October 1, 2026
Behavioral Health Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

| MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON | MEMBERS NOT PRESENT IN PERSON |
|---|---|
| Joel San Juan – District 1 | Dr. Devesh Vashishtha – District 3 |
| Dr. Rosolyn Harper – District 2 | Amanda Berry, Chair – District 4 |
| Robert Alm – District 2 | Aaron Byzak – District 5 |
| Dr. Julie Hayden, Member at Large – District 2 | |
| Skylar Phillips – District 2 | |
| Jessica Karamer – District 3 | |
| Robin Sales, Member at Large – District 3 | |
| Stuart Gaiber – District 3 | |
| Minola Clark Manson, 1st Vice Chair – District 4 | |
| Kathy Watkins – District 4 | |
| Brad Stone – District 4 | |
| John Byrom – District 5 | |
| Donald Romo – District 5 | |
| Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer - Seat 21 | |
| | |
| **MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE** | |
| William "Bill" Stewart – District 1, Just Cause – Illness Option (1/2) | |
| Janice Luna-Reynoso, 2nd Vice Chair – District 1, Just Cause – Illness Option (1/2) | |

**STAFF TO THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD**
Jennifer Bransford-Koons, Interim Director, Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
Katherine Briggs, Operations Chief, BHS

## I. CALL TO ORDER

The Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) was called to order by 1st Vice Chair Minola Clark Manson at 2:33 p.m. in person and via Zoom.

## II. CONSENT CALENDAR

On a motion by Stuart Gaiber, seconded by Kathy Watkins, the following consent calendar items were approved:

1. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from September 03, 2026.

AYES: 16 NAYS: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 0

DRAFT

**III. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Total of eleven (11) in-person comments, five (5) in-person via Zoom comments, and four (4) e-comments.

**In-Person Comments:**

- Robin Sales, BHAB Member, noted BHAB's responsibility to review behavioral health programs and policies for potential recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, emphasized the importance of considering diverse experiences and adhering to the county code of conduct, and raised a concern regarding member interactions.
- Jerry Hall acknowledged the return of sailors from the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Group, referenced reports of suicides during deployment, and urged coordinated outreach to the Navy while emphasizing the availability of crisis resources, including 9-8-8 and the Veterans line.
- John Brady, Lived Experience Advisors, reported recurring cases in which clients experiencing housing instability and behavioral health issues were unable to reach their case manager and subsequently received warnings that risked program discharge.
- Kristian J. Berger, community member, noted that the board's mandated annual reports have not been issued since 2022 and raised concern that BHS, rather than the board, has been preparing the reports, affecting oversight.
- Steve Dilley, the Veterans Art Project, introduced the Veterans Art Project, which provides arts classes for veterans and their families, and asked how small community organizations can obtain a letter of support for upcoming state innovation funding
- Dean Scaduto, Golden Coast Rehab, reported that a new Partial Hospitalization Program and Intensive Outpatient Program for Medi-Cal adults reached capacity soon after opening and noted that additional capacity is needed to meet demand.
- Yusef Miller, North County Equity and Justice Coalition, raised concerns about a hostile environment within BHAB and its subcommittees and suggested establishing clearer expectations for the board's purpose and scope.
- Paul Dunlap, For Better Brains, introduced the organization, noted recent leadership changes in behavioral health, described speaking with unhoused individuals experiencing serious mental illness, and suggested increasing transparency by publishing budget and contract information online.
- Ellen Stone, SD Peers, announced an upcoming World Mental Health Day luncheon for peers in Balboa Park and encouraged sharing the event information with those who may benefit.
- Jessica Kramer, BHAB Member, stated that a recent subcommittee report did not reflect the subcommittee's work and appeared to present a personal viewpoint, and encouraged members to review the report amid ongoing discussion of grave disability.
- Stuart Gaiber, BHAB Member, highlighted the importance of transparency and cooperation within the board, noting that constructive conduct supports effective fulfillment of its responsibilities.

**In-Person Comments via Zoom:**

- Mary Jo O'Brien, San Diego Peers, expressed concern about the impending end of her housing subsidy, noted challenges in identifying transitional or flexible housing options, and requested support in locating resources for January.
- Madison, community member, noted that adolescent substance use can affect brain development and contribute to mental health conditions, and encouraged continued support for evidence-based youth prevention and mental health programs.

- Tom Packard, SDSU School of Social Work, stated that he is familiar with Minola Clark Manson's work through prior professional experience and BHAB participation and has consistently observed her as a competent and committed contributor.
- Kathleen Lippitt, community member, referenced Scotland's high drug-related death rates, cautioned that similar policies could have local impacts, and encouraged reconsideration of current harm-reduction strategies.
- Phil Cenedella, community member, described challenges the Ocean Beach Task Force on Homelessness faces in obtaining agency support for local behavioral health and safety concerns and requested additional assistance.

**E- Comments:**

- Ann Marie Council, former San Diego Senior Deputy City Attorney, recommended formalizing the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (LPS) Ad Hoc Subcommittee as a permanent subcommittee, citing its value in improving understanding of the LPS system and strengthening BHAB's policy recommendations.
- June H Dudas, community member, requested establishing the LPS Subcommittee as a permanent standing committee with diverse representation and encouraged closer collaboration with BHS to improve conservatorship practices.
- KMarie, community member, raised concerns about an individual discharged from a treatment facility before a conservatorship review and requested continued oversight and appropriate services to support safety and stability.
- Wilderness Rose, community member, stated that the LPS Subcommittee meets Brown Act and County Policy A-74 requirements for open-meeting compliance, noting inconsistent posting of agendas and minutes, and requested compliance or temporary suspension of meetings until resolved.

## IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jennifer Bransford-Koons, Interim Director of BHS, provided the following update:

- A local emergency was declared in anticipation of a severe El Niño season, enabling faster response to potential storm impacts. Residents were encouraged to prepare.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jennifer Bransford-Koons, Interim Director of BHS, yielded time to Dr. Elizabeth Hernandez, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), who introduced a presentation on County Medical Services (CMS) and Safety Net Bridge, presented by Dr. Heather Summers, Deputy Director, Clinical and Safety Net Coordination, HHSA. The following was presented:

- The county's primary goal is to prevent gaps in care by keeping eligible individuals enrolled in Medi-Cal and maintaining service access.
- The Safety Net Bridge Program will support residents who temporarily lose Medi-Cal coverage by providing no-cost medical care, medications, social services, and food resources, initially focusing on eight ZIP codes.
- Program components include partnerships with clinics and providers, mobile medical units, community health fairs, enrollment assistance, and proactive outreach by community health workers.
- CMS reform efforts include stakeholder engagement and advisory board input, with recommendations to streamline enrollment, remove administrative barriers, improve transparency, align eligibility with Medi-Cal, and expand assistance programs.

- Additional reform phases (2026–2029) will be brought to the Board based on analysis and funding, with both programs scheduled for Board consideration on October 27, 2026.

**V. ACTION ITEM: BHS PROCUREMENTS AND CONTRACT EXTENSIONS BOARD LETTER**

**Public Comment**

Total of two (2) in-person comments.

**In-Person Comments:**

- Kristian J. Berger, community member, raised concerns about limited board access to contract information and cited county findings of inconsistent contract monitoring, requesting greater transparency and a permanent contract oversight committee.
- Robert Alm, BHAB member, expressed concern about being asked to approve multiple contracts without sufficient time or access to review them and recommended forming a work group to review the contracts before action is taken.

**ACTION ITEM: BHS PROCUREMENTS AND CONTRACT EXTENSIONS BOARD LETTER**

Jessica Kramer moved to defer action on the item 'BHS Procurements and Contract Extensions Board Letter' to allow BHAB to receive each contract and the data provided to the County for each LPS facility. The motion was seconded by Robert Alm. The board voted to approve the motion.

AYES: 11 NAYS: 1 ABSTENTIONS: 3

**VI. ACTION ITEM: 2026 DATA NOTEBOOK**

On a motion by Kathy Watkins, seconded by Robin Sales, the action item '2026 Data Notebook' was approved.

AYES: 15 NAYS: 0 ABSTENTIONS: 0

**VII. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: SLATE OF 2027 BHAB EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

**Public Comment**

Total of five (5) in-person comments and one (1) in-person comment via Zoom.

**In-Person Comment:**

- Jerry Hall, BHAB Member, raised concerns about interactions within the nominating committee and referenced related public discussion, encouraging the board to consider voting on nominees individually.
- Kristian J. Berger, community member, emphasized the need for a chair with strong knowledge of statutes, policy changes, and system trends to support effective oversight and communication with the Board of Supervisors.
- Robert Alm, BHAB Member, described concerns about discussions within the nominating committee and procedural issues in subsequent meetings, raising broader concerns about the committee's functioning.
- Stuart Gaiber, BHAB Member, acknowledged the difficulty of recent board discussions and expressed support for the integrity and service of the executive committee.
- Jessica Kramer, BHAB Member, stated that the nominating committee's diversity discussions were difficult and noted concerns about interruptions and elevated voices, stating that the environment became hostile and impeded productive dialogue.

**In-Person Comments via Zoom:**

- Janice Luna-Reynoso, BHAB member, noted that discussions about representation and diversity can be challenging and experienced differently by individuals, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a respectful and safe environment during such conversations.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEM: SLATE OF 2027 BHAB EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

Minola Clark Manson, 1st Vice Chair, BHAB, referenced the materials included in the packet and invited members to nominate themselves or others for the Slate of 2027 BHAB Executive Officers. The slate was presented, and the advisory board will accept additional nominations from the floor. Voting is scheduled for November.

## VIII. DISCUSSION ITEM: WORKGROUP FOR BHAB ROLE IN THE BHS DIRECTOR SELECTION PROCESS

**Public Comment**

Total of one (1) in-person comment.

**In-Person Comment:**

- Robert Alm, BHAB member, reviewed bylaw distinctions between work groups and subcommittees. He noted that workgroups shall include at least one member and may include stakeholders and are subject to the Brown Act, while subcommittees consist only of members, no fewer than 3 and no more than 5 and are not subject to Brown Act.

**DISCUSSION ITEM: WORKGROUP FOR BHAB ROLE IN THE BHS DIRECTOR SELECTION PROCESS**

Minola Clark Manson, 1st Vice Chair, BHAB, led a discussion about the following:

- A work group was formed to support BHAB's role in selecting the next BHS director and will operate for at least six months or until an appointment is made.
- One voting representative from each supervisorial district will participate, with additional stakeholder involvement; other BHAB members may also participate.
- The work group will review and update selection criteria and meet with the Interim HR Director as part of the recruitment process.
- Regular updates will be provided to the board.

## IX. 1st VICE CHAIR'S REPORT

Minola Clark Manson, 1st Vice Chair, BHAB, provided the following updates:

- The Community Program Planning (CPP) will be sunset in October. Members were encouraged to attend upcoming meetings to ensure continued participation and input.
- Brad Stone was congratulated on his appointment as the BHAB representative to the Healthy San Diego Advisory Committee.
- The form for BHAB members to request information from BHS is now available and was emailed to BHAB members.

## X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were provided:

- Staff noted that further follow-up on the BHS director selection process is expected from Minola Clark Manson or Robin Sales by the Interim HR Director.
- A member encouraged the advisory board to reduce personal rhetoric, noting that such exchanges are counterproductive and do not reflect the interests of San Diego County residents.

## XI. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Stuart Gaiber, seconded by Dr. Rosolyn Harper, meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.