



County of San Diego

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TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

FROM: LUKE BERGMANN, Ph.D., Director, Behavioral Health Services

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES 2021 YEAR-END DIRECTOR'S REPORT

***LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO* UPDATES / SPECIAL EVENTS**

Live Well Advance Conference and Schools Summit

The virtual *Live Well Advance Conference and Schools Summit* was held on Wednesday and Thursday, November 17th & 18th, 2021. Conference topics included equity, climate, homelessness, youth, schools, and personal and worksite wellness. The conference was an opportunity to bring local and national leaders together to connect to advance a shared vision of a healthy, safe, and thriving San Diego region.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) YEAR IN REVIEW

This calendar year saw incredible advancement of critical services and initiatives in BHS, moving us closer to realizing the vision of moving from crisis to chronic and continuous care for San Diego County residents experiencing behavioral health conditions. A few highlights are included below, followed by updates from the teams within BHS.

Expanded Capacity of Crisis Stabilization Services

Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs) provide, short-term (less than 24 hours) services for people who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. 2021 saw incredible expansion of this critical service through the following:

- The North Inland Hospital-Based CSU at the Palomar Hospital campus in Escondido was expanded from 8 to 16 recliners. All 16 recliners were available beginning January 2021.
- The South Region Hospital-Based CSU located at Paradise Valley Hospital became operational with 12 recliners in April 2021.
- The North Coastal Community-Based CSU in Vista became operational with 12 recliners in October 2021.
- The North Coastal Live Well Center Community-Based CSU in Oceanside is estimated to open in early 2022. When operational, this facility will have 12 recliners available.

These facilities add to the existing crisis stabilization services at the San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital (18 beds) and the Community-Based Emergency Screening Unit serving children and youth (12 recliners).

Launch of Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRTs)

MCRTs provide a non-law enforcement, community-based crisis response designed to engage individuals in behavioral health services and reduce law enforcement interventions when clinically appropriate. MCRTs are comprised of clinicians, case managers, and peer support specialists to provide a clinician-only crisis intervention, triage for level of care need, link to appropriate behavioral health services, and if clinically indicated, transport to a crisis stabilization unit or walk-in assessment center as appropriate. MCRT began as a pilot program in January 2021 serving the North Coastal Region and as of today, MCRT is operational in East, North Central, South, and Central Regions. North Inland Region is estimated to be operational on December 8, 2021, completing countywide implementation.

Additionally, on November 10, 2021, BHS was notified by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) that the department was **awarded \$18 million through the Crisis Care Mobile Units (CCMUs) program** funded through the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) and by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). The CCMU funding must be utilized between September 15, 2021, and June 30, 2025, and will support the expansion of MCRTs throughout the region, with a priority on serving individuals ages 25 and younger.

Comprehensive County Substance Use Harm Reduction Strategy (Harm Reduction Strategy)

Building on existing work within BHS and Public Health Services (PHS), a comprehensive Harm Reduction Strategy was presented to the Board of Supervisors in June 2021. Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use and includes a spectrum of strategies that meet people who use drugs “where they’re at” and address the conditions of use along with the use itself. The Harm Reduction Strategy is divided into four strategic domains: 1) Cross-sectoral convening, 2) Healthcare integration and access, 3) Housing, and 4) Workforce; and can be found by [clicking here](#). There is work being done across all four domains, including the implementation of housing strategies that are supportive of the County’s Framework for Ending Homelessness. The section below provides more details on a collaborative housing strategy that has rolled out in the City of San Diego.

ADULT AND OLDER ADULT (AOA) SYSTEM OF CARE

Behavioral Health Services, Community Harm Reduction Teams (C-HRT)

Within the Harm Reduction Strategy’s Housing domain is the deployment of the Community Harm Reduction Teams (C-HRT). The City of San Diego, San Diego Housing Commission, and the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency are collaborating on a joint effort to address the needs of individuals who are homeless in the City of San Diego, who also have substance use and co-occurring conditions, through the deployment of C-HRT). C-HRT’s multidisciplinary model of service includes peers as substance use counselors, a mental health clinician, a registered nurse, and a psychiatric consultation with a nurse practitioner. C-HRT is a low barrier engagement harm reduction team that provides just-in-time specialty services, connections to behavioral health services and designated bridge housing, including Safe Haven housing for difficult to engage clients with chronic substance use and co-occurring conditions. Wellness, stability, and permanent supportive housing is the goal.

Services include:

- Multidisciplinary team to engage individuals “where they are” and are experiencing homelessness, substance use, and co-occurring conditions.
- Specialty field-based harm reduction services for individuals experiencing homelessness with substance use and co-occurring conditions.
- Harm Reduction services to include outreach and engagement, low barrier, just in-time services and connection to primary care, behavioral health services, medication management, Medication Assisted Treatment and syringe exchange services.
- Care coordination with existing Central Region Homeless Teams for a “hot hand-off”.

PATH San Diego Homeless Outreach Program (SD-HOP)

SD-HOP is a Countywide Homeless Outreach and engagement program designed to help individuals with mental health and substance use issues who are also experiencing homelessness. Individuals will receive a behavioral health screening, short-term case management, and connections to an array of housing options and behavioral/physical health care and community-based resources. The SD-HOP operates from a client-centered and continuous engagement approach through field-based services; ninety percent (90%) of all services are conducted in the field and services are countywide.

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) & San Diego Housing Commission Joint Procurement

BHS partnered with San Diego Housing Commission on a joint RFP for Behavioral Health Support Services (BHSS) at two San Diego Housing Properties. The BHSS programs will provide on-site support to the residents at the Kearny Vista (142 units) and Valley Vista (190 units) properties. Residents will be screened by the BHSS providers and linked to ongoing BHS and ancillary services. The Kearny Vista contract was awarded to Telecare Corporation and executed on October 27, 2021. The Valley Vista contract is expected to be awarded and executed in December 2021.

CLINICAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (CDO)

Long-Term Care Efforts

Continued efforts were made to support the acute inpatient care services that provide 24/7 inpatient psychiatric care. During this calendar year, six beds were added to Crestwood Fallbrook Healing Center and five beds were added to Alpine Special Treatment Center, both facilities designated as Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD) Mental Health Rehabilitation Centers (MHRC). With the addition of these 11 beds there are now a total of 286 IMD MHRC beds. There are planned efforts to expand beds in the Skilled Nursing Facility/Special Treatment Program (SNF/STP) and SNF Patch contracts to further support the long-term system of care, pending contract finalization. Additionally, during this calendar year 57 Augmented Services Programs Board and Care (ASP B&C) slots were added with the continued goal to expand capacity.

Cultural Competency Academy (CCA) – Executive Leadership Series

The CCA is a program under the Academy of Professional Excellence within San Diego State University Research Foundation. The CCA provided two executive leadership series to BHS contracted providers with a focus on creating antiracist organizations. The Executive CCA is designed for executives of behavioral health provider organizations and consists of three 90-minute virtual training sessions, a one-hour coaching call, an executive project, networking, offline work, and a final one-hour session to wrap up the series, as well as discuss individual executive project summaries and next steps. Themes that were discussed during this series include privilege and classism in behavioral health, executive allyship, and the tools to lead change within their organizations. In 2021, 14 behavioral health provider executives completed the series. The next series is scheduled to begin in January 2022.

12th Annual Primary Care and Behavioral Health Integration Summit

Health Quality Partners hosted the 12th Annual Primary Care and Behavioral Health Integration Summit in a virtual format over the course of three days in November 2021. There were 296 attendees at the Summit from many sectors of healthcare, including federally qualified health centers, behavioral health programs that included both mental health and substance use treatment providers, and other community-based organizations. The presentations covered a wide range of relevant and dynamic topics, including street medicine, telehealth best practices, empathic de-escalation strategies, and provider burnout. There was also an insightful opening keynote address on the power of implicit bias by Reverend Bryant T. Marks, PhD, who served on President Barack Obama's Board of Advisors and has provided implicit bias training to over 40,000 employees and volunteers in law enforcement, government, education, and healthcare organizations.

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES (CYF) SYSTEM OF CARE

SchoolLink

SchoolLink is a partnership between BHS CYF, community-based organizations, and school districts throughout San Diego County to offer outpatient specialty mental health services (SMHS) and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment on school campuses that serve students on Medi-Cal and those who are low-income, uninsured, or underinsured. SchoolLink implements a standardized practice across the system of care, increases collaboration between schools and providers of mental health and SUD treatment programs, and provides system-level data that was previously unavailable.

Under the leadership of Board of Supervisors Chair, Nathan Fletcher, the School Mental Health Initiative allowed for substantial enhancements for SchoolLink contracts to assist the system in preparing to support students as they began the 2021-2022 school year. Contract amendments were completed in September/October 2021 to allow funding to promote the recruitment and sustaining of a vital workforce of clinicians. An emphasis on group therapy and provision of services on school campuses was promoted. Work in the sphere of student mental health continues, with efforts towards universal screening, the establishment of a contract with the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) and San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) for the Creating Opportunities in Prevention and Eliminating Suicide (COPEs) Initiative, as well as collaborating with Managed Care Plans for the Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program that will be made available through the state.

Healing Opportunities for Personal Empowerment (HOPE)

The HOPE program, which officially launched in July 2021, is a collaboration between BHS and the Probation Department to provide a new intensive treatment program for in-custody youth. The HOPE program supports the juvenile justice system's transition to a positive youth development model while also focusing on the interrelated Triad of Treatment needs typical of youth who are in custody and provides evidence-based and evidence-informed treatments for criminogenic, mental health, and substance use. This innovative program allows BHS Juvenile Forensics Services Stabilization, Treatment, Assessment and Transition (STAT)-HOPE clinicians to work side-by-side with Probation staff in the units to create a therapeutic milieu that is both strengths-based and trauma-informed. Youth practice newly acquired skills in a safe environment, while also maintaining structure and personal accountability. As the Probation Department prepares to open the Youth Transition Campus, the HOPE program will shift from East Mesa to the new campus. The new site allows for enhanced campus living and is expected to have three HOPE units with 12 youth per unit. Clinicians will have space within the housing units which will allow for enhanced interactions and support.

EDGEMOOR DISTINCT PART SKILLED NURSING FACILITY (Edgemoor)

Accomplishments

Edgemoor has been named annually as one of the top nursing facilities in the nation by US News and World Report since 2012. Edgemoor was ranked "The Best" nursing home in California by Newsweek two years in a row for their 2020 and 2021 rankings and was ranked 3rd in their 2022 rankings. Since December 2015, Edgemoor has maintained its five-star ranking on the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services ranking system which looks at nursing home deficiencies from state and federal surveys, staffing levels, and performance on quality measures against other nursing homes in California.

COVID-19 Update

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be at the forefront of operations at Edgemoor. Edgemoor continues to follow and implement the continually changing guidance of various local, state, and federal health organizations.

At the beginning of the year Edgemoor partnered with CVS Pharmacy to administer COVID-19 vaccinations on-site as part of the CDC Pharmacy Partnership Program for skilled nursing facilities, with plans in progress

to provide residents, staff, and contractors vaccine boosters. Currently, staff and contractors on-site at the facility are subject to the vaccination requirements of the California Public Health Order of August 5, 2021.

Facility Updates

The planning and development of a 12-bed acute psychiatric facility into the existing floor plan of Edgemoor continues. The project is pending California Department of Public Health and California Department of Health Care Access and Information (formerly the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development) review and approval.

PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (PCE) UNIT

Accomplishments

Two signature efforts garnered significant coverage for mental health and increased access to resources. The first of these was the May Is Mental Health Month (MIMHM) campaign that brought awareness and reduced mental health stigma through various activities including the creation of the BHS MIMHM website which included a community calendar, resources, and activities for the month of May. The month of May also included the Children's Mental Health Awareness Day which was observed with the lighting the County Administration Center in green, as well as weekly campaign e-mails to HHSA staff.

The second signature event was Recovery Happens which celebrated those in recovery and the people who support them. The event featured music, inspirational stories, and a proclamation sponsored by Chair Fletcher honoring National Recovery Month. PCE staff also created an accompanying webpage that hosted a virtual resource fair and additional event information. The page was visited by over 500 unique visitors.

The PCE unit in collaboration with contractors and other partners led additional events and activities to increase community engagement and awareness of key prevention efforts such as the Prescription Drug Takeback Day, the Suicide Prevention Council's Annual Stakeholders meeting, the Annual Check Your Mood Day Campaign, and the press conference for the release of the Annual Report to the Community. Additionally, PCE has continued efforts on several key campaigns including phase II of the fentanyl awareness campaign, a health care workers self-care campaign, and the It's Up To Us campaign which addressed the continuing impacts of COVID-19 through the It's Up to Us "Mask Your Face, Not Your Feelings" campaign.

Virtual Substance Abuse Training Summits

Prevention contractors including Center for Community Research (CCR), SAY San Diego, Rescue Agency, and Vista Community Clinic among others participated over the last year in planning the virtual 2021 Western States Marijuana Summit and the Opioid/Stimulant Summit held in November 2021.

- **Western States Marijuana Summit**

More than 400 individuals registered to attend the 2021 Western States Marijuana Summit held November 2-3, 2021, with more than 300 people in attendance each day. A variety of topics were presented over the 2-day summit. Topics included an update on COVID and overdoses by Dr. Wilson Compton, Deputy Director, with the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the National Institutes of Health; the effects of weed on women; the environmental threat from illegal cultivation to forests, other public lands, and wildlife; and a session on effective communication.

- **Western States Opioid/Stimulant Summit**

The Western States Opioid/Stimulant Summit was held November 4-5, 2021, with more than 700 registered to attend and about 500 individuals attending each day. A wide variety of topics were presented, that included the state of science from Dr. Nora Volkow, director, National Institute on Drug Abuse; a panel discussion on achieving meaningful harm reduction with Luke Bergmann, Director, BHS; a discussion on a community response to overdoses by connecting prevention, public

health and public safety; strategies to reach diverse populations; and changing hearts and minds by using effective media messaging. Both summits were available at no cost to attendees and continuing education units were also available.

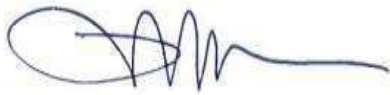
SAN DIEGO COUNTY PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL (SDCPH)

Medical staffing, COVID interdisciplinary clinical management, and facility improvements have been key focal points for SDCPH this year. 2021 was a time of steep transition for SDCPH medical staffing. The hospital was saddened to see the departure of its Medical Director Dr. Nesbit in September. Dr. Nesbit successfully navigated the hospital through some of the most challenging times of COVID-19, working closely with nursing, infection control, and the medical staff to develop various procedures which bolstered the hospital's ability to continue to provide high-quality services.

Hospital medical staffing experienced a successful transition following reprocurement of services. Additionally, medical staff leadership has continued seamlessly, with Dr. David Folsom of the University of California San Diego (UCSD) appointed into his new role as Assistant Medical Director. This development tracks the strengthening collaboration between UCSD and SDCPH, to the benefit to the patients we serve. Dr. Folsom reports to Dr. Krelstein, who remains the Medical Director for San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital.

Facility planning has continued in collaboration with multiple HHSA and County departments. Staff adaptability and leadership has supported the progress of critical projects while maintaining continuity of operations and excellent patient care.

Respectfully submitted,



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