October 2, 2025
Behavioral Health Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON
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
Donald Romo – District 5
Aaron Byzak – District 5
Janice Luna-Reynoso – District 1

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT IN PERSON
William "Bill" Stewart – District 1
Jessica Kramer – District 3
Amanda Berry, Member-At-Large – District 4
Terra Lawson-Remer – #21

MEMBER PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE
Stuart Gaiber – District 3

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. CONSENT CALENDAR

BHAB approved the following consent calendar item:

1. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from the meeting of September 4, 2025.

AYES: 13 NAYS: 1 ABSTENTIONS: 1

III. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

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

In-Person Comments:

DRAFT

- Jerry Hall, with BHAB Rehab, thanked Supervisor Lawson-Remer for her leadership in advancing the recently approved mandate granting the Citizens Law Review Board authority to review jail deaths within the behavioral health services system. He urged the board to take an active role in reviewing behavioral health services implemented throughout the County.
- Sarah Gordon, from the County of San Diego's Public Safety Group (PSG), highlighted the upcoming *Peer Support in Action Educational Summit and Resource Fair* being held in Corth County on October 28. She explained that the event, organized in collaboration with Behavioral Health Services and other County departments, serves as the second of its kind and aims to connect individuals with justice-involved backgrounds to educational resources and employment opportunities in treatment, reentry, and healthcare systems.
- Dean Scaduto, founder of Golden Coast Rehab, shared his plans to open an outpatient mental health facility. He discussed the significant shortage of providers accepting Medicaid and described his ongoing efforts to establish recuperative care housing to support individuals experiencing mental illness and homelessness by providing stable housing and access to treatment.

E- Comments:

- Mary Jo requested the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to ensure transparency and community input across planning efforts and processes. She further asked that peers be invited to participate as members of such committee related to community planning efforts.
- John Brady, with Lived Experience Advisors, raised concerns about accessibility challenges in locating the BHAB meeting link on the BHAB website. He also discussed issues related to in-home care for individuals with disabilities, including those with behavioral health conditions. He emphasized that many individuals rely on friends or family for support, which can be difficult for those whose support networks face their own behavioral health challenges.
- Peggy Walker, a prevention professional, addressed concerns regarding the public health impacts of high-potency marijuana. She urged the County and BHAB to adopt more evidence-based marijuana policies, including implementing potency caps based on scientific evidence and public safety considerations.
- June Dudas, commended the County's July 1 Health and Human Services Agency update on Involuntary Behavioral Health Treatment efforts. She encouraged the County to consider implementing Psychiatric Advance Health Directives to empower individuals with serious mental illness to participate in their treatment planning. She also emphasized the need for treatment options when individuals lack insight into their illness and voiced concerns about limited availability of PERT teams to accompany law enforcement during mental health crises.

IV. ACTION ITEM: 2025 DATA NOTEBOOK

On the motion of Robert Alm, seconded by Stuart Gaiber, this item was approved.

AYES: 11 NAYS: 2 ABSTENTIONS: 2

V. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: PRESENTING THE 2026 SLATE OF OFFICERS

BHAB members will vote on the Slate of Officers at the next BHAB meeting in November. No additional nominations were made on the floor.

VI. PRESENTATION ITEM: MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM (MCRT) SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM AND CRISIS SERVICES OVERVIEW

Total of one (1) in-person comment and three (3) E-comments:

In-Person Comment:

- Heather Nemour, representing the San Diego County Office of Education, expressed deep appreciation on behalf of schools countywide for the ongoing collaboration with the Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT). She emphasized the critical importance of MCRT services in light of decreased school-based mental health funding and workforce shortages.

E-Comments:

- Tom Brady requested clarification regarding procedures within Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs), specifically whether individuals are permitted to sleep in CSU facilities, how CSU stays relate to Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 5150 holds, and if individuals can request a transfer to an emergency department.
- Becky Rapp commended Behavioral Health Services for the success and impact of the MCRT program. She recognized MCRT's essential role in providing timely, trauma-informed crisis intervention in schools and communities. She also suggested incorporating data on youth marijuana use into MCRT and school-based crisis reporting.
- Tom Pepperd encouraged the County to expand reporting to include longitudinal outcome data following Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) interventions, including post-discharge follow-up and linkage to services.

PRESENTATION ITEM: MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM (MCRT) SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM AND CRISIS SERVICES OVERVIEW

Piedad Garcia, Ed.D., LCSW, Deputy Director, Behavioral Health Services (BHS); Yael Koenig, LCSW, Deputy Director, BHS; Alisha Eftekhari, LMFT, Assistant Medical Services Administrator, BHS provided the following overview of the County's MCRT School Pilot Program and Crisis Services:

Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)

- MCRT provides non-law enforcement, clinical response to individuals experiencing behavioral health crises that meet established safety criteria. These criteria were developed in collaboration with law enforcement jurisdictions under the leadership of Commander Adams of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department.
- The program aims to provide a response time under one hour, with a current countywide average of 24 minutes.
- MCRT also partners with schools through a dedicated dispatch line, offering de-escalation, assessment, and coordination with guardians and school personnel.

Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT)

- PERT provides a trauma-informed, co-response model pairing licensed mental health clinicians with law enforcement officers to assist individuals in crisis.
- PERT serves individuals of all ages, including those who are voluntary or meet Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 5150 criteria, and coordinates with MCRT as appropriate to ensure the least restrictive response.

Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) Overview

- CSUs provide short-term, urgent behavioral health services to individuals in crisis, offering a safe alternative to inpatient hospitalization.
- Services include clinical assessment, peer support, therapy, medication management, and care coordination, delivered by Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) certified staff.
- There are currently six County-funded CSUs, with two additional sites expected to open by early 2026.

VII. ACTION ITEM: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTINUUM INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (BHCIP) LETTER OF SUPPORT DRAFT

Nadia Privara Brahms, MPA, Acting Director, Behavioral Health Services (BHS), presented an update on the County's application for Proposition 1 Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) funding. BHS is proposing to redevelop the former Health Services Complex on Rosecrans Avenue into a Behavioral Health Wellness Campus offering a full continuum of care, including crisis stabilization, rehabilitation, subacute, and outpatient services. She requested BHAB's approval of a Letter of Support to accompany the County's grant application and demonstrate support for the project.

On the motion of Donald Romo, seconded by Kathy Watkins, this item was approved.

AYES: 14 NAYS: 1 ABSTENTIONS: 0

VIII. PRESENTATION ITEM: BHS BUDGET CYCLE UPDATE

Total of one (1) E-comment.

E-Comment:

- John Brady, representing Lived Experience Advisors, inquired about the medical and policy limitations that prevent physicians working with Medi-Cal from identifying environmental factors, such as black mold, as a contributing factor to health conditions.

PRESENTATION ITEM: BHS BUDGET CYCLE UPDATE

Liberty Donnelly, Acting Assistant Director, Chief Strategy and Finance Officer, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) presented on BHS Budget Cycle and provided the following updates:

- No changes have been made to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Adopted Budget for FY 2024–25.
- The BHS budget follows the County's overall budget cycle, beginning each July with budget planning and development of the 5-Year Forecast. During this phase, BHS reviews revenues, funding sources, cost avoidance strategies, and system impacts.
- Draft budgets are reviewed by County leadership, including the five Deputy Chief Administrative Officers (DCAOs), followed by formal presentation to the Board of Supervisors.
- The 5-Year Forecast identifies anticipated budgetary impacts, policy changes, and program priorities such as service capacity expansions, new mandates, and capital projects.
- The Operational Plan, developed on a two-year cycle, translates these long-term priorities into actionable strategies and resource allocations.
- Input from BHAB and community partners helps inform the forecast and guide budget decisions, making the budget planning process transparent and accessible.
- BHS is preparing for the implementation of the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), effective July 1, 2026, which will reshape funding structures and program operations statewide.
- As part of the BHS Transformation Plan, BHS is reviewing its structure and financial systems to prepare for a transition toward becoming a standalone department, independent of centralized Health and Human Services Agency operations.

IX. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Nadia Privara, MPA, Acting Director, BHS provided the following updates:

- Chief Administrative Officer Ebony attended the BHS All-Staff Meeting, addressing staff questions and noting that the Ad Hoc Subcommittee guiding BHS's transition to a stand-alone department may begin meeting in November.
- The Director's Report highlighted complex treatment system, including programs such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) and other court-linked services, which will align with the upcoming BH-CONNECT Medi-Cal demonstration project.

- Proposition 36 was noted as an unfunded mandate, with BHS continuing to provide related services despite the absence of dedicated funding.
- The BHS Administrative Office at 3255 Camino del Rio South is being sold to a community partner, prompting a consolidation of administrative functions across two new locations. Staff have been notified of the relocation, with the transition expected to occur in November. BHS is collaborating with the Department of General Services to identify new long-term office space.

X. CHAIR'S REPORT

Robin Sales, Chair, BHAB provided the following updates:

- The BHAB Fall Retreat is scheduled for Saturday, November 1, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Camino office, 1st floor. The planning committee met to develop the agenda which aims to develop board member relationships, explore priorities for the upcoming year, and suggest subcommittees moving forward.
- A call for volunteers was made for the Ad-Hoc Community Program Planning 9CPP) Subcommittee, with five BHAB members needed, one from each district. Each member will also recruit one community member, forming a 10-member subcommittee with an expected commitment of 10–12 meetings, totaling approximately 20 hours.
- The Re-Entry Support for Justice-Involved Youth and Adults Subcommittee met on September 22, where Kat Briggs presented on BHSA and CPP in preparation for the October meeting, which will include a BHSA input session to gather community insights on justice-involved programs and re-entry supports.
- Dr. Julie Hayden reported that the Pathways to Continuum of Care for Children, Youth, and Adults Impacted by Alcohol and other Drugs Subcommittee did not meet in September. Meetings will resume on October 13 with a BHSA input session to gather community perspectives on the substance use disorder continuum of care.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Live Well Advance Conference and School Summit
  - Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025
  - Location: San Diego Convention Center
- Peer Support in Action | Educational Summit and Resource Fair
  - Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2025
  - Time: 9:00 am-1:00 pm
  - Location: North Inland Live Well Center: 649 W. Mission Ave., Escondido, CA 92025
  - Free for attendees: Lunch, transit passes, parking onsite, and grocery bags

XII. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Robin Sales, seconded by John Byrom, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.