County of San Diego

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NADIA PRIVARA BRAHMS, MPA
ACTING DIRECTOR, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

April 22, 2025

TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

FROM: Nadia Privara Brahms, MPA, Acting Director, Behavioral Health Services

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

REMARKS FROM BHS ACTING DIRECTOR

I am honored to serve in the role as the Acting Director of Behavioral Health Services for San Diego County. This job is big, and the system is complex. However, I am confident in the ability of the BHS team to press forward and advance efforts that support people across our continuum in accessing the care that they need, when they need it. We have an incredibly talented team of County staff and contracted providers who work hard each day to care and support people with behavioral health needs.

I would also like to acknowledge the amazing vision and leadership put forth and operationalized by my predecessor, Dr. Luke Bergmann, over the past six years. Dr. Bergmann has been an incredible mentor, friend, and boss to me personally as well as a staunch advocate for innovation and improved access to care for people with substance use and mental health conditions.

As we move through this period of transition, BHS will remain committed to advancing important work already underway, as well as new initiatives on the horizon. The following briefly highlight key priority areas:

1. Maintain continuity of behavioral health care across our system
2. Continue efforts to recruit and retain an expert behavioral health workforce
3. Continue implementation of Board priorities, new initiatives, and new mandates, including and not limited to:
    a. Optimal Care Pathways (OCP) models (Mental Health, Substance Use, Children/Youth/Families/Transition Age Youth)
    b. Network/service enhancements
    c. Optimization organizational structure and operations as a Health Plan

    d. Optimization of revenue
    e. Enhanced community engagement and empowerment
    f. Implementation of BH-CONNECT, BHSA, payment reform, and other major policy shifts
    g. Continued implementation of the outpatient EHR and other critical systems
    h. Others
4. Accelerate culture change within the organization
    a. Embrace innovation
    b. Encourage direct, open, and transparent communication
    c. Foster an environment of learning and growth of expertise
    d. Expect organizational flexibility and the ability to evolve and embrace change
    e. Cultivate strong relationships
    f. Strive to be a nationally recognized organization within community behavioral health

I am excited to work with BHAB to support these efforts and to further build trust and rapport with the diverse communities that we serve. I appreciate the dedication and time each of you invests in continually improving our local behavioral health continuum of care and I look forward to the work we will accomplish together.

BHS SPECIAL EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Appointment of Interim Public Conservator for the County of San Diego
Acting Behavioral Health Services Director Nadia Privara Brahms, has designated Diane Ashton, LMFT, to serve as Interim Public Conservator for the County of San Diego. A native San Diegan, Diane received a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Washington and an Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from National University. She has been licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist in California since 2014. Diane brings years of experience having worked for the San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital, Institutional Case Management, Healthcare Oversight, and currently provides clinical oversight of the Public Conservator's Office and the CARE Act Program. Diane has provided direct clinical care with a variety of populations in various settings including residential, outpatient, and community-based treatment within the private and public sectors.

Let's Talk About: Connecting South Bay to Mental Health Resources – Upcoming Community Event
As part of *May is Mental Health Matters Month,* BHS will be hosting a FREE community event titled "Let's Talk About: Connecting South Bay to Mental Health Resources" on Thursday, May 15, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. -7:30 p.m. at the MAAC Community Center in Chula Vista. This event will highlight crisis response services such as the Access & Crisis Line/9-8-8 Lifeline, Mobile Crisis Response Teams, and other local mental health services. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet service representatives, take part in an interactive input activity, and connect with local organizations at a mini resource fair. Spanish interpretation, refreshments, and children's activity booth will be provided.

Event Information:
- **Date:** Thursday, May 15, 2025
- **Time:** 6:00PM – 7:30PM
- **Location:** MAAC Community Center (1387 Third Avenue, Chula Vista, CA, 91911)

- **Cost:** Free
- Register at the following link: https://bit.ly/4iMhjjQ
  https://bit.ly/42yFsVH

Understanding the County of San Diego Budget
The County's budget is a two-year plan showing how funds will be used in the first year and making recommendations on spending for the second year. It covers the fiscal year from July 1 to June 30. The 2025-27 Recommended Budget will be released May 1.

- Visit San Diego County Open Budget for more information.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadia Privara
Digitally signed by Nadia Privara
Date: 2025.04.22 13:49:29 -07'00'

NADIA PRIVARA BRAHMS, MPA., Acting Director
Behavioral Health Services

cc: Kimberly Giardina, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Aurora Kiviat Nudd, Assistant Director and Chief Operations Officer
Cecily Thornton-Stearns, Assistant Director and Chief Program Officer