



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD ACTION ITEM MARCH 7, 2024

Approve BHAB Public Comment Language on Senate Bill (SB) 43

BHAB Public Comment: SB 43 Board of Supervisors Meeting, March 12, 2024.

My name is Robin Sales, Chair of Behavioral Health Advisory Board, also known as BHAB and I am here to speak on behalf of our board to address SB43 implementation. Two other board members will also be speaking today.

First, BHAB would like to express its appreciation that the Involuntary Behavioral Health Treatment Collaborative was formed to help facilitate discussion and planning for implementing SB43. It has brought together many stakeholders to the table, which provided invaluable data and insight.

We recognize that regardless of whether we support the idea of compulsory care, we all desire SB43 to deliver an excellent service, performed by well trained professionals, that leads to successful outcomes, that is adequately funded, and that works to remove barriers to sustained behavioral health and wellness.

It is said that people do not resist change, they resist transitions.

A transition to a house from the street, a transition to a life free from substance use from living life with an addiction or a transition to a life with better mental health from a life of almost constant symptoms. All these transitions involve placing one's trust in at least one system. We would like you to understand the gravity of implementing SB43 in a way that is responsible and respects the complexity of these transitions. These are people, after all, and they deserve more than we currently have to offer by way of Medical funded services.

My name is Todd Boyer, representing District 2.

We believe strongly that every system or program we design for a population or group is most comprehensive and successful when it is informed by people who have lived experience of that population or group. Ideally the informing starts at the very beginning and is constant through the design, is represented on the program staff, involved in auditing, and there when the program concludes. We encourage you to reach out to Lived Experience experts and advisors at every opportunity.

As a board, we have decades of lived experience among us and have stories of our own to tell.

I've been clean and sober from alcohol and drugs for 23 years. I tried for several years to stop using meth and drinking alcohol. Not until I lost everything was I able to find the courage to ask for help.

You see, I had to get to a point of surrender. When I was finally ready to accept help, people were there to answer the call.

I believe from my experience that the alcoholic and drug addict have to reach a bottom. With this in mind, any program that we put in place has to be ready when the individual asks for it.

My name is Holly Herring, I'm a representative from District 3.

I was brought to an emergency room in the middle of the night by uniformed officers and was placed on an involuntary 72 hour hold that eventually ended after 30 days. By a stroke of pure luck, it was discovered that I had private health insurance that I didn't even know I had. I was lucky because I was taken to a very nice, well-staffed, nicely maintained, and very private mental health care facility. Other people I knew at the time didn't have private health insurance and their stays had been shorter at the county hospital. Several of the people I knew who had been treated in the county hospital did not live very long and were lost to behavioral health challenges. The care I received at a private facility that was dignify and effective. My friends at the Medi-Cal facility can't say the same.

I, personally, would like to see behavioral health care become more equitable economically. That is something that must be carefully thought out from a user perspective and implemented when BHS and its contractors have funding to assure adequate services. We appreciate that the BOS allocated \$15 million dollars ARPA funding two weeks ago towards the implementation of the legislation. We are excited to learn the details going forward and how the other allocations will enhance behavioral health services for all San Diegans.

BHAB understands that our County has been running at a deficit in behavioral health resources. We are eager to see more work from the collaborative meetings as they develop over the course of this year centered on the client experience maintaining equity and positive outcomes. If people resist transitions because of systems failure, and not change itself, and SB43 is the mandated transition - then we owe it to the beneficiaries of this system to deliver a service well informed by plenty of lived expertise.

Thank you.

It is THEREFORE, staff's recommendation that BHAB vote to approve public comment statement on behalf of BHAB regarding SB 43 to be presented at the Board of Supervisors meeting on March 12, 2024.