June 5, 2025
Behavioral Health Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON
Bill Stewart – District 1
Gaurav Mishra – District 1
Joel San Juan – District 1
Dr. Rosolyn Harper – District 2
Robert Alm – District 2
Julie Hayden, Member-At-Large – District 2
Robin Sales, Chair – District 3
Dr. Devesh Vashishtha – District 3
Stuart Gaiber – District 3
Minola Clark Manson – District 4
Kathy Watkins – District 4
Judith Yates, 2nd Vice Chair – District 4
Amanda Berry, Member-At-Large – District 4
Donald Romo – District 5

MEMBER PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE
Aaron Byzak – District 5

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT IN PERSON
Janice Luna-Reynoso – District 1
Jessica Kramer – District 3

STAFF TO THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
Nadia Privara Brahms, Acting Director, Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
Dania Barroso-Conde, Program Coordinator, BHS
Maria Molina-Melendez, Behavioral Health Advisory Board Coordinator, BHS

DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) was called to order by Chair Robin Sales at 2:30 p.m. in person and via Zoom.

II. CONSENT CALENDAR

BHAB approved the following consent calendar item:

1. Approval Of the Meeting Minutes From the meeting minutes from May 1, 2025

AYES: 14 NAYS: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 0

III. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENTS

Total of three (4) In-person comments and three (3) E-Comments

In-Person Comments:

- Jerry Hall encourages the board to consider rescheduling meetings that fall during holiday months such as January, July, and December. Jerry expressed encouragement for the board to use the next 60 days to further understand the responsibilities and duties of board service.
- Joe Banez, Senior Director of Engagement at Shadowproof, shared the national nonprofit ids dedicated to addressing addiction across California and the United States. Working to promote equitable access to evidence-based addiction treatment and reduce stigma associated with addiction. He also shared information about a treatment locator tool, treatmentatlas.org, and has interest in collaborating with BHS in the future.
- Gaela Fernandez Florin shared the mission of leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology to support people with serious mental illness, starting first with bipolar disease. Stated an interest in exploring opportunities to collaborate with BHS.
- John Brady stated the board to get a review of contracts and consider integrating trainings on the application of reasonable accommodation for both employees and clients.
- Brad expressed support for recent drug enforcement administration efforts, including a recently launched youth-focused marijuana awareness campaign. They encouraged the board to support public education and policy initiatives based on emerging scientific evidence.

E-Comments:

- Anonymous, expressed their concerns about programs like Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act and Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)/Laura's Law, noting limitations in their effectiveness for individuals who may lack insight into their illness or the ability to voluntarily seek help.
- Anonymous, shared concerns with the practice of removing individuals with severe mental illness from County programs when they are unable to voluntarily participate, emphasizing that untreated symptoms may impair their ability to engage and lead to further deterioration.
- James emphasized the need for licensed housing options with wraparound services and medication management, located in safe environments that protect individuals with severe mental illness from exploitation or eviction during periods of instability or medication adjustment.

IV. PRESENTATION ITEM: COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO PROCUREMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

Public Comments: Total of one (1) in-person Public Comment was received.

- Jerry Hall encouraged greater transparency in upcoming contract procurements. He recommended BHS share a list of planned contracts in advance and include more detailed program metrics to support meaningful public input and evaluation.

PRESENTATION ITEM: COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO PROCUREMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

Dr. Nicole Esposito, MD, Chief Population Health Officer, Population Health Unit, BHS; Sheena Figueroa, Chief, Procurement Services, Department of Purchasing and Contacting (DPC); and Maggie Ramsberger, Director, Agency Contract Support, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) provided the following overview of the County of San Diego's Procurement Process:

- Outlined the County's Behavioral Health Plan, which integrates Medi-Cal eligible residents into coordinated mental health and substance use treatment services through the Mental Health Plan (MHP) and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS), offering benefits such as crisis intervention, residential treatment, outpatient care, and peer support.
- Described the BHS network of care, which includes over 145 providers and more than 365 contracts.

- Detailed the three-phase procurement process, including planning (needs assessment, cost analysis, authority verification), solicitation (posting on BuyNet, pre-proposal activities), and award (source selection committee, negotiations, contract execution).
- Highlighted the County Administrative Code Section 401, which governs procurement authority levels, competitive bidding, single-source contracts, and contract extensions.
- Reviewed contract monitoring practices, noting a shift from contract-specific metrics to broader, network-level performance indicators aligned with statewide behavioral health goals.

V. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER UPDATE

Dr. Sayone Thihalolipavan, MD, MPH, Public Health Services introduced himself as the new Public Health Officer for the County of San Diego and provided the following updates:

- Emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between Public Health and Behavioral Health Services.
- Highlighted joint efforts such as the Overdose Surveillance and Response Unit and discussed upcoming opportunities, including school-based behavioral health initiatives and new Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) requirements for coordinated community health assessments across systems.

VI. PRESENTATION ITEM: GRANT PROGRAMS ENHANCING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNITY CARE EXPANSION-PRESERVATION (CCE-P) & BOND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (BHCIP)

Public Comments: Total Of One (1) In-Person Comment and Three (3) E-Comments:

In-Person Comment:

- Arousha Brocious, owner of Ranchi Digas adult residential facility, reported that CCE-P grant funding has enabled the preservation of their facility and continued housing for 49 residents.

E-Comments:

- Cyralynn Mabalot, administrator for Fancor & Orlando Guest Homes, shared that their adult residential facility, serving individuals with mental disabilities from the ages of 18-59+, received CCE-P grant funding from BHS. The funding supports the preservation of board-and-care facilities, such as Fancor & Orlando Guest Homes, as many have closed over the years.
- Steven Aron expressed appreciation for receiving County grant funding to support the remodeling of their assisted living facility and adult residential facility. The improvements enhanced safety, accessibility, and overall quality of life for residents by creating more comfortable and socially engaging living spaces.
- James Tran, Executive Director of Changing Options, stated that their adult residential care facility, operating four facilities in Ramona for over 38 years, was awarded CCE-P grant funding. The grant will support capital improvements and operating subsidies, helping to sustain operations and housing for 24 residents.

PRESENTATION ITEM: GRANT PROGRAMS ENHANCING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNITY CARE EXPANSION-PRESERVATION (CCE-P) & BOND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (BHCIP)

Megan O'Dowd-Schacht, Chief, Agency Operations, Strategy & Finance, Grant Development & Management, BHS, presented the following overview of the Community Care Expansion-Preservation (CCE-P) and Bond Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) grants:

- Described the purpose of the CCE-P grant, which aims to prevent the closure of licensed adult and senior residential care facilities serving qualified residents with behavioral health conditions who are at risk of homelessness.

- Highlighted completed capital projects, including Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) installations, roof and flooring replacements, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades, and other infrastructure improvements across numerous Board and Care facilities.
- Noted that both BHCIP-funded projects target underserved regions and support the County's broader goals of infrastructure enhancement and access to care for Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

VII. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT OUTS

Robin Sales, Chair, BHAB

- **Re-Entry Support for Justice-Involved Youth and Adults Subcommittee**
  - Robin Sales, Chair, reported that the Re-Entry Support for Justice-Involved Youth and Adults subcommittee was dark in May. The upcoming meeting, scheduled for June 23rd at 3:30 via zoom, will include a roundtable with the Probation Department focused on behavioral health care for adults and juveniles transitioning from incarceration to community settings.
- **Pathways to Continuum of Care for Children, Youth, and Adults Impacted by Alcohol and other Drugs Subcommittee**
  - Julie Hayden, Chair reported that the subcommittee met on May 12 to continue identifying gaps and areas for improvement within the current continuum of care.

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Nadia Privara, Acting Director, BHS provided the following update:

- New residential beds are being established as part of the Optimal Care Pathways model. These will be the first beds specifically designated for individuals with behavioral health conditions allocated to community-based organizations and the County's substance use residential treatment facility.

IX. CHAIR'S REPORT

Robin Sales, Chair, BHAB provided the following updates:

- Effort being made to fill BHAB Member seats and categories in alignment with the required categories outlined in the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC).
- A Peer voice roundtable will be planned for the August BHAB meeting.
- BHAB Executive members are actively involved in the selection process for a new BHS Director.
- BHAB Mid-Year Retreat will take place in lieu of the regular BHAB meeting, as the board will go dark in July.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Bill Stewart reported on a meeting held on May 21, 2025, where one of the key topics of discussion was the role of Public Guardians and Public Conservators under the CARE Act. He also acknowledged BHS staff, Amber Irvine, for her valuable contributions during the meeting.

XI. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Robin Sales, seconded by Gaurav Mishra, the BHAB meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.