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TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

FROM: Luke Bergmann, Ph.D., Director, Behavioral Health Services

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR'S REPORT – March 2025

BHS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

BHS offers a multitude of programming to support children and youth in need of mental health and substance use treatment, to ensure a full continuum of care through family centered and youth informed services. This edition of the Director's Report provides key updates on BHS programs and services for children and youth.

Next Move Program and Competency Remediation

Next Move is a specialized community-based outpatient program that began offering behavioral health services in October of 2024 for youth up to the age of 21 who have a justice intersection. Next Move is part of the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Justice-Involved Initiative Home Behavioral Health Link. The program is designed to support justice-involved youth and those at risk of justice involvement, with an emphasis on caring for youth transitioning out of a juvenile justice facility. Next Move provides diagnostic evaluations, mental health, and co-occurring substance use treatment for youth and young adults who have Medi-Cal or are uninsured. Referrals to the Next Move program can be made by anyone, including Probation officers, the Court, schools, or caregivers. The program focuses on helping youth develop tools for success and is available countywide through the two main office locations listed below.

- Southeastern Live Well Center, 5101 Market Street, Suite 2100 San Diego, CA 92114
- North Coastal Live Well Health Center, 1701 Mission Avenue, Suite 110, Oceanside, CA 92058

Next Move provides competency remediation services for youth determined by the court to be incompetent to stand trial due to mental illness, developmental disability, or developmental immaturity. competency remediation services are offered countywide, regardless of insurance coverage, in a one-to-one setting facilitated by a licensed clinical psychologist or psychiatrist.

Over the course of three to five days, youth receive tailored instruction designed to address specific gaps in their understanding of legal concepts and courtroom procedures. Clinicians use the Slater Method, an evidence-based approach that incorporates visual aids and role-playing exercises to enhance

comprehension and build one's ability to actively participate in their defense. The length and intensity of the remediation process are customized based on the youth's individual needs and learning capacity. Through the structured and supportive framework of the Slater Method, Next Move enables youth to gain essential knowledge and skills for effective participation in their legal proceedings. This step-by-step approach not only helps youth understand the judicial process but also contributes to fairer legal outcomes and improved long-term success for those involved in the justice system.

Next Move is committed to empowering youth with the tools necessary for success, reducing recidivism, and ensuring equitable participation in the justice process. By delivering specialized mental health and Competency Remediation services, the Next Move program helps youth navigate legal challenges while fostering their personal growth and overall well-being.

For more information on Next Move visit: sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/next-move/

For more information on DHCS Justice-Involved Initiative visit: dhcs.ca.gov/CalAIM/Justice-Involved-Initiative/Pages/home.aspx

Children and Youth Optimal Care Pathways (OCP)
The September 24, 2024 Board Letter titled '*Creating a Children, Youth, and Transition Age Youth Behavioral Health Continuum Framework for San Diego County*' creates an opportunity to quantify optimal service levels and inform a comprehensive long-term plan to enhance services, inclusive of stakeholder engagement during the development process. The County is focused on developing a framework over the next six months, with a final report and plans to be delivered within eighteen months.

SchooLink Portal
BHS is working to procure services for an electronic SchooLink Referral Portal for schools with contracted SchooLink providers. SchooLink is the local partnership between BHS and local school districts, providing on-site behavioral health services at schools across San Diego County. The SchooLink Portal will streamline the referral process between school sites and providers to ensure timely communication, shorter access times, and consistent communication processes.

Teen Recovery Centers
Teen Recovery Centers (TRC) offer co-occurring outpatient substance use, early intervention, and treatment services to adolescents ages 12-17, and their families, through seven regionally based Drug Medi-Cal (DMC) certified clinics and 20 school sites across the county. TRCs receive referrals from schools and other youth-serving entities, such as Juvenile Probation. The adolescents are assessed using American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria and provided with individual, group, and family therapy, psychoeducation, peer support, and introduction to prosocial activities according to their assessed needs. The ASAM levels of care currently available through the TRCs include 0.5 Early Intervention, 1.0 Outpatient Services, 2.1 Intensive Outpatient Services, and Recovery Services.

In 2023, ASAM published its fourth edition for adults, which made changes to the assessment dimensions and levels of care. The fourth edition volume for adolescents is anticipated for publication in 2026 with changes in levels of care to 1.5Y Outpatient which will include early intervention, 2.1Y Intensive Outpatient, 2.5Y High Intensity Outpatient, and medically managed classifications for each level of care: 1.7Y for Outpatient, 2.7Y for High Intensity Outpatient, and 3.7Y for Residential Services. Levels of care that are intensive outpatient or higher are anticipated to be co-occurring enhanced.

All County Letter (ACL) 24-35
On July 12, 2024, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) issued an ACL 24-35, informing County Child and Family Well-being (CFWB) and Juvenile Probation departments of the elimination of

mental health screenings as a prerequisite for mental health referrals. Instead, CFWB and Probation must submit a referral to the County Mental Health Plan (MHP) within three business days of opening a case.

To implement the requirements of ACL 24-35, CFWB, Probation, and BHS collaborated to review the mandate and establish initial processes for compliance. Key examples of this collaborative work include:

- **Reviewing Data** - Analyzing annual data from CFWB and Probation to determine the number of new cases requiring referrals.
- **Defining Target Populations** - Identifying the MHP population eligible to access BHS programs.
- **Establishing a Referral Workflow** - Developing a workflow for CFWB outlining the process for referring individuals to therapy services.
- **Creating Informational Materials** - Designing a one-page resource for social workers and Probation officers (POs) summarizing BHS programs, including criteria, target populations, and available services.
- **Training** - Planning training sessions to equip social workers with a comprehensive understanding of various BHS programs.

These efforts aim to streamline the referral process and ensure timely access to mental health services for eligible individuals under the requirements of ACL 24-35.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a group of conditions that result from prenatal alcohol exposure impacting fetal brain development. Those affected by FASD may exhibit neurodevelopmental impairments, such as poor impulse control, executive functioning deficits, memory deficits, learning differences, in addition to behavioral and social challenges such as difficulty regulating emotions, difficulty following rules and understanding consequences. Such neurodevelopmental impairments can contribute to criminal behavior and recidivism. Without proper identification, these individuals are less likely to receive appropriate accommodations and services. Studies show that youth with FASD are overrepresented in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. The County CFWB and Probation departments have hosted workgroups and developed processes to identify and support affected youth.

San Diego is fortunate to have FASD field experts at Rady Children's Hospital and San Diego State University. Studies estimate that 23%-36% of youth in custody may meet the criteria for FASD, compared to 2-5% of the general population. Recognizing rehabilitative services as a critical component of Probation's vision, Probation has for many years screened youth in custody for referral to the FASD Clinic at Rady Children's Hospital. Recently, BHS joined a workgroup convened by the Juvenile Court to ensure that youth who may benefit from care are connected to Rady, ensuring that the Rady team has access to important health history and evaluations.

Creating Opportunities in Preventing and Eliminating Suicide

Creating Opportunities in Preventing and Eliminating Suicide (COPES) is a capacity building initiative led by the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) in partnership with BHS and 31 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) funded by the State of California Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA 2021-2025). During Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24, the participating LEAs collectively served over 290,000 students in 430 San Diego County schools. Through capacity building efforts, the COPES LEAs provided 385 mental health and suicide prevention trainings and events within school communities, engaging over 33,300 students, 9,100 school staff, and 900 parents and caregivers. Additionally, four suicide prevention and mental health peer programs were implemented in 134 schools representing 24 LEAs.

On May 16, 2024, the Mental Health Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) released Request for Applications (RFA-004) for additional MHSSA grant funds. RFA-004 was only available to current MHSSA grantees. The goal of the RFA-004 is to provide services through grants in the following

categories: (1) Marginalized and Vulnerable Youth, (2) Universal Screening, (3) Sustainability, and (4) "Other Priorities" to allow applicants to identify and address their unique needs. Subsequently, on August 26, 2024, the MHSOAC issued the Notice of Intent to Award $800,000 to BHS for FY 2024-25 through FY 2026-27. The additional grant will build on the COPES program services to develop a local planning team that will be tasked to create a roadmap for mental health universal screening, managed through SDCOE.

2024 Edition of the California Guidelines for the Use of Psychotropic Medication with Children and Youth in Foster Care

In December, DHCS released the 2024 Edition of the *California Guidelines For The Use Of Psychotropic Medication With Children And Youth In Foster Care* via All County Information Notice. These guidelines were originally published in 2014 to ensure safe, appropriate, and effective use of psychotropic medications for foster children with a goal of ensuring that medications are part of a comprehensive treatment plan that includes therapy and other supportive services. The 2024 edition supersedes the 2018 version, includes updated research, and is presented in a new format.

BHS identified these guidelines as reflecting best practice for all youth. As a result, the guidelines were integrated into the Medication Monitoring tool at the time they were originally published. The Medication Monitoring tool continues to have a link to the guidelines document.

California Guidelines For The Use Of Psychotropic Medication With Children And Youth In Foster Care: ACIN I-50-24 (December 16, 2024)

Qualified Individual Training

In November 2024, DHCS and CDSS, in partnership with the University of California, Davis Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice, initiated a new required training in 2025 for all Qualified Individuals (QI). Qualified Individual Fundamentals is a six-part course and is required for anyone who is or will be performing QI activities, pursuant to Welfare and Institution Code (WIC) 4096(g) and ACL 21-113 Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) 21-060), in collaboration with placing agencies who are making recommendations for Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) level of care placement. BHS has a team of two program managers and six licensed mental health clinicians who are identified to conduct QI assessments prior to placement in STRTPs and assigned to complete the training. The course is designed to provide an overview of the QI requirements and processes across the State of California.

WIC 4096(g):
leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=WIC&sectionNum=4096

ACL 21-113 BHIN 21-060:
cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/Letters-and-Notices/ACLs/2021/21-113.pdf?ver=2021-10-06-134855-840

CA Behavioral Health Planning Council's (CBHPC) - Children and Youth Workgroup

BHS staff participated in the planning and coordination of the California Behavioral Health Planning Council's (CBHPC) Children and Youth Workgroup educational hybrid event, "Out in the Open: Conversations about Mental Health and Drug Use Issues (No Cap)" held on January 16, 2025, at the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE).

The event offered the opportunity to increase behavioral health support for youth by raising awareness of youth mental health and drug use issues and provided resources for parents, caregivers, family members, educators, and behavioral health professionals. The event featured a film screening of a segment titled "Hiding in Plain Sight," followed by a panel discussion, and a question-and-answer session

with attendees. The six-member panel was represented by lived experience youth, including a youth and a parent representative from the film, a behavioral health program director, and the SDCOE Executive Director of the Student Wellness & School Culture Department. Resource tables were available throughout the event.

For more information on CBHPC visit:
https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/CBHPC-PlanningCouncilWelcome.aspx

To watch the film "Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness" visit:
pbs.org/show/hiding-plain-sight-youth-mental-illness/

Children Crisis Residential Care Facility
BHS, in collaboration with the County's CFWB and Department of General Services (DGS), is working to establish a Children's Crisis Residential Care (CCRC) Program in San Diego County. The CCRC program is currently under development with services expected to launch in 2027. This new level of care is anticipated to consist of 16 crisis residential beds, four of which will be dedicated to serve identified participants of the Children's Crisis Continuum Pilot Program (CCCPP). In July 2021, CCCPP was signed into law to provide a framework for highly integrated continuum of care for foster youth with high acuity needs.

Nurse Practitioners
The *2022 Addressing San Diego's Behavioral Health Worker Shortage Report*, commissioned by the County and produced by the San Diego Workforce Partnership, highlighted the workforce challenges for all behavioral health professionals. In 2022, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) released a workforce map that illustrated the severe national shortage of child and adolescent psychiatrists. In that mapping, San Diego was identified as having a high shortage of child and adolescent psychiatry physicians.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNPs) were previously integrated into BHS programs that serve adults. In 2024, BHS established and implemented a framework to allow for PMHNP workforce in programs that serve youth. PMHNPs will be credentialed through Optum, the County's Administrative Services Organization. Physician collaboration and oversight remain a part of the model, with the extent of collaboration and oversight dependent on the experience of the PMHNP.

Strategic Behavioral Health Initiative
The American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3 (AAP-CA3) launched a strategic behavioral health initiative in July 2023. The goal for this collaborative effort is to assess current behavioral health resources and needs for children and youth and develop a roadmap to a comprehensive continuum of care that meets the needs of children and youth throughout the region and incorporates evidence-based and best practice care models. To learn more about the initiative, visit https://sbhisd.org/.

Mobile Crisis Response Teams in Schools
Beginning November 2024, Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) may be deployed to public-school districts, charter schools,and in San Diego County, grades K-12, to respond to behavioral health crisis calls. MCRT in Schools launched following a collaborative workgroup and ongoing partnership with the County Office of Education. Through a school dedicated phone line, MCRTs can respond to behavioral health crisis calls in schools if there is no known threat of violence or medical emergency. Depending on the situation, MCRT can:

- Provide assessments,
- Utilize crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques,
- Initiate and transport a 5585* (5150) hold when there is a not a safety concern, and

- Make connections to appropriate behavioral health services and resources, provide initial coordination for treatment services as needed, and follow-up for up to 30 days after initial service.

For more information on MCRT please visit:
https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/BHS_MCRT.html

Behavioral Health Service Directories for Children, Youth, and Families (CYF)
BHS offers streamlined access to available services through online directories that are located on the BHS webpage. In August 2024, the content and structure of the directories were updated based on feedback from the CYF Council. The CYF Directory is a printable directory that is designed for families and service providers who need assistance finding behavioral health and substance use services for children, youth, families, and pregnant and parenting women. The directory is organized by program level of care and includes program name and phone number, BHS points of contact for programming, and other community resources. The Regional School Directories for Children and Youth provide printable directories highlighting behavioral health services within each region and school district, including identifying school site location and program name and phone.

To access Behavioral Health Service Directories for CYF, visit:
https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/mental_health_services_children/service_directories.html

Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) Statewide Multi-payer School-Linked Fee Schedule (Fee Schedule)
As part of the CYBHI, CDHCS launched the CYBHI Fee Schedule program, a first-of-its kind effort to make it easier for students and families to receive outpatient mental health and substance use disorder support when, where, and how they need it. This program creates a sustainable reimbursement pathway for LEAs and public Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to receive funding for services rendered at a school or school-linked site. The program established the reimbursement rate for a certain set of outpatient school-linked services rendered to children and youth who are:

- Under the age of 26,
- Enrolled in public TK-12 schools or institutions of higher education (e.g., California Community Colleges), and
- Covered by Medi-Cal managed care plans, Medi-Cal Fee-for-Service, health care service plans, and disability insurers.

Children, youth, and families will not pay out-of-pocket expenses and there will not be any impact to their existing insurance plan nor deductibles.

DHCS identified the first statewide cohort of forty-seven LEAs approved to participate in the CYBHI Fee Schedule program. To develop the CYBHI Fee Schedule provider network, DHCS implemented an operational readiness review process for all interested County Offices of Education (COE) and LEAs. In determining LEA readiness, DHCS considered a variety of factors, including, but not limited to: Medi-Cal enrollment, service delivery infrastructure and capacity building, data collection and documentation, and billing infrastructure. The first cohort of LEAs were determined by DHCS to meet the readiness review requirements and launched in January 2024. Two additional cohorts launched in 2024: Cohort 2 in July 2024 and Cohort 3 in October 2024.

The following are the San Diego participating LEAs and IHEs:

Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
San Diego Unified School District	Feaster Charter	Chula Vista Elementary School District
Santee School District	Lakeside Union School District	Empower Language Academy
	Lemon Grove School District	Fallbrook Union Elementary School District
	Alpine Union School District	High Tech High
	South Bay Union School District	Ramona City Unified School District
	Vista Unified School District	San Diego Community College District
	Bonsall Unified School District	
	Julian Union School District	
	La Mesa Spring Valley School District	

On December 2, 2024, DHCS released the Cohort 4 Readiness Application for LEAs and public IHEs to participate in the CYBHI Fee-Schedule program and statewide provider network. The fourth cohort of the CYBHI Fee Schedule program is open to all LEAs and IHEs that seek to start billing in July 2025.

To learn more about the CYBHI Feed Schedule Program visit:
https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/CYBHI/Pages/Fee-Schedule.aspx

BHS SPECIAL EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

10th Annual Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference (CICAMH) - April 25, 2025)

The 10th Annual CICAMH Conference themed “Critical Solutions for Critical Issues: Reinstilling Hope and Connection in Youth Mental Health” is scheduled for Friday, April 25, 2025. The hybrid conference will be held at the University of San Diego, Kroc Institute of Peace and Justice. Registration and event details are available at the following link: cicamh.com/

Respectfully submitted,



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