2021



County of San Diego
Behavioral Health Advisory Board
Annual Report









County of San Diego Board of Supervisors



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Joel Anderson District 2



Terra Lawson-Remer District 3



Nathan Fletcher District 4



Jim Desmond District 5

County Of San Diego Executives



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Nick Macchione
Director
County of San Diego Health and
Human Services Agency



Dr. Luke Bergmann
Director
County of San Diego Health and
Human Services Agency
Behavioral Health Services

WHAT IS THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD?

On December 2, 2014, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors established the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5604 and California Health and Safety Code Section 11805.

BHAB is limited to twenty-one members. The Board of Supervisors appoint 20 members from the general public, consisting of four members per supervisorial district, and the 21st seat is held by a designated member of the Board of Supervisors. The categories of membership include:

- Member of the Board of Supervisors
- Consumer
- Family Member
- Substance Use Recovery
- Community Member

BHAB Purpose Statement:

The purpose of the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Advisory Board is to review and evaluate the community's behavioral health needs, services, programs, facilities, and procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement in the planning process.

Advisory Capacity:

The Advisory Board shall act in an advisory capacity only to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and the County of San Diego's (County) Chief Administrative Officer, Agency Director of the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and Director of HHSA Behavioral Health Services (BHS).

2021 BHAB MEMBERS

District 1

William Stewart - 2nd Vice Chair Janice Luna Reynoso Che Hernandez - 1st Vice Chair Joel San Juan

District 2

Todd Boyer Jim Taylor James Merino VACANT SEAT

District 3

Shannon Jaccard Robin Sales Michael Grattan Mali Woods Drake

District 4

Amina Sheik Mohamed John Sturm - Member-at-Large Judith Yates - Chair VACANT SEAT

District 5

Richard McGaffigan
Carol Clemens
K.C. Strang
Phillip Deming - Member-at-Large

Board of Supervisor

Nathan Fletcher - Chair, San Diego
County Board of Supervisors

A MESSAGE FROM 2020-2021 BHAB CHAIR, JUDITH YATES



Chairing the BHAB through 2020 and 2021 was both an honor and a challenge during a time that found our population coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. Persons with behavioral health needs found themselves increasingly isolated from the system of services they relied upon to maintain their recovery stability and avoid crisis episodes. The County of San Diego's BHS department partnered with the many contracted service providers to seek alternatives to in-person care by accelerating the use of telehealth. While not the ideal clinical approach, for most it provided a safe model for continuing the care that was critical for their personal treatment plan.

Though challenging, during the pandemic BHAB continued to stay informed of efforts to address the increasing service needs, support program expansions, and advocate for expanded workforce capacity while keeping in focus the drive to achieve higher equity in terms of access across the diverse populations being served in San Diego County.

Striving to better integrate services both with primary care as well as mental health and substance use disorders continued to be a challenge for BHS and BHAB as it conducted its work through monthly meetings via Zoom. A fundamental role of BHAB is to encourage community engagement in all planning efforts which became even more difficult to accomplish. In spite of the obstacles due to COVID-19, BHAB used its three working groups to include both BHAB members and community persons with expertise or lived experiences to focus on improving community and stakeholder engagement, strengthening services in the alcohol and other drugs system of care, and building competencies to understand and address the nexus between Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health.

None of this could have been accomplished without the ongoing leadership and guidance of our Board of Supervisors and their Chair who actively engaged with BHAB throughout 2020 and 2021. With a sincere thank you to both Chair Fletcher and all of my fellow BHAB board members, as well as BHS staff, I am proud to be a small part of this year's Annual Report.

Judith Yates BHAB Chair 2020 - 2021

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOCUS ON VALUE AND EQUITY IN 2021



In the past year there was a renewed attention to **racial justice**, with calls for the dismantling of structural racism and the promotion of equity within our government systems. In recognition of these calls for reform from the community and by the Board of Supervisors (Board), BHS took tangible steps to lessen disparities and support equity within the behavioral health system, building on an existing foundation of equity-oriented activities and in alignment with broader countywide racial justice efforts. The following are activities that BHS brought to BHAB for their awareness and recommendations on efforts that reflect BHS' focus on value and equity during 2021.

BHS expanded the Data Sciences and Population Health teams to further support a population health approach to **identifying health disparities across**

racial and ethnic groups, as well as disparities across gender, sexual orientation, culture, language, and socioeconomic status. The Population Health Unit worked with BHS leadership to engage in strategic planning and evaluation of programs to support proportional resource allocation based on community need, and with design considerations led by stakeholder input including BHAB.

BHS worked with the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Health Services Research Center (HSRC) and Rady Children's Hospital Children and Adolescent Services Research Center (CASRC) to develop the "Community Experience Project" designed to establish a process for identifying and addressing unmet behavioral health needs through the ongoing completion of four areas of work:

- Engagement with community members and key stakeholders in the identification, collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in the development of plans for action.
- Creation of a "Behavioral Equity Index" to highlight populations and neighborhoods at greatest risk for unmet behavioral health need.
- Development of a "Community Experience Dashboard" to provide users with an interactive platform to investigate behavioral health experiences by subpopulation and subregional area using community data sources.
- Development of action reports which will synthesize key findings and priorities for intervention.

Continuing to Build a Regionally Distributed Continuum of Care

Throughout the year, BHS also focused on continuing to build a network of comprehensive behavioral healthcare system that delivers the right services, to the right person, at the right time. This included:

- Expanding behavioral health hubs countywide.
- Ensuring discharged clients are paired with a care coordinator.
- Expanding innovative projects, such as the Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) pilot, which became
 operational in March 2021 and by end of year was operational across the county.

- Implementing a series of actions to address the steep shortage of essential behavioral health workers.
- Offering more supportive housing paired with effective behavioral health treatment.
- Embracing harm reduction strategies.
- Improving care to the justice-involved population.

Additionally, BHS continued to engage in collaborative work between HHSA and the San Diego County Sheriff's Department to support behavioral health care services in San Diego County's jails. This effort was in alignment with Chair Fletcher's State of the County priorities as shared on February 18, 2021, as well as the Triple Aim approach to improve the health of populations, enhance the experience and outcomes of individuals, and ultimately reduce per capita costs of care. Additionally, this effort aligned with the interests of the BHAB Criminal Justice workgroup

BHS collaborated with the BHAB Chair and the BHAB Executive Officers in strategically bringing these efforts to BHAB's awareness for their input and support to achieving a more just and equitable approach to the Continuum of Care. With these focus areas in mind, BHAB members thoughtfully considered and determined their strategic goals and workgroups for 2021, seeking alignment with BHS and County initiatives while also honoring issues of critical importance to the communities they represent.

Dr. Luke Bergmann
Director, Behavioral Health Services
County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency

2021 BHAB STRATEGIC GOALS

At the annual BHAB fall retreat, held on October 29, 2020, members identified priority areas of focus for the 2021 calendar year. To define these areas of focus more clearly, BHAB members were surveyed and facilitated discussions were held in BHAB's Continuum of Care (CoC) and Building a Better BHAB (BBB) workgroups. These collective actions resulted in the formation of strategic goals, with an emphasis on enhancing BHAB's value to the community, to be completed through the efforts of distinct workgroups. The 2021 Strategic Goals and respective workgroups for 2021 were as follows:

Criminal Justice (CJ) Workgroup Co-Chairs: Ed Weiner & Richard McGaffigan Meetings:

- Strategic Goal #1: Build BHAB's internal knowledge base by engaging with stakeholders and investigating the impact of behavioral health system of care disparities in the criminal justice system.
- Strategic Goal #2: Build BHAB's internal knowledge base by engaging with stakeholders and learning about evidence-based best practices surrounding community-based public safety programs utilizing the sequential intercept model.
- Strategic Goal #3: Build BHAB's internal knowledge base by exploring restorative and transformative programs with justice-involved people with behavioral health needs to better understand the spectrum of care while addressing disparities.

Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) CoC Workgroup Chair: Phillip Deming Meetings:

 Strategic Goal #1: Build BHAB's internal knowledge base to support BHS efforts to improve AOD services by serving as the bridge between the community and BHS, resulting in structured and synthesized feedback from the AOD system of care with a focus in the area of prevention.

Stakeholder Engagement Workgroup Co-Chairs: Bill Stewart & Janice Luna-Reynoso Meetings:

 Strategic Goal #1: Build BHAB Member and stakeholder knowledge and capabilities to make more timely and informed contributions to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and BHS by becoming better informed on issues affecting the community, especially underserved populations, as well as issues of health equity, starting with the MHSA Community Program Planning Processes and strong stakeholder feedback loops.

The following goal fell within the purview of the BHAB Executive Committee, guiding the BHAB meeting structure and external engagement.

 Maximize BHAB Members' abilities to focus on BHAB's strategic goals by strengthening the diversity of stakeholder engagement to shape recommendations on meetings day and time, structure, content, and presentations.

BHAB ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2021

BHAB holds regular monthly public meetings, on the first Thursday of the month, and all interested individuals are encouraged to attend. In 2021, BHAB meetings continued to be held virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19 guidance and recommendations that limited public gatherings.

Despite the challenges and uncertainties posed by the pandemic, BHAB continued their monthly meetings, with the exception of going dark in July. Members provided input and guidance on four Board Letters regarding local behavioral health services that went before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) and approved thirteen additional action items. Among the approved actions in 2021 was the approval of the updated County Ordinance relating to BHAB and the updated BHAB bylaws. Monthly meetings featured focused, facilitated presentations, and discussions that broadened BHAB members' understanding and perspective, enabling them to represent the needs and interests of their communities more fully, in addition to informing their recommendations for enhancing behavioral health service delivery in the region. BHAB also welcomed 9 new appointed members to the advisory board, however, two members opted to resign soon after their appointments in consideration of conflicts of interest that would hinder their full participation as an advisory board member.

2021 BHAB BY THE NUMBERS

- 9 New Board Members Appointed to BHAB
 - 13 Action Items Approved
 - Presentations on County Programs, Facilities, or Initiatives
- Total BHAB (General and Executive Committee) Meetings held in 2021

JANUARY



BHAB started the year with the introduction of its newest member, Board of Supervisors Chair Nathan Fletcher, holding the 21st seat on BHAB. Chair Fletcher shared his vision and commitment to addressing behavioral health needs in the region.



Dr. Luke Bergmann presented to BHAB on the Procurement Board Letter and reviewed recommended actions, including the authorization of competitive solicitations and amendments to extend existing behavioral health services contracts, including single source contracts, to sustain critical behavioral health services. These recommended actions support the continuation of critical work to advance the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care in alignment with Board direction, and upon the vote of BHAB an Action Item to support this Board Letter was passed. Luke also shared an informational item with BHAB: a Harm Reduction response to the Board of Supervisors. Members discussed strategies to encourage harm reduction and how substance use disorder programs can work together to improve outcomes for individuals with methamphetamine use disorder.



To set the tone for 2021, BHAB revisited discussions from the end of 2020 regarding the priorities for the upcoming year, with the intention to finalize them by the February meeting.

FEBRUARY



The County of San Diego's vision of the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care (CoC) is to achieve a transformational shift from a model of care driven by crises to one driven by chronic or continuous care and prevention through the regional distribution and coordination of resources to keep people connected, stable, and healthy. In February, Dr. Bergmann provided BHAB with an update on the Continuum of Care, including the Triple Aim approach concept which includes improving the patient experience, improving population health outcomes, and reducing long-term cost (Population Health, Better Care and Better Value).

Dr. Piedad Garcia, Deputy Director, BHS, and Keely Halsey, Chief of Homelessness Strategies, City of San Diego provided BHAB with an overview on the San Diego Convention Center *Shelter to Home* operation which is a collaborative pandemic response by the City of San Diego, BHS, the Regional Task Force on Homelessness, and the San Diego Housing Commission. The shelter provides centralized resources and "whole person" services such as behavioral health screening and assessments, psychiatric screening and medication management, crisis intervention, individual and group counseling services, case management, and linkage to community-based support

services, care coordination and linkage to behavioral health services, and housing navigation assistance.



Upon the vote of BHAB, an Action Item to approve the adoption of the 2021 BHAB Strategic Goals was passed, with an emphasis on enhancing BHAB's value to the community. This vote included the creation of the Criminal Justice, Alcohol and Other Drugs, and Stakeholder Engagement workgroups.



During public comments, Carol Clemens spoke about unmet needs in behavioral health for families with loved ones with mental illness, she identified areas of fragmented services with suggestions for improvement. Chair Fletcher cited her public comment during his <u>State of the County address on Thursday, February 18, 2021</u>.

MARCH



In his State of the County address, Chair Fletcher emphasized behavioral health as one of his highest priorities. He re-emphasized key points of his address at the March BHAB meeting in addition to providing an update on the Syringe Services Program (SSP) as part of a Comprehensive Harm Reduction Strategy.

Chair Fletcher also discussed efforts being made to address behavioral health workforce challenges in the region, and the need for a behavioral health conference with representatives from all the major universities, community colleges, as well as other behavioral health professionals, in order to identify the composition of the workforce needed. He also addressed the need for establishing a pipeline of mental health workers to fill local vacancies and for creating incentive programs to recruit and retain workers in our public sector systems.

The 2020 BHAB Workgroup Chairs presented their final reports for their workgroups:

- Phillip Deming, <u>Overdose Prevention</u> the report included an update on the Overdose Mapping Tool, a data system used to identify trends, in addition to, linking public health, public safety and prevention.
- Jerry Hall, <u>Building a Better BHAB</u> the report recommended a review of the BHAB bylaws every five years, and encouraged that the new and future workgroups have a clear focus on their priorities in order to remain engaged and effective.

APRIL



Andrew Strong, the Director from the newly formed Office of Equity and Racial Justice, presented to BHAB about the new department and its goals. Mr. Strong shared his vision of strengthening the community with active engagement, advocacy, and changing County operations, policy, and legislation through the lens of equity and racial justice.



BHAB continues to play an essential role of reviewing and supporting Board Letters. Dr. Bergmann shared with BHAB for their review and approval the Report Back [to the Board of Supervisors] on Comprehensive Substance Use Harm Reduction Strategy. The goal of this program is to protect San Diegans from the community harms of drug use by enacting a harm reduction approach towards substance use which prioritizes human dignity, saving lives, providing appropriate levels of care for People Who Use Drugs (PWUD), and best practices in addressing substance use, abuse, and addiction. A vote on this Board Letter was tabled for the following month due to an absence of a quorum and member interest in further discussions on the harm reduction strategy.

MAY



Simonne Ruff, Director of the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), invited members to participate in input-gathering sessions for the development of the Five-Year Strategic Housing Plan (Five-Year Plan). BHS's housing work is guided by the BHS Strategic Housing Plan (Housing Plan), which is developed by CSH with input provided by BHS, the Behavioral Health Housing Council, and various community stakeholders.

The Five-Year Plan envisions creating homes with intention, purpose, and collaboration, and outlines guiding principles and targeted responses that will maximize a range of housing options for people with behavioral health conditions. The Housing Plan's goals are driven by the input of people with lived experience, with an approach that is rooted in principles of equity and inclusion. The finalized BHS Five-Year (2022-2027) Strategic Housing Plan and summary documents are available on the BHS Mental Health Services Act Housing webpage.



BHAB unanimously approved the Report Back on Comprehensive Substance Use Harm Reduction Strategy Board Letter, which noted the increase in overdose deaths and included a Syringe Services Program.



Four new BHAB Members were welcomed and introduced: James Merino and Jim Taylor, representing District 2; and Saurabh Gupta and Amina Sheik Mohamed, representing District 4. Mr. Gupta resigned in 2021.

JUNE



In June, Dr. Bergmann provided an overview of one-time funding streams from the Governor's Budget and Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that are expected for mental health services. These funds offer an opportunity to invest in capital projects that support mental health services. The key projects reviewed included children and youth behavioral health initiatives, treating and preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), housing, and homelessness.

BHAB governance was also addressed this month with a presentation by Kyle Sand from County Counsel who provided members with a recommendation to update the BHAB County Ordinance to align with the BHAB bylaw updates in accordance with changes made to State Legislation AB1352. Members agreed to the approach and its timeline for completion by early fall.

JULY



According to the BHAB bylaws a minimum of 10 regular meetings shall be held. Members voted in support of going dark for the July meeting.

AUGUST



BHAB members received a <u>California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM)</u> presentation by Dr. Jennifer Tuteur, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Medical Care Services, and Julie Howell, Senior Health Policy Advisor, Medical Care Services Division. This presentation was recommended by BHAB Chair, Judith Yates. The CalAIM framework was developed by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and encompasses a broad-based delivery system, program, and payment reform across the Medi-Cal program. The presentation included an overview of CalAIM and its key components, as well as implications to behavioral health managed care plans and was followed by Q&A session.



BHS Deputy Director, Dr. Piedad Garcia, presented on the Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) Pilot Project. MCRT provides in-person support to anyone, anywhere, experiencing a mental health, drug, or alcohol-related crisis.

The presentation reviewed the pilot program in North Coastal Region and provided an overview of plans to expand the service to other regions in the county in a staggered approach. Additionally, Piedad shared that a media campaign would launch to disseminate information in

the community about MCRT. Stakeholders were asked to consider how they too can play a role in building awareness and educating the community on MCRT.



Dr. Bergmann reviewed with BHAB the Procurement Board Letter that went to the Board of Supervisors in July and the recommendations. The board action authorized the procurement of a range of services critical to maintaining and anticipating future behavioral health needs. The approximate costs and revenue for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 was \$800,000 to \$1.2 million.

SEPTEMBER



One of the duties of BHAB is to provide input on the expenditures of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding and every year there are several community meetings and opportunities for stakeholders and other community members to provide input on programs and services funded by MHSA funds. This effort culminates with a yearly MHSA update to BHAB with a public hearing to gather additional public input. In September, Nadia Privara Brahms, Chief, Agency Operations, Behavioral Health Services, provided BHAB with the MHSA Annual Update which included the MHSA budget for FY 2021-22, which is approximately \$218.6 million, and is comprised of the following:

- Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) \$27.1 million
- Innovation (INN) \$8.4 million
- Workforce Education and Training (WET) \$3.6 million
- Community Services and Supports (CSS) \$179.5 million

Key investments included: service equity, workforce programs, prevention services, homeless/housing services, crisis services, children's & youth services, school-based services, as well as services for justice-involved individuals and special populations.

BHAB approved the MHSA Annual Update to be submitted to the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission.



Dr. Luke Bergmann announced BHS' reorganization. To ensure BHS has the adequate support and infrastructure in place to sustain growth and increasing complexity of services, and in anticipation of further growth, an internal reorganization was planned to occur within BHS. All contractors were notified of this change and more importantly, points of contacts or Contracting Officer Representative (COR) were not changed. Beyond that, BHS is building new functional capacity to strengthen data driven program design and manage new kinds of projects, such as capital projects and cross-departmental collaborations.



Additionally, Dr. Bergmann reviewed the acceptance of several grants and funding to further advance initiatives of Continuum of Care. Among these were the Crisis Care Mobile Units (CCMU) Grant, the Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG), the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG), and the CalAIM Implementation funding.

OCTOBER



As a follow-up to the presentation given to the BHAB Executive Committee in September, Dr. Piedad Garcia, Deputy Direction Departmental Operations, Behavioral Health Services, addressed concerns regarding changes to the Clubhouses. Dr. Garcia elaborated on the redesign of the Clubhouses initiated with the intent to introduce evidence-based practices and improve outcomes for clients following the International Clubhouse Standards which are focused on social skills development, education, and workforce development.



In October, BHAB took action on two items of operational importance to BHAB:

- The BHAB Ordinance and bylaw revisions. The bylaws were amended to align with language in Assembly Bill (AB) 1352 which further defined the roles of County mental health boards in 2019. BHAB, along with BHS staff and County Counsel, collaborated on these revisions for approximately a year.
- 2) The 2020 BHAB Annual Report highlighting the prior year's accomplishments. The BHAB Annual Report is a requirement of local behavioral health boards/commissions, per state statute. Reports are publicly available and maintained online by the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions (CALBHBC).



Todd Boyer, representing District 2, was introduced and welcomed as a newly appointed BHAB member.

NOVEMBER



The Procurement and Contract Extensions Board Letter was presented to BHAB by Dr. Bergmann and Nadia Privara Brahms, Acting Assistant Director, Behavioral Health Services in November. The Board Letter summarized that BHS provides a comprehensive array of community-based mental health and substance use disorder services through contracts with local public and private agencies to vulnerable populations, including individuals who are experiencing homelessness, individuals with justice involvement, and children and youth with complex behavioral health conditions. BHAB was provided a presentation detailing the recommended actions in the Procurement and Contract Extensions Board Letter which authorizes competitive solicitations, single source procurements, and amendments to extend existing contracts, to support critical behavioral health services.



In November, BHAB voted on the slate of 2022 BHAB Officers. The Nominating Committee presented the following recommended slate of 2022 Executive Officers on October 7, 2021, and it was approved:

- Bill Stewart, Chairperson
- John Sturm, 1st Vice Chair
- Phillip Deming, 2nd Vice Chair
- Che Hernandez, Member at Large (representing the alcohol and substance use community)
- Judith Yates, Member at Large (representing the mental health community)



BHAB also approved the 2021 Data Notebook in November. Local behavioral health advisory boards and commissions are asked by the California Behavioral Health Planning Council to complete a Data Notebook annually. This task helps local boards fulfill their mandate to report on program goals, needs, and provide input to the legislature and the public. Participation also informs advocacy decisions by the California Behavioral Health Planning Council. During this meeting, BHAB reviewed the actions they had taken for the Data Notebook and approved the final draft for submission.



Robin Sales and Nick Gulino, representing District 3, were introduced and welcomed as a newly appointed BHAB members. Mr. Gulino resigned in 2021 due to concerns of possible conflicts of interest.

DECEMBER



BHAB was provided with a presentation by Dr. Jennifer Tuteur, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Medical Care Services, and Heather Summers, Deputy Director, Medical Care Services, Cal-SDAIM, regarding the Medi-Cal Prescription (Rx) Transition expected to become effective on January 1, 2022. The presentation included an overview of the upcoming changes to the Medi-Cal prescription pharmacy benefit, as well as the consumer/pharmacy benefits, and details pertaining to consumer/provider resources and changes, including implications for how clients receive their medications. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session with BHAB members.



In preparation for the following year, BHAB members were asked to submit three priority areas of focus for 2022. This was a particularly important activity due to several new BHAB member appointments in this past year. Incoming BHAB Chair, Bill Stewart led the group in a discussion and invited each member to share their three areas of interest within behavioral health. Input gathered will help to inform ongoing discussions in identifying the 2022 BHAB priorities.



Carol Clemens, representing District 5, was introduced and welcomed as a newly appointed BHAB member. Mali Woods Drake, representing District 3, was appointed to BHAB and planned to attend her first meeting in January 2022.



For questions or general inquiries on the San Diego County Behavioral Health Advisory Board, please contact Dania Barroso-Conde at Dania.Barroso-Conde@sdcounty.ca.gov

Special thanks to BHS administrative support staff Bertha 'Betty' Milton (Administrative Secretary III), Brenda Arguelles (Administrative Secretary III), and Karen Aguilar (Administrative Secretary II), as well as BHAB support staff Philip Ainsworth (Administrative Analyst II) and Maya Shahar (Administrative Analyst II).