



County of San Diego

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July 28, 2023

TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

FROM: Luke Bergmann, Ph.D., Director, Behavioral Health Services

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR'S REPORT – AUGUST 2023

BHS YOUTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UPDATES

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SchoolLink

A critical partnership between the County of San Diego (County) and local school districts, SchoolLink, is aimed at delivering County-funded behavioral health services in selected schools throughout the regions. BHS serves approximately 50% of the schools in San Diego County, offering over 380 school-based programs in 29 districts. School sites are determined based on collaboration with the school through a request for services and penetration of Medi-Cal/ uninsured students identified on campus. SchoolLink provides a platform for providers to coordinate with school staff to meet with students at their schools and to empower students to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. In addition to therapeutic services (individual and group) conducted on-site at schools, students also have access to an array of services at community-based locations and through connections to other resources in their community. BHS providers connect with their school partners each August and September to schedule annual SchoolLink meetings for planning and coordination of on-site services to be provided during the upcoming school year.

Teen Recovery Centers Early Intervention Services

Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23, Early Intervention (American Society of Addiction Medicine [ASAM] Level 0.5) services are offered at each of the seven regional Teen Recovery Centers (TRC). Early Intervention services are intended for youth and young adults who are at risk for developing substance-related conditions. These services are offered through the TRC main facilities and at Drug Medi-Cal (DMC)-certified school sites, and are available to adolescents up to age 21, regardless of income, Medi-Cal eligibility, and insurance coverage. Early Intervention services include screening and assessment, education on substance use and refusal skills, and introduction to prosocial activities. Evidence-informed curricula are used by each TRC for individual and group Early Intervention services. Service duration varies from one to multiple sessions, depending on individual and family needs.

Screening to Care

The Board of Supervisors (Board) dedicated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to pilot a Screening to Care program to provide prevention and early intervention (PEI) supports to middle school students. Beginning in August of 2021, BHS partnered with San Diego County

school districts to develop a screening program that would systematically identify youth needs. This is a new program with the overarching goal of universal screening of middle school students to determine social-emotional needs and provide PEI supports utilizing the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework, which provides primary supports for the entire school, secondary supports for those students that need extra assistance in meeting academic and behavioral goals, and tertiary support for those students that need more formal, individualized interventions. The program design utilizes contractors to provide these services in partnership with participating school districts throughout the county. As of February 2023, the County completed contract procurements for four of the five service areas to deliver the Screening to Care services. The remaining service area (North Coastal) is expected to have an effective service start date of October 2023.

School-Based PEI

Beginning in FY 2016-17, BHS established a school-based PEI program as a regional, County service to provide screening, early identification, and early intervention for at-risk children in the identified public elementary schools. The program is designed to promote emotional and social competence, and to prevent, reduce, and treat aggression and emotional problems in young children delivering social/emotional mental health PEI services to families and their children in preschool through 3rd grade who may be at risk of school failure, who are beginning to exhibit behavioral and/or emotional issues, who may be in families experiencing high stress, and/or are from underserved cultural populations. Utilizing the evidence-based Incredible Years (IY) model and curriculum, the program completes the IY training series, which is a set of three comprehensive, multifaceted, and developmentally based curricula for parents, teachers, and children. The program also utilizes a culturally appropriate Family Community Partnership (FCP) model that conducts outreach and behavioral health prevention activities utilizing parent-peer partners based on a *promotora* model. The six PEI contracts were reprocured for FY 2022-23 and are divided across all county regions and administered by five different contractors.

Creating Opportunities in Preventing and Eliminating Suicide

The Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) was passed in 2019 to establish partnerships between County Behavioral Health Departments and County Offices of Education or other local education entities (LEAs) in order to expand mental health services to students across the State of California. In December 2021, through the Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission (MHSOAC), BHS was awarded \$6 million in MHSSA grant funding which supports the current Creating Opportunities in Preventing and Eliminating Suicide (COPES) program with the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) as the lead agency. Additionally, on August 16, 2022 (7), the County Board of Supervisors approved the acceptance of additional \$1.1 million in MHSSA grant funding.

COPES aims to build the capacity of participating LEAs to support school communities that champion mental wellness. The program focuses on: stigma reduction; suicide prevention, intervention and post-intervention; professional development; programming for educators, staff, students, and families; developing coordinated referral pathways for students needing mental/behavioral health services; and building staff and student wellness resiliency. The LEAs collectively serve over 334,600 students in 470 San Diego County schools. In its first year, each LEA designated a COPES liaison to partner with SDCOE to become subject matter experts in mental health promotion and suicide prevention. To enhance efforts on student health and wellness, COPES implemented “calming corners,” and provided calming corner kits to 466 San Diego County schools. Additionally, 25 LEAs have committed to implementing peer programming over the next three years at 180 elementary, middle, and high schools.

Intensive Outpatient Program

BHS will be posting a competitive procurement for an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) which offers diagnostic and clinical treatment services in a structured and therapeutic environment that is time limited (approximately 6-8 weeks) with the goal of stabilization, skill building, and medication management. Services will be offered through a Day Intensive Half (DIH) program for children/youth up to age 21 with similar clinical needs. Services will include individual, family, and group sessions. The typical attendance for youth is three times per week after school hours. Referrals will primarily be from outpatient providers when intensive services are needed such as Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP) as a step-down plan with a slower transition, Emergency Screening Units (ESU) to prevent inpatient hospitalization, and/or inpatient hospitals as a recommended step down from an acute setting. An industry day was held on May 25, 2023, to obtain input on an optional program model.

Partial Hospitalization Program

BHS will be posting a competitive procurement for a PHP, which is a non-24-hour, time-limited (approximately two weeks) treatment program that is hospital-based, or community-based in a structured setting. PHPs offer diagnostic and clinical treatment services in a therapeutic environment with the goal of stabilization, skill building, and medication management. Services will be offered through a Day Intensive Full (DIF) program Monday to Friday, inclusive of educational instruction for children/youth up to age 21 with similar clinical needs (i.e., mental health and substance use). Services will include individual, family, and group sessions. Referrals will primarily be from inpatient hospitals as a step down, ESUs to prevent inpatient hospitalization, and/or IOPs when higher level of care is needed. An industry day was held on May 25, 2023, to obtain input on an optional program model.

Children's Crisis Continuum Pilot Program

California Assembly Bill 153 (Chapter 86, Statutes of 2021), signed into law in July 2021, mandated the creation of the Children's Crisis Continuum Pilot Program to be jointly implemented by the California Department of Social Services and the Department of Health Care Services. This pilot program provides a framework for a highly integrated continuum of care for foster youth with high acuity needs to be modeled across California. The purpose of the Children's Crisis Continuum is to fully integrate the system of care for foster youth enabling a seamless transition between service settings and to provide stabilization and treatment to foster youth with high acuity needs within the least restrictive setting possible. The County was awarded \$8.5 million in grant funding to support the pilot program over the first five years. BHS in collaboration with the County's Child and Family Well-Being (CFWB) and Probation departments, is working to initiate several new services as part of the pilot program, including care coordination services to include linkages to resources and ease of transition of services across levels of care, including to the Children's Crisis Residential Program. CFWB is also including 16 Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) beds in the pilot.

LGBTQ+ Performance Improvement Project

Each year, as part of the BHS external quality review process, BHS engages in a clinical Performance Improvement Project (PIP) aimed at addressing specific programming and service needs. Increasing therapeutic support for youth and young adults who identify as sexual and gender minorities through group/family therapy is the Mental Health PIP for the 2022-2024 period. Approximately 8% of youth receiving CYF system of care services identify as LGBTQ+. Both national and local data indicates that these youth have a higher risk for poor mental health outcomes than youth who identify as heterosexual/cisgender. For example, they are more likely to attempt suicide, and have higher rates of crisis service and inpatient hospitalization use.

On March 2, 2023, Responsive Integrated Health Solutions (RIHS), in partnership with BHS and the University of California San Diego Child and Adolescent Services Research Center (UCSD-

CASRC), held a training for providers working in the CYF system of care to increase providers' knowledge and skill in providing affirming therapeutic support for youth who identify as LGBTQ+ and are receiving services across the San Diego County system of care.

Approximately 170 providers attended the training. Additionally, the It's Up to Us LGBTQ+ resource pages were updated to include additional LGBTQ+ resources in a more user-friendly format. These resources can be found on the It's Up to Us webpage at the following link: <https://up2sd.org/resources?list=lgbtq>. From October 27, 2022, to April 27, 2023, there were 618 unique page views, a 488.6% increase from the previous reporting period (10/27/22-1/27/23). The upcoming Spring 2023 Youth Services Survey results will be utilized to examine if these interventions have made an impact in the quality of care provided to LGBTQ+ youth and young adults.

Group Therapy PIP

For the 2023-2025 period, the identified focus of the PIP is to enhance access to, and utilization of, group therapy as a treatment modality. To increase the utilization of group therapy among CYF providers, BHS is collaborating with UCSD-CASRC in working with CYF's school-based contractors. The primary objectives of this PIP are to promote the expansion of workforce development and ensure training and support for increased use of group modalities. Additionally, the project aims to offer more community- and school-based group therapy options for youth in San Diego County.

Youth Development Academy

In October 2020, California Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 823 which includes establishing a process for the closure of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) by June 30, 2023, and the transition of youth offenders to local county jurisdictions. Under the California Health and Human Services Agency, the newly created Office of Youth and Community Restoration has been overseeing the transition of youth offenders from state to local custody. Through a comprehensive local planning process with BHS, the County Probation department, and several other partners and stakeholders, the various needs of these youth were examined, and an all-inclusive program was developed. Generally, the cohort of youth are older (age 16 to 25 years), have committed serious crimes, have a history of substance use, and often come with a history of adverse childhood experiences, trauma, school and home instability. These youth are expected to be detained anywhere from two to seven years and require treatment which is inclusive of family and community engagement as well as educational and vocational learning, reintegration, and successful reentry.

BHS and Probation entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in January 2023, and BHS has since been providing mental health services inclusive of assessments, individual treatment, family engagement and therapy, group therapy, psychiatric assessment, and medication management as clinically indicated. In the first six months (as of June 30, 2023) staff have provided over 63,000 minutes of mental health services to 46 youth in this program.

Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative

The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) is a five-year, \$4.7 billion initiative and key component of Governor Newsom's Master Plan for Kids, established as part of the Budget Act of 2021. CYBHI promotes social and emotional well-being, prevention of behavioral health challenges, and seeks equitable, appropriate, timely, and accessible services for emerging and existing behavioral health needs of children and youth through age 25. The CYBHI focuses on four strategic areas: Workforce Training and Capacity; Behavioral Health Ecosystem Infrastructure; Coverage for Services; and Public Awareness. These strategic areas align with the priorities of the CYF BHS system of care (CYFBHSSOC) council. CYBHI updates

are included in the CYFBHSSOC council meeting agendas and meeting packets as informational items that promote CYF system of care advancements.

- Additional Information on CYBHI can be found at the following link: <https://cybhi.chhs.ca.gov/>.
- Information on the Master Plan for Kids can be found at the following link: https://cybhi.chhs.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/KidsMentalHealthMasterPlan_8.18.22.pdf

TAY Substance Use Residential

Episcopal Community Services (ECS) was awarded the TAY substance use (SU) residential treatment program contract in October 2022 to provide 15 beds, including residential and withdrawal management beds. ECS identified a location in the City of San Diego and has a projected start for fall of 2023.

TAY SU Outpatient

Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC) was awarded the TAY SU Outpatient Treatment Program (Expanding Horizons) contract in October of 2022. Contracted services include group counseling, individual counseling, urinalysis testing, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), artistic expression groups, and prosocial activities. UPAC is finalizing its facility remodel in the Rolando Park neighborhood of San Diego with an open house planned for September 2023. The program has collaborated with the Urban Street Angels' "Just Be You" TAY program to provide SU services to its clients as well as conducted outreach presentations for Probation, the TAY Council, and leadership at Pathways programs.

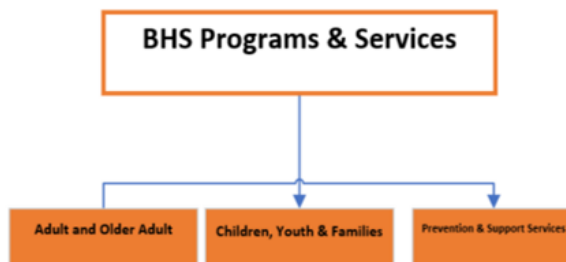
BHS REORGANIZATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UPDATE

Since November 2021, BHS has steadily and strategically moved forward efforts to restructure to align with other large healthcare organizations to better achieve our mission of ensuring San Diegans have access to high-quality behavioral health services. With this next step, we are continuing our transformation that will help us further the Triple Aim – better experience of care, improved health of populations and lower cost per capita.

Programs and Services Overview

Led by Chief Program Officer and Assistant Director of Department Operations, Cecily Thornton-Stearns, Programs & Services is the largest BHS unit and designs, develops, and provides oversight to a large network of behavioral health services and supports to fulfill our role as a health plan, public health entity, and direct service provider. The Programs & Services portfolio is comprised of nearly 300 Programs, providing services in 400+ service locations, including 13 County operated programs. The Programs & Services unit is comprised of nearly 450 staff, including both direct services and administrative positions.

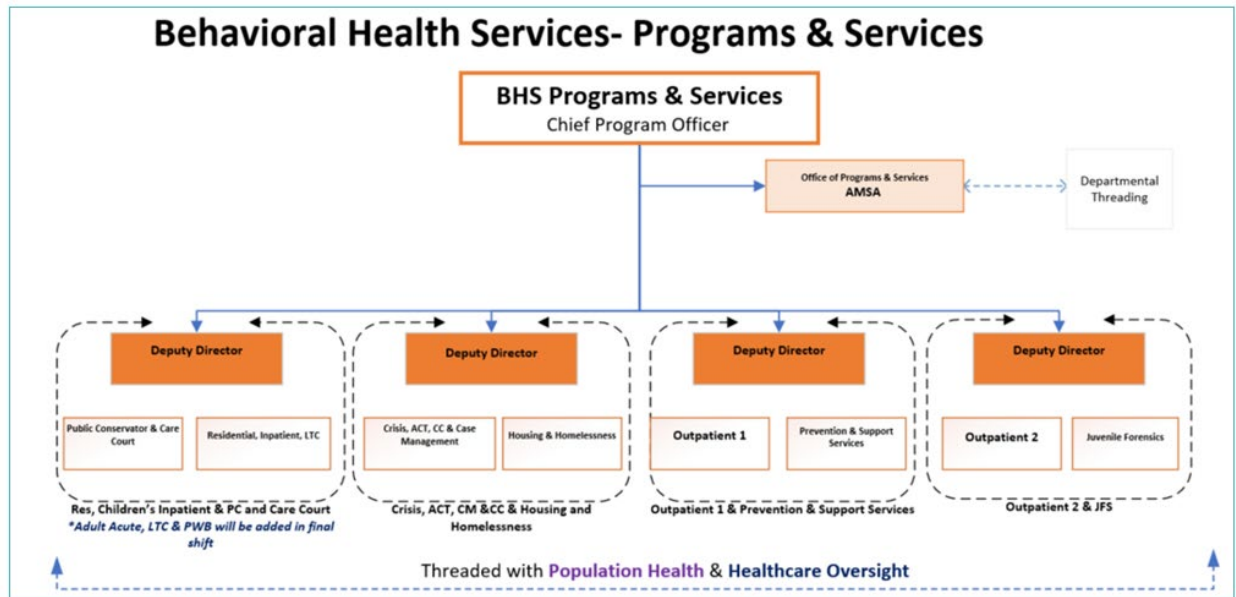
Behavioral Health Services- Programs & Services Current



The BHS Programs & Services unit has historically been comprised of three teams: Adult and Older Adult (AOA), Children Youth & Families (CYF), and Prevention and Support Services (PSS). This structure will shift in the first phase of the Programs & Services unit re-org.

Oversight of Service Lines

The first phase of the Programs & Services unit reorganization establishes eight distinct service lines which will be initially consolidated under four Deputy Directors, while additional critical leadership positions are being filled. This shift will narrow the COR teams' focus to distinct service line portfolios, enhancing oversight, alignment, and subject matter expertise to facilitate the design, development, and delivery of high quality, cost-effective and efficient behavioral health programs and services.



Establish eight distinct programs & services teams consolidated under four deputy directors:

- A. Under the leadership of **Deputy Director Piedad Garcia**, consolidate the following:
 - **Crisis, ACT, Care Coordination and Case Management** – Includes Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) programs, County-operated case management and enhanced care coordination, recovery and bridge services, Crisis Stabilization Units (CSU), Psychiatric Emergency Response Teams (PERT), and Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT).
 - **Housing and Homelessness** – Includes Augmented Services Programs (ASP) Adult Residential Facilities (ARF) and Residential Care for the Elderly (RCFE), homeless outreach, Community Harm Reduction Teams (C-HRT) and Safe Havens, housing navigation services, housing vouchers, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) housing developments, units and vouchers, and development of the 5-year Strategic Housing Plan.

- B. Under the leadership of **Deputy Director Yael Koenig**, consolidate the following:
 - **Outpatient 2** – Includes children's school-based mental health services, therapeutic behavioral services, outpatient substance use disorder (SUD) programs, Pathways to Well-Being, and Continuum of Care Reform (CCR).
 - **Juvenile Forensic Services** – Juvenile forensic services are County-operated programs that include Stabilization, Transition, and Treatment Team (STAT) and Healing Opportunities for Personal Empowerment (HOPE).

- C. Under the leadership of **Deputy Director Cara Evans Murray**, consolidate the following:

- **Outpatient 1** – Includes Biopsychosocial Rehabilitation Programs (BPSRs), outpatient SUD treatment programs, CalWORKs programs, hybrid outpatient programs, OTPs, and ambulatory withdrawal management.
 - **Prevention and Support Services** – Prevention and Support Services unit will be expanded to include new COR teams, leadership positions, and services. Existing services include SUD prevention services, DUI programs, MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention services, and will expand to include clubhouses, supported employment, and peer services.
- D. Under the leadership of **Deputy Director Charity White-Voth**, consolidate the following:
- **Residential, Children’s Inpatient** – The residential, inpatient, and long-term care (LTC) shift will occur in two phases. In the first phase, this team will oversee SUD residential, transitional residential, short-term residential therapeutic programs (STRTPs), and children’s acute services.
 - **Public Conservatorship and Care Court** – This new unit supports individuals involved in adult mental health civil court processes and consists of the Public Conservator (PC) Team that shifted to BHS from Aging and Independence Services (AIS) in November 2022 and the newly established Care Court (CC) team.

BHS SPECIAL EVENTS

Mobile Crisis Response Team Outreach at a San Diego Pride Event

The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) service providers, Exodus and Telecare, collaborated in participating at a San Diego Pride outreach event which was successful in raising the community’s awareness about MCRT services. The MCRT booth offered free games, giveaways such as mini-safety plans and coping skills cards, as well as MCRT swag including magnets describing how to make a MCRT referral. The booth was successful in attracting a crowd with staff reaching hundreds of individuals with program information and afforded them the opportunity to engage with librarians, nurses, and other community service providers who expressed appreciation for their services and collaboration. There was an overwhelming positive response from the community including from youth (high schoolers and TAY) excited to know that MCRT is a service available in San Diego County.

14th Annual Early Childhood Mental Health Conference-We Can’t Wait!

The Children, Youth and Families (CYF) System of Care, in partnership with Early Childhood stakeholders, will host the 14th Annual Early Childhood Mental Health Conference: *We Can’t Wait! – Re-Imagining Prevention and Early Intervention in Communities of Hope*. The hybrid conference will be held from September 28-30, 2023. The conference explores early childhood development, culturally informed, evidence-based practices, and advances in early education programs. Attendees will be able to examine ways that our communities and systems of care can better ensure diversity, equity, and access to care so that children have more positive experiences, and that all families have support to nurture and celebrate their strengths.

To register, visit the following webpage: <https://www.earlychildhoodmentalhealth-sandiego.com/>

National Recovery Month Celebration

Join us as we celebrate National Recovery Month! The purpose of National Recovery Month is to bring San Diego County’s recovery community together and raise awareness for treatment, support programs, and local resources. This national observance is held every September in partnership with public and private entities throughout the region to celebrate and support individuals in recovery, those thinking about recovery, and the families and friends of those on

August 2023

recovery journeys. This year's National Recovery Month Celebration event theme is "Tides of Hope," focusing on the resiliency of individuals in recovery.

The kickoff celebration will be held on **Saturday, August 26th at Waterfront Park from 10:00am – 1:00pm**. In addition to valuable resources, the event will be filled with fun interactive activities, music, and shared stories of hope from those with lived experience. Free naloxone and event giveaways will also be available for attendees while supplies last. This event is **FREE** to attend, please share widely with your networks.

Event Info:

- **Date:** Saturday, August 26, 2023
- **Time:** 10:00am – 1:00pm
- **Location:** Waterfront Park ([1600 Pacific Hwy, San Diego, CA 92101](#))
- **Cost:** Free
- **Exhibitor Information:** There is no cost to have an exhibitor booth at the National Recovery Month Celebration event. To request an exhibitor booth, please submit the exhibitor request form by **Friday, August 4th**. The exhibitor request form can be found at the following link: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/09be60aec4c45888efe49b3d3001942>.

We hope to see you there! If you have questions about this event, please contact us at Engage.BHS@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



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Behavioral Health Services

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