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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 – April 2025

BHS WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING UPDATES

In addressing the San Diego County behavioral health workforce challenges, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) has focused efforts on workforce education and training striving to build, enhance, and sustain a strong, culturally competent, person centered, and wellness-driven public behavioral health workforce. Such efforts are closely tied to the continuum of care, aiming to ensure that the behavioral health workforce is equipped with the necessary training and support to provide quality care and meet the diverse needs of individuals.

BHS Partnership with the San Diego Office of Education (SDCOE)

Several efforts have been made to promote recruitment and support interest in careers within public behavioral health. These efforts have focused on high school, community college, undergraduate and graduate levels of academia. To increase interest in behavioral health careers among high school students, BHS developed a partnership with the SDCOE, focused on workforce pipeline efforts. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025, BHS provided classroom presentations on behavioral health careers at multiple high schools, engaging approximately 350 students. The goal was to introduce students to the behavioral health field and potentially lay the groundwork for a future workforce. The BHS team also participates in several SDCOE led events in the community to further engage high school and community college students.

San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) Public Mental Health Academy (PMHA) Certificate Program

BHS has partnered with the SDCCD to provide a PMHA to facilitate workforce development and career pathways in public behavioral health by offering coursework leading to a PMHA certificate. There are currently 541 students enrolled in the program, with seventy-five percent (75%) reporting they have mental health lived experience. In FY 2023-2024, 18 students graduated from the program, with the majority continuing their education to earn an Associate of Arts (AA) degree, transferring to a university, or pursuing careers within public behavioral health.

Live Well Center for Innovation and Leadership (LWCIL) Partnership
The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency's (HHSA) LWCIL People Subcommittee is a collaboration between the County and San Diego State University (SDSU) to promote the recruitment and retention of the public health and behavioral health workforce. It is committed to supporting the recruitment of individuals for careers in public service. In partnership HHSA representatives from HHSA Human Resources, the Department of Strategy and Community Engagement (formerly the Office of Strategy and Innovation), Child & Family Well-Being, Public Health and Aging & Independence Services, the subcommittee maps current practices for workforce pipeline development, recruitment, and retention of critical positions while also identifying strategies for future workforce efforts. In collaboration with SDSU, LWCIL will participate in the first HHSA Careers Week on March 26, 2025.

California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) Public Behavioral Health (PBH) Master of Social Work (MSW) Training Program
In July 2023, SDSU launched the statewide PBH MSW Training Program to address California's public behavioral health workforce development needs. Funded by the California Office of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), this program aims to increase the employment and retention of MSWs in California's publicly funded behavioral health programs and services by providing selected MSW students with specialized training and stipend support. BHS continues to partner with SDSU to develop learning opportunities for students selected for this program, with presentations focused on the public behavioral services system of care. The first cohort for the 2023 -2024 school year was comprised of seven students. Currently for the 2024-2025 school year, there are twelve students participating in the PBH program.

Graduate Student Internship Support through Southern Counties Regional Partnership (SCRP) Stipend Program
To further support graduate students, SCRP offers stipends in the amount of $6,000 to those who have completed their internships or practicums at the County or County-contract behavioral health programs. In 2024, 15 students were awarded the stipend. In 2025, 53 students are set to receive the stipend.

University of California San Diego (UCSD) Psychiatry Program
The UCSD Community Psychiatry Program continues to support post-graduate education and trains psychiatry residents, fellows, and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) trainees to advance concepts of community psychiatry and promote work within community-based settings. The program also places PMHNP trainees side-by-side with psychiatry residents throughout the entire program. In FY 2023-2024, the UCSD Community Psychiatry Program had eight psychiatry residents and five PMHNP students enrolled. Of the 21 psychiatry resident graduates and 57 PMHNP students, 19 psychiatry residents and 52 PMHNP students continue to work in public behavioral health settings, respectively.

ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund Information Sessions
Over the next five years, BHS is investing $75 million of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation Funding to establish a regional Behavioral Health Workforce Fund. On Thursday, March 20, 2025 the Policy Innovation Center held a virtual informational session regarding the establishment of a regional Behavioral Workforce Fund to help people enter, advance, and stay in public behavioral health careers in San Diego County. The virtual event served as an opportunity for people interested in public behavioral health careers to learn about 0% loan options and provide feedback about the proposed Behavioral Health Workforce Fund programs. Additional public input sessions are being held this week with a focus on specific types of behavioral health careers. Components of the ELEVATE fund are anticipated to begin in early FY 2025-26. The March 20th information session was well attended with over 100 participants from various stakeholder groups such as Community-Based Providers, Higher Education, Social Service Agencies, Federally Qualified Health Clinics, Pediatricians, Health Systems, City of San Diego and consumers. During the Q&A session, many questions came from individuals seeking information on training programs and loan qualifications.

BHS SPECIAL EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

BHS Director Announcement

Luke Bergmann, Ph.D., has resigned from his position as BHS Director and will be stepping down from this position after April 11, 2025. While this was a difficult decision to make, he looks forward to the opportunity to address mental health care challenges from a different vantage. The work of BHS is driven by staff with incredible passion, wisdom, and unparalleled commitment to serve the needs of the community. Through this transition and into the future their work will continue and there is no doubt that their efforts will lead to an ever better behavioral health system in San Diego County in the years to come.

Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) 30-Day Public Review Period

The MHSA FY 2025-26 Annual Update will be posted to the BHS website for a 30-day public review and comment period. The review period is expected to begin on April 1, 2025, and end on May 1, 2025. On this date, final comments will be heard at the May BHAB meeting. The MHSA FY 2025-26 Annual Update will go before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on June 3, 2025, subject to change, for review and approval, as required by the Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission (MHSOAC). This will be the final MHSA Annual Report completed before BHS shifts to the new Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Integrated Plan. Planning is underway to assess the impact and implement the various new requirements of the BHSA.

2025 NAMIWalks Community Wellness Expo Kicks Off *May is Mental Health Matters (MIMHMM) Month*

May is Mental Health Matters Month (MIMHMM) is just around the corner. BHS and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Diego have partnered to host the Community Wellness Expo at the NAMIWalks 5K event on April 26, 2025, at NTC Park in Liberty Station. The Wellness Expo will kick off MIMHMM and offer mental health-related resources, interactive activities, and opportunities to connect with local organizations, advocates, and community members dedicated to mental wellness.

The Expo will feature nearly 100 exhibitors with a combination of community organizations, providers, and County departments to provide mental health-related resources along with fun and interactive activities and promotional materials for all to enjoy. MIMHMM provides an opportunity for everyone to come together to build mental health awareness and end the stigma, which is crucial in encouraging people to seek the assistance that they need. Stay tuned for more information on upcoming MIMHMM events and materials by visiting the *It's Up to Us* website at the following link: https://up2sd.org

Event Information:

- **Time:** 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
- **Location:** Preble Field in NTC Park at Liberty Station- 2455 Cushing Road, San Diego
- **Cost:** Free
- **Registration:** https://www.namiwalks.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donordrive.event&eventID=1748&language=en

11th Annual Children and Youth Mental Health Well-Being Celebration on May 10, 2025

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Diego Community Advocacy Program will host the 11th Annual Children and Youth Mental Health Well-Being Celebration on Saturday, May 10, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The event will be held in-person at Grossmont Center Mall in the main courtyard. The celebration is part of the events held in observance of MIMHMM. The Children and Youth Mental Health Well-Being Celebration is free to attend and will offer a variety of fun and engaging activities for all ages, including opportunity drawings, and more. If interested in attending this event as a community-based organization and host a resource table, please submit an Interest form at the following link: forms.office.com/r/zUZQPtKsbU

Discontinuation of CCISC and CADRE Requirements from BHS Programs

BHS is issuing an information notice to contracted- and County-operated programs to discontinue the

Comprehensive, Continuous, Integrated System of Care (CCISC) model and Change Agents Developing Recovery Excellence (CADRE) training requirements. For over 20 years, these requirements have worked to address the needs individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions. In that time, the CCISC model has become well established within BHS, and CADRE has achieved its original objectives.

Through DHCS's Behavioral Health Transformation initiative, the State has strengthened the focus and requirements for all programs to address the needs of individuals with co-occurring conditions. Additionally, the Mental Health Contractors Association requested the removal of CADRE training requirements to allow BHS providers flexibility in decision-making. As such, the CCISC and CADRE requirements are discontinued as of April 1, 2025. BHS remains committed to ensuring people with co-occurring conditions receive treatment that meets them where they are.

Respectfully submitted,



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