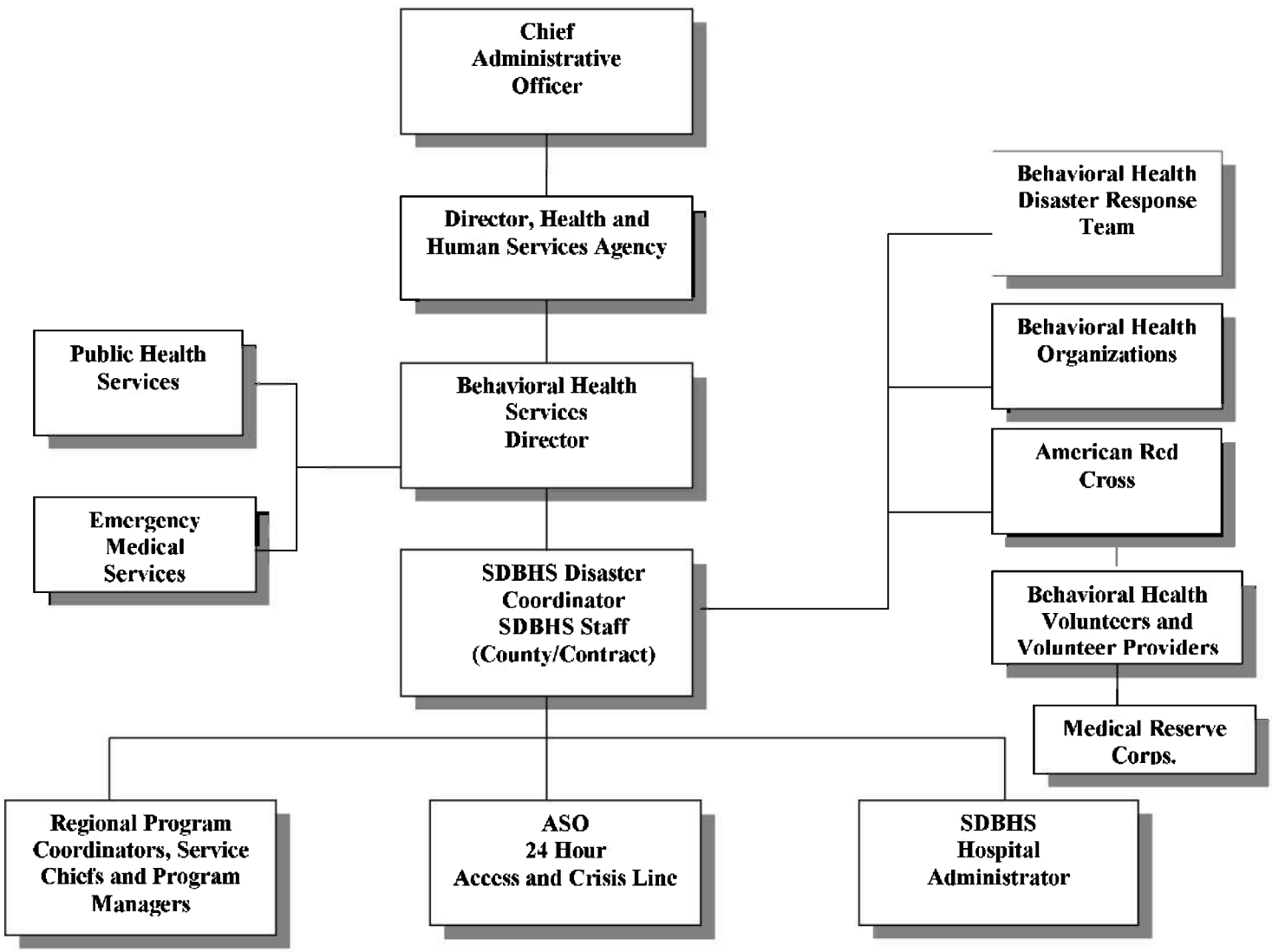
1. Disaster Coordinator working with administrative leads and media staff assures the broadcasting of information about the immediate availability of behavioral health services. PSAs (Public Service Announcements)

   In the first category, SDBHS cooperates with the OES and the Disaster Media Team to get public service messages 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.

2. 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 (see Page 5, Item C-5).

3. The Emergency Alert System (EAS), the Lifesaving Information for Emergencies (LIFE) system, radio, television, and newspapers 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.

4. Behavioral Health Services will help staff crisis phones, when necessary.

Attachment 1

Behavioral Health Disaster Operations