September 3, 2026
Behavioral Health Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON
Janice Luna-Reynoso, 2nd Vice Chair – District 1
Dr. Rosolyn Harper – District 2
Robert Alm – District 2
Dr. Julie Hayden, Member at Large – District 2
Skylar Phillips – District 2
Jessica Karamer – District 3
Robin Sales, Member at Large – District 3
Minola Clark Manson, 1st Vice Chair – District 4
Kathy Watkins – District 4
Amanda Berry, Chair – District 4
John Byrom – District 5
Donald Romo – District 5
Aaron Byzak – District 5

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT IN PERSON
Joel San Juan – District 1
Dr. Devesh Vashishtha – District 3
Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer - Seat 21

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE
William "Bill" Stewart – District 1
Stuart Gaiber – District 3, Just Cause – Illness Option (2/2)
Brad Stone – District 4, Just Cause - Care Giver Option (1/2)

STAFF TO THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
Aurora Kiviat, Assistant 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 Amanda Berry at 2:36 p.m. in person and via Zoom.

II. CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Aaron Byzak, seconded by Kathy Watkins, the following consent calendar items were approved:

1. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from August 06, 2026.

AYES: 16 NAYS: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 0

III. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Total of four (4) in-person comments, five (5) in-person via Zoom comments, and three (3) e-comments.

DRAFT

In-Person Comments:

- Steve Dilley, Veteran's Art Project, outlined California Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 204 which recognizes the behavioral health benefits of arts participation and the role of arts organizations as community partners. They asked how San Diego County will respond and requested BHAB to support integrating and funding community-based arts organizations in prevention and early intervention efforts.
- Anne Marie Council, Quarter Turn Strategies Institute, noted support for the Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Subcommittee and noted their voluntary participation. They referenced Los Angeles County's successful street psychiatry model focused on restoring autonomy and encouraged San Diego to adopt similar approaches.
- John Brady, Lived Experience Advisors, described ongoing issues with clients facing housing instability and behavioral health challenges, unable to reach their case manager and received a warning notice that threatened program discharge for future incidents. They noted this problem occurs repeatedly for others and are seeking help.
- Jessica Kramer, BHAB member, noted a county contractor outlined housing requirements that barred any future suicide or self-harm threats required to retain housing. They called for stronger de-escalation and response practices.

In-Person Comments via Zoom:

- Becky Rapp, community member, asked BHAB to prioritize addressing the connection between marijuana use and the community's mental health challenges, especially as the county advances its Socially Equitable Cannabis Program. They stated the need for clear, scientific public health information about the mental health risks of cannabis use, particularly for youth and young adults.
- Madison, community member, informed BHAB that Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2249, strengthening restrictions on cannabis packaging that may appeal to youth. They asked the board to monitor implementation and consider local prevention and education measures to support youth protection.
- Yesenia Cortez, licensed marriage and family therapist and community member, shared their background in crisis intervention and work with high-risk youth and adults experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), trauma, and depression. They shared an interest in connecting with BHAB to help address ongoing barriers to behavioral health services.
- Tom Packard, professor emeritus of social work at SDSU, asked questions about the timeline and decision-making related to reports involving BHS, and a May 2025 analyst incident. They requested that BHAB ensure transparency.
- Linda Mimms, community member, supported earlier comments about the Los Angeles Homeless Outreach & Mobile Engagement (HOME) team model and stated it could be adopted locally. They asked that the next behavioral health director be a physician with strong clinical expertise in mental health and that the selection process be transparent.

E- Comments:

- Jerry Hall, community member, stated that the state-required Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) issue resolution process mandates quarterly reporting of complaints to BHAB, yet no reports have been provided since 2015 despite known complaints. They said this gap prevents BHAB from understanding community concerns and requested that reporting practices be implemented and recent complaint records shared.
- June H Dudas, LPS Subcommittee of BHAB, recommended that the Los Angeles HOME team present its successful street-based mental health model and noted its strong outcomes and

alignment with state field-based approaches. They also asked that recruitment for the next BHS Director prioritize substantial behavioral-health and clinical experience.

- KMarie, community member, reported concerns about an individual's planned discharge from Mental Health provider to an enhanced Independent Living Facility (ILF) despite their ongoing lack of insight, refusal of treatment, and continued need for LPS conservatorship. They requested support with stabilization of care and reassessment of their LPS status.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Comment

Total of one (1) e-comment.

E- Comment:

- Robert Stonebrook, San Diego Coalition for Effective Treatment, explained that the BHSA shifts counties toward accountability for population-level behavioral health outcomes and requires the Community Planning Process to function as a strategic, system-wide alignment effort. They noted that success depends on coordinated priorities and collective action across stakeholders, reflected in the Integrated Plan.

Director's Report

Aurora Kiviat, Assistant Director, BHS, provided the following updates:

- Shared that BHS is currently undergoing a leadership transition and Jennifer Bransford-Koons was appointed as interim director. Jennifer Bransford-Koons brings extensive county experience and is still planning to retire at the end of October. Core operations will continue, and the department is working to ensure stability during the transition.
- BHAB was encouraged to review the Director's Report for updates on children's services, crisis response, and workforce initiatives.

V. PRESENTATION ITEM: COUNTY MEDICAL SERVICES (MCS) UPDATE

Shelly Tregembo, Chief, Department of Strategy and Community Engagement, presented the following:

- Outlined the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (HR1) action plan which outlines broad actions taken to address major safety-net changes resulting from HR1.
- Described two HR1 related board initiatives: the temporary Safety Net Bridge Program to support individuals who may briefly lose Medi-Cal, and long-term County Medical Services (CMS) reform.
- Overviewed current CMS eligibility, income thresholds, covered services, and stakeholder recommendations. Board item anticipated in late 2026.

VI. PRESENTATION ITEM: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, CRISIS RESPONSE OVERVIEW

Public Comment

Total of one (1) in-person comment.

In-Person Comment:

- Yusef Miller, Saving Lives in Custody California, asked clarity on how mobile crisis response screening is applied, raised concerns about potential escalation when law enforcement is notified, and asked for details on mobile crisis team availability as well as Crisis Stabilization Unit locations and capacity.

Presentation Item: Behavioral Health Services, Crisis Response Overview

Piedad Garcia Ed.D., LCSW, Deputy Director, BHS, presented the following:

- Overviewed crisis services using a client-focused case example to illustrate how individuals access support through 9-8-8 and the Access & Crisis Line (ACL). They also described the screening

criteria used across ACL, 9-1-1 dispatch, and law enforcement to determine appropriate crisis response, noting some criteria are under re-evaluation.

- Outlined Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) structure, response protocols, safety procedures, and typical timelines, including coordination with law enforcement when needed.
- Reviewed Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs), their expansion, 24/7 access, and role in diverting individuals from emergency departments.

VII. INFORMATION ITEM: 2026 DATA NOTEBOOK HANDOUT

Amanda Berry, Chair, provided an informational update on the annual Data Notebook Survey prepared by the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CalBHPC). They noted that this year's theme is Foster Youth and that county subject-matter experts are compiling the required responses. The completed Data Notebook will return to BHAB as an action item on the October 1 agenda for approval prior to submission to the state.

VIII. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT OUTS

Access to the Continuum of Care for Children, Youth, and Adults impacted by Mental Health and Substance Use Subcommittee

Dr. Julie Hayden, Member at Large, reported the following:

- Noted ongoing work reviewing harm-reduction approaches and the continuum of care for mental health and substance use across all age groups.
- The subcommittee discussed the ongoing challenges in accessing treatment for adolescents and children.

Involuntary Treatment - Lanterman-Petris Short (LPS) Subcommittee

Robert Alm, BHAB Member, reported the following:

- The subcommittee received a recent presentation from the Los Angeles HOME team, whose field-based psychiatry and housing-linked model showed impactful success stories. They plan to meet with the Los Angeles HOME team and will report back with further information.
- Although the subcommittee focus on involuntary LPS treatment, they stated that expanding similar field-based programs in San Diego could help reduce the need for involuntary interventions.

BHAB VI Bylaws Subcommittee

Amanda Berry, Chair, reported the following:

- Article 6 revisions, which are currently under review by County Counsel. The proposed bylaw amendments will be returned to BHAB as an action item.

IX. ADVISORY BOARD UPDATES: HEALTHY SAN DIEGO, HEALTH SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD, AND OTHER STATE AND LOCAL BOARD

Amanda Berry, Chair, BHAB, provided the following update:

- There is an opening for a BHAB representative to serve on the Healthy San Diego Advisory Board, specifically someone who identifies as a behavioral health consumer or family member. The Healthy San Diego Advisory Board collaborates with managed care plans, county departments, clinics, hospitals, and community organizations. BHAB members are invited to express interest in serving on the Healthy San Diego Advisory Board.

X. CHAIR'S REPORT

Amanda Berry, Chair, BHAB, provided the following updates:

- Announced Janice Luna-Reynoso as the newest member of the Executive Committee, serving as 2nd Vice Chair through year-end.
- Congratulated Donald Romo on his reappointment by District 5 for another term.
- Requested BHAB members to volunteer for the fall retreat planning committee and the nominating committee for the 2027 executive officers. Volunteers will be contacted by BHS staff.

On the motion of Aaron Byzak, seconded by Minola Clark Manson, the 2027 Executive Nominating Committee was approved to include: Aaron Byzak, Donald Romo, Robert Alm, Minola Clark Manson, and Jessica Kramer.

AYES: 16 NAYS: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 0

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

XII. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned by Amanda Berry at 5:01 p.m.