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June 4, 2026

TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

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

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

BHS Leadership Announcement

Appointment of New Policy Director

Brynn Viale Long, Deputy Director, will serve as the BHS's new Policy Director. This new position was established by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Ebony Shelton as part of an enterprise-wide effort to strengthen coordinated support across departments, elected offices, and key stakeholders. In this role, Brynn will provide strategic leadership across high visibility policy areas to support cohesive communication and alignment with County policy direction. Brynn brings more than a decade of leadership experience within the Health and Human Services Agency, advancing organizational priorities through strategic planning, operational leadership, and cross system collaboration. She has a strong record of turning complex operational and programmatic insights into effective, outcomes focused policies that align with County and Board priorities.

Programs & Service Delivery Updates

Special Treatment Program

Friendship Manor Nursing & Rehabilitation Center has joined our local network as a provider of Special Treatment Program (STP) services, adding 42 new beds to expand placement options for individuals requiring skilled nursing care with enhanced behavioral health support designed to support individuals with serious mental illness and complex behavioral health needs. Friendship Manor is a 104-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation center in National City that provides 24-hour nursing care, rehabilitation services, and interdisciplinary support within a structured healthcare environment.

The addition of these 42 STP beds increases provider variety to support consumer choice and improve access to clinically appropriate placements for adults requiring both skilled nursing services and structured behavioral health interventions. The secured setting is intended to support individuals who require a higher level of supervision and stabilization due to serious mental illness, behavioral complexity, or safety concerns, while still receiving nursing and rehabilitative care. Friendship Manor's STP model includes on-site psychiatric and psychological supports to promote recovery, wellness, and successful community reintegration when appropriate.

This expansion is expected to strengthen continuity of care, improve transitions from acute and subacute settings, and support movement across levels of care for individuals with complex medical and behavioral health needs. The additional STP capacity will also help address placement barriers for difficult-to-place individuals requiring higher-acuity behavioral health supports within a therapeutic skilled nursing environment.

Substance Use Residential Treatment Services
New Creation Behavioral Healthcare Foundation has joined our local network as a new provider for a combined Substance Use Residential Treatment Services (SURTS) and Recuperative Care (RC) model, adding 73 Adult Substance Use Residential Treatment beds and 16 Recuperative Care beds to expand treatment and recovery capacity for individuals with substance use and complex health needs.

The organization has an established operational history across multiple California counties, including Orange County and San Bernardino County. This addition broadens provider variety to support consumer choice and expand treatment options for adults with diverse recovery, medical stabilization, and care coordination needs. The co-located model is intended to support individuals requiring substance use treatment while also addressing medical recovery needs that may otherwise create barriers to engagement in care or successful discharge planning.

The SURTS program is funded in part by Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) and Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) funding, supporting infrastructure investments to increase residential treatment availability and strengthen the behavioral health continuum of care. The addition of 73 SUD residential beds and 16 Recuperative Care beds is expected to improve access, strengthen continuity of care, enhance transitions between levels of care, and support individuals with complex treatment, stabilization, and recovery needs through a more integrated service model.

Housing & Homelessness Update
In Fiscal Year (FY) 25–26, BHS expanded its housing and supportive service offerings across Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Supportive Services, and Interim Housing. The supportive housing portfolio grew by 47 new No Place Like Home (NPLH) units, strengthening long-term housing options for individuals with behavioral health needs. Tenant Peer Support Services also expanded, increasing the number of residents served from 323 to 425 across Special Needs Housing Program (SNHP) and NPLH developments. Interim Housing programs also saw substantial growth. Augmented Services Programs (ASP) increased capacity by 182% to 661 slots, Short Term Bridge Housing (STBH) expanded by 209% to 173 beds, and the final allocation of one-time American Rescue Plan Act funding for Recovery Residences increased by 53%, adding approximately 100,000 bed days. Together, these enhancements strengthen the system's capacity to support individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The County is preparing to implement the Transitional Rent benefit, a Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (MCP) Community Supports benefit that provides up to six months of temporary rent assistance for eligible members at risk of homelessness. Beginning 7/1/26, the County will launch a one-year Flexible Housing Pool pilot to align BHSA housing resources with MCPs and housing providers. The pilot will fund up to 250 rental subsidies for individuals newly enrolled in Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services, supporting housing stability for those at highest risk. This pilot does not limit the number of individuals who may access the Transitional Rent benefit, which remains an MCP-approved and MCP-funded resource.

Population Health Update
BHS, in partnership with Blue Shield Promise and Kaiser Permanente, is participating in a Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Learning Collaborative to pilot a new data-sharing process aimed at improving follow-up after behavioral health–related Emergency Department (ED) visits. Historically, BHS has had limited timely visibility into ED utilization for mental health and substance use needs, restricting opportunities for rapid outreach and engagement. Through this initiative, Managed Care Plans now transmit daily Admission, Discharge, and Transfer (ADT) files to BHS, where records are matched and follow-up notifications are issued to the appropriate providers for client outreach. The first provider notification was issued on April 28, 2026. BHS continues to monitor provider follow-up activities documented in SmartCare, with the goal of strengthening client engagement in mental health and substance use services following ED utilization.

System Capacity, Capital & Infrastructure Updates

Artificial Intelligence Ambient Listening Platform
BHS will be rolling out Eleos across our health plan network within the next few months. Eleos is an AI-supported ambient listening platform designed to enhance efficiency, improve documentation quality, improve member experience, and support provider well-being. It is being made available via CalMHSA and integrates directly with the SmartCare EHR. This platform is specialized for behavioral health, and its features—documentation structure, AI/compliance rules, clinical interventions—are tailored accordingly.

This implementation aligns with our ongoing commitment to reduce administrative burden, strengthen compliance, and create additional capacity for clinicians to spend more time delivering direct services.

Eleos provides AI-generated summary of sessions and real time compliance support. Reported benefits from organizations currently using Eleos include:

- Time savings for clinical documentation
- Higher client engagement and fewer no-shows
- Increased capacity for direct services
- Improved documentation quality and accuracy
- Improved clinician experience and reduced burnout
- Opportunities for increased Medi-Cal revenue through more complete and timely documentation

Looking Ahead

Behavioral Health Service Act Integrated Plan Public Comment
Community members are invited to provide public comment regarding the BHSA Integrated Plan during the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, June 9, 2026. Members of the public can participate in this opportunity both virtually or in-person at the County Administration Center Board Chamber, Room 310 (1600 Pacific Hwy, San Diego, CA 92101).

To review the agenda and event details, please visit:
https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/cob/bosa.html.

Fiscal Year 26-27 Recommended Budget
The month of June will be heavily focused on finalizing and presenting key budget materials, with multiple rehearsals and coordination meetings supporting the upcoming Budget Deliberations. Activities begin with the June 1 Budget Hearing, followed by a series of Change Letter rehearsals on June 10, 12, 18, and 22. A brief internal touch-base on June 15 will help finalize data and script updates ahead of the final run-throughs, ensuring all materials are ready for deliberation. The month concludes with the June 25 Budget Acceptance, marking the final step in the approval process.

BHS Case Management Art Show
The County of San Diego BHS Case Management program is hosting its annual art show on Friday, June 12 from 11am-2pm at the Southeastern Live Well Center, 5101 Market St., San Diego, CA 92114 Tubman Chavez Conference Room B &C, 1St floor. This year's show will also feature art from the County-Operated Behavioral Health Center artists! All community members are welcome.

Scoop from You(th) Challenge
BHS will celebrate youth finalists who were selected as "Regional Winners" for their participation in the latest *Scoop From You(th) Challenge: Piece of Mind* on Saturday, June 13, 2026. Youth and young adults ages 12-25 were encouraged to use art as a medium to explore mental health, reduce stigma, and promote wellbeing. In total, the department received 69 submissions from 57 youth reflective of varying genres. Regional winners will receive gift card awards for their winning submissions. We thank all participants for their efforts and creativity to create more awareness around the importance of mental health.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadia Privara
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NADIA PRIVARA BRAHMS, MPA, Director
Behavioral Health Services

c: Elizabeth A. Hernandez, Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Aurora Kiviat Nudd, Assistant Director, Chief Operations Officer
Cecily Thornton-Stearns, LMFT, Assistant Director, Chief Program Officer
Liberty Donnelly, Assistant Director, Chief Strategy and Finance Officer