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April 2, 2026

TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

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

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR'S REPORT – April 2026

Programs & Service Delivery Updates

Housing and Homelessness Services Updates

BHS remains committed to supporting housing options for individuals living with serious mental illness (SMI) and substance use disorders (SUD). In Fiscal Year 2024–25, 14% of individuals receiving mental health or SUD services, 11,799 individuals, in the BHS system of care reported experiencing homelessness. Although BHS programs serve many unhoused residents, data from the region's 2023 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count show that not everyone experiencing homelessness has a behavioral health condition. Among the 10,264 people counted, 22% reported having a serious mental illness and 17% reported a substance use disorder. These data were not collected in the 2024 or 2025 PIT Counts. Together, these findings highlight the need for tailored approaches within the broader homelessness response system. BHS offers a continuum of short-term, transitional, and permanent supportive housing services.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, pairs long-term affordable housing with supportive services to help people exit homelessness and maintain stability. The County of San Diego (County) has committed more than $53 million in Mental Health Services Act Community Services and Supports funding to the Special Needs Housing Program and its predecessor, creating 350 PSH units. The County also supports 57 services-only units, where residents receive County-funded services even though the County did not fund the construction. In 2018, Proposition 2 enabled up to $2 billion in revenue bonds and the use of Proposition 63 funds to launch the No Place Like Home (NPLH) program. San Diego County received approximately $127.8 million through NPLH to expand housing opportunities. As of March 2026, 16 NPLH developments are operating or in lease-up, providing 375 units, with five additional projects in progress. Supportive services are provided by contracted service providers. If a higher level of support is needed, the tenant may be referred to a higher level of care, such as outpatient clinic services, Strengths-Based Case Management (SBCM), or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), to receive intensive, field-based case management and stabilization supports.

BHS continues partnering with the San Diego Housing Commission to deliver supportive services at Homekey-funded PSH sites for individuals experiencing homelessness with behavioral health needs. Homekey sites remain operational. Pacific Village and Presidio Palms are nearing 100% occupancy. Altogether, BHS provides behavioral health supportive services to 568 Homekey units across five

developments. BHS is continuing to work with the San Diego Housing Commission to operationalize support for a Homekey+ PSH development in the City of San Diego.

To address the shortage of licensed residential care options, BHS continues expanding Augmented Services Program (ASP) capacity using Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) funding. Since initial implementation, ASP growth now includes a total of 393 new BHBH-funded ASP slots countywide. ASP provides enhanced onsite supports, such as transportation, money management, and daily living assistance, for individuals with serious mental illness residing in board-and-care settings and enrolled in SBCM or ACT.

Community Care Expansion Preservation
Under the Community Care Expansion Preservation grant, BHS remains focused on stabilizing and preserving existing Adult Residential Facilities and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly. All previously awarded capital projects are now complete. A second round of Notice of Funding Availability will deploy remaining capital funds, with construction expected to begin July 2026. These investments continue to protect critical residential care capacity for individuals with serious behavioral health conditions who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Large Policy Changes: BHSA, BH-CONNECT, and Medi-Cal Transformation
BHS is preparing for the rollout of the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), approved by voters through Proposition 1 in March 2024. The new framework updates the MHSA and creates a housing category that directs 30% of BHSA funding to housing supports. The framework also expands planning and reporting to include substance use disorder services, supporting BHS' integrated approach to behavioral health and housing. In addition, under the Behavioral Health Community-Based Organized Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment (BH-CONNECT), the California Department of Health Care Services will introduce a Transitional Rent benefit to help prevent and address homelessness by covering short-term rent or temporary housing. Beginning in Spring 2026, eligible Medi-Cal members may receive up to six months of this benefit, which will serve as a bridge to long-term housing and complement other Medi-Cal support services. To support the implementation of Transitional Rent and BHSA Housing Interventions BHS is in the process of developing a Flexible Housing Pool to coordinate across MCPs, the County, and various providers. The Flexible Housing Pool creates a critical pathway for integrating multiple funding sources, streamlining service authorization and delivery, and enhancing client access to wraparound supports. Through this approach, clients experience a whole-person care approach, receiving housing, health, and supportive services in a connected, coordinated manner that improves health stability and housing outcomes.

System Capacity, Capital & Infrastructure

BHS Receives Largest Award in the State!
BHS has been awarded $99.5M in Bond Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (Bond BHCIP) Round 2 grant funding – the largest award for this round of funding in the State! This funding will help build the County's first-ever Behavioral Health Wellness Campus, a centralized site where adults can access a full continuum of mental health and substance use treatment services in one location. It will be located on the site of the former County Health Services Complex on Rosecrans Street adjacent to SDCPH. The project is currently in the planning and pre-development phase, with an anticipated completion date of May 2031. You can watch the press conference that occurred on March 17th for more details. A recommendation to accept these grant funds will be presented to the Board of Supervisors at the May 19 hearing.

The new campus will include five core services:

- **Crisis stabilization unit:** Immediate, short-term care for adults experiencing a behavioral health crisis.
- **Mental health rehabilitation center:** Support for people with complex needs transitioning from hospital-level care.
- **Peer-focused social rehabilitation facility:** Intensive short-term care with peer-based recovery support.
- **Adult residential substance use disorder treatment center:** A safe, structured environment for adults receiving residential treatment.
- **Outpatient community health clinic:** Treatment and support for adults with mental health or co-occurring conditions.

Adult Substance Use Residential Treatment addition of 44 Withdrawal Management beds
A contract has been awarded to Father Joe's Villages for the operation of a 44-bed adult residential withdrawal management program, effective March 1, 2026. This expansion directly supports the County's goal of strengthening the behavioral health continuum, particularly for individuals experiencing homelessness, by adding 44 new residential withdrawal management beds in the downtown San Diego area. The new capacity aligns with the Board's direction to close longstanding service gaps, improve system flow from crisis to treatment, and advance the Substance Use Optimal Care Pathways model. This program is expected to provide timely stabilization and treatment access to approximately 2,700 additional residents each year, many of whom face both substance use and housing challenges.

Edgemoor Acute Psychiatric Unit Groundbreaking Ceremony
County and State leaders gathered on March 5, 2026, to kick off the $28.1 million project that will add 12 new acute psychiatric beds to Edgemoor DPSNF in Santee. Edgemoor's new inpatient psychiatric unit will provide short-term crisis inpatient care for adults, including those at risk of self-harm, or who are experiencing severe symptoms such as depression or psychosis that cannot be safely managed at home. Construction for the new Edgemoor acute psychiatric unit, which includes a 5,780 square-foot courtyard, is slated to be completed in May 2027.

Community Engagement, Public Participation & Partner Coordination

BHSA Integrated Plan (IP) Public Comment Period
BHS is holding a 30-day public review and comment period for the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Integrated Plan (IP) for Fiscal Year 2026-2029. Community members, providers, and partners are invited to review the plan and share feedback during the 30-Day public comment period. **Public comment period is open from March 17, 2026 – April 15, 2026.**

How to Share Your Feedback
You can provide comments on the BHSA Integrated Plan through any of the following options:

Online

- Visit the BHSA website: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/bhsa.html
- Submit your comments using the 30-Day Public Comment Form: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/019cf7c01f407d9cbebcae3de4a63c02
- Review the BHSA Integrated Plan Draft and provide feedback through the Engage San Diego County platform: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/019cf7c01f407d9cbebcae3de4a63c02

By Phone
- Call our feedback voicemail at 619-584-5063, or toll-free at 888-977-6763

By Email
- Engage.BHS@sdcounty.ca.gov

Stay Connected
- Sign up for the BHSA Distribution List: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/0199ed6ccca376edba0926bd9c329e2c
- Follow the BHSA Engagement Page: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/engagement/

Following the 30-day Public Comment Period, a public hearing will be held with BHAB at the May 7th general membership meeting.

Workforce & Capacity-Building Initiatives

BHS Peer Support Symposium
BHS, in collaboration with Southern Counties Regional Partnership, delivered the "Leading with Lived Experience: A Peer Support Symposium" on March 10th at the SDSU Parma Payne Goodall Center. Receiving 165 registrations, 150 participants who are primarily peer support specialists and community health workers attended the day of engagement and celebration. National speaker Jesse Leon provided an engaging keynote presentation that inspired our lived experience providers to continue their growth and passion for behavioral health and seek partnership opportunities. This event received positive regards from attendees.

Recognition & Achievements

Sharp Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) Open House
Local leaders gathered on March 9 in Chula Vista to mark the completion of the region's seventh Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU). The County's partnership with Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center is expanding access to urgent behavioral health care for residents across the South Bay.

Once operational, the CSU, co-located within the hospital's new Emergency Department, will provide short-term, intensive behavioral health crisis services in a safe and therapeutic setting. Its unique placement within a well-established medical center's emergency department creates a more appropriate, supportive and timely pathway for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

Looking Ahead

East Region Crisis Stabilization Unit Ribbon Cutting - April 20, 2026
The County of San Diego is pleased to announce that the Open House event for the Crisis Stabilization Unit located in the east region which will be held in April 2026. This new facility will be the eighth Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) in our system of care and will provide essential 24/7 crisis stabilization services to East County residents. It will also serve as a valuable resource for law enforcement, the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT), Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT), local Emergency Departments (EDs) and other community partners.

CSU services are individualized and designed for short-term support, up to 24 hours. By delivering immediate behavioral health care in a therapeutic environment, our CSUs have successfully diverted

84% of individuals from inpatient treatment during FY 24/25. The goal of the CSUs is to connect people to ongoing care while reducing the need for higher levels of care.

We look forward to introducing this important new resource to the east county community and strengthening our collective ability to respond to behavioral health needs.

Fiscal Year 2026-27 County Budget Survey
The County of San Diego is inviting residents to provide feedback to guide decisions on the fiscal year 2026-27 budget. County staff examine data, review community feedback from the past year, and bear in mind state and federal funding issues to identify County budget priorities. The survey is one of several opportunities for residents to give their input. Through the survey, you can also stay informed by sharing how you prefer to receive additional budget information, such as email, text or some other form of communication.

Key dates:
- March 22: Survey and ranking tool close
- May 1: Recommended budget for fiscal year 2026-27 will be released to the public
- June 1: Public Hearing on the recommended budget

For more key days and times, visit the San Diego County Budget Website:
- https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/openbudget/en/home.html

Escondido Clubhouse Art Show
The public is invited to the Escondido Clubhouse Art Show – "Who We Art", which will showcase the unique talents of Escondido Clubhouse members. All are welcome!

Date: April 10, 2026
Time: 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Location: 474 W Vermont Ave, Suite 105, Escondido, CA 92025

NAMIWalks
It's almost time for the Annual San Diego NAMIWalks event! Organized by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), this free event will take place on **Saturday, April 25, 2026**. The community is invited to join local organizations in raising awareness about mental health and addressing the stigma surrounding mental health topics. For more details, visit https://www.namiwalks.org/sandiego or view the promotional flyer.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadia Privara

Digitally signed by Nadia Privara
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