



County of San Diego

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LUKE BERGMANN, Ph.D.
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December 22, 2022

TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

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

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR’S REPORT – FEBRUARY 2023

BHS DEPARTMENTAL OPTIMIZATION UPDATES

With the exponential growth over the last few years of the County’s Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department, and its increasing budget, BHS has pursued ensuring that there is adequate support and infrastructure in place to sustain the growth and increasing complexity of services. Over the past year, through a phased approach, BHS has been restructuring our internal structure, resources, and staffing to optimize the configuration of key activities and functions that support the delivery of data-driven, quality mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services to the most vulnerable individuals and families within our community.

Adequate support for department growth includes additional BHS staff positions and opportunities for employee growth. There has been no job attrition as a result from this restructuring process. BHS has maintained continuity of current functions and activities during the transition to ensure services and current activities are not disrupted.

BHS Organizational Changes



Below are highlights of the some of the key organizational changes implemented in four phases over the past year. The implementation timeline of each phase is as follows: Phase 1-December 2021; Phase 2-February 2022; Phase 3-July 2022; and Phase 4-October 2022.

Key organizational changes to highlight, include:

Operations Unit

- Established the **Health Plan Operations Team**, under the BHS Operations Unit, comprised of Quality Assurance (QA), Management Information Systems (MIS) and the **newly established Health Plan Administration** team. The team handles critical functions and activities in fulfilling

BHS's role as the Specialty Mental Health Plan and is responsible for mandated audit and documents coordination, Optum reporting collaboration activities, and Network Adequacy requirements support, along with key efforts related to CalAIM.

- Established a **new Business Operations team** under the Operations Unit to oversee BHS facilities, including new BHS capital project planning, information technology (IT), and project management functions within BHS. The Project Management Office (PMO) provides centralized project management for large bodies of work within the department, including Behavioral Health Continuum of Care projects, new capital projects, and other new critical bodies of work that require intensive cross-collaboration. Centralizing these multiple functions within Business Operations ensures optimal efficiency to support the delivery of excellent customer service.

The BHS Operations Team is led by Assistant Director and Chief Operations Officer, Aurora Kiviat Nudd.

Programs and Services Unit

- Renamed the Prevention and Community Engagement (PCE) team to the **Prevention and Support Services team**. The team will oversee BHS-level prevention services, such as regional prevention contracts governing councils and coalitions, and other contracted work funded by the Mental Health Services Act – Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funds, and Substance Abuse Block Grant funds, which will align services that have direct upstream benefit across behavioral health services.
- Shifted the **Office of the Public Conservator** to BHS, which previously was a part of the Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator. supporting the alignment of resources, services, and policies to address the needs of conservatees and inform the implementation of upstream interventions to ensure access to care in the least restrictive environment. It will also align services as BHS moves to implement the new mandated Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Court by October 2023, as part of the first cohort of California counties.

The BHS Programs and Services team is led by Assistant Director and Chief Program Officer, Cecily Thornton-Stearns.

Population Health Unit

- Established the **Population Health Unit** under the leadership of the Chief Population Health Officer, Dr. Nicole Esposito. The Population Health Unit implements a population health approach to support access to behavioral health care by ensuring those in need have access to services, working to identify and eliminate health disparities, driving excellent health outcomes, and supporting continuous improvement.
- **Shifted system-level prevention functions** to the BHS Population Health Unit, including contracts that support systemwide prevention and future evaluation initiatives, to support broader prevention efforts across the department. These contracts are focused on public health planning and strategy, which will serve to advance community-wide equity in behavioral health outcomes. This work aligns with the data surveillance and epidemiology functions of the unit and will thread with prevention initiatives currently underway across the enterprise, such as efforts in collaboration with public safety and justice partners.

The BHS Population Health Unit is led by Dr. Nicole Esposito, Chief Population Health Officer.

Healthcare Oversight Unit

- To align programming, BHS will begin shifting **contracts with a justice focus** to the Healthcare Oversight Unit. The Healthcare Oversight Unit currently oversees the Forensic Evaluation Unit, a County-operated program that provides psychiatric and psychological evaluations ordered by the court for adults facing criminal charges. Shifting contracted justice programs to this team will align County-operated and contracted services that support individuals with justice involvement. The contracted collaborative courts, including the drug courts, re-entry court, and behavioral health court, will begin transitioning to the Healthcare Oversight Unit in late 2022, followed by the transition of other contracts over the next few months, which include justice assertive community treatment (ACT) programs, AB 109 programs, jail in-reach programs, and the serial inebriate program.

The BHS Healthcare Oversight Unit is overseen by Dr. Michael Krelstein, the Chief Medical Officer for Behavioral Health Services.

Strategy and Finance Unit

- Established the **Data Science team** under the Strategy and Finance Unit. The Data Science team is responsible for acquiring, synthesizing, integrating, and interpreting mental health and substance use disorder data, including the development of dashboards and establishing data governance. The team serves as the centralized, integrated data hub to coordinate BHS and other data, and supports data needs related to public presentations, program and clinical design, outcomes, and fulfills various reporting requirements and supports general departmental strategies. The Data Science team collaborates with the Epidemiology team within the Population Health Unit to ensure access and availability of community behavioral health data as needed.
- Shifted the **BHS Budget team**, which oversees a budget of nearly \$1 billion, to the Strategy and Finance Unit. The BHS Budget team leads budget development and implementation activities for BHS units, including BHS Administration, the San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital, the Edgemoor Distinct Part Skilled Nursing Facility (DPSNF), and County-operated services.
- Shifted **BHS Fiscal team** to the Strategy and Finance Unit. The BHS Fiscal team is responsible for all fiscal functions to support the 300+ contracts currently within BHS, including contract budgets, revenues, contractor invoices, contract spending, year-end activities, and other tasks related to the fiscal management of contracts.
- Shifted “community engagement” functions to the **BHS Communication and Engagement team** to align key functions and further bolster the department’s community engagement efforts. The current community engagement activities and media advocacy contracts were shifted to the Communication and Engagement team within the BHS Strategy and Finance Unit. The team provides broad support across BHS to support rapid response, public records act and media requests, Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) activities, Board Letters and presentations, and employee engagement. Shifting community engagement activities to this team supports broader departmental, Agency and enterprise efforts around community engagement, including public messaging campaigns, establishing new BHS services and capital projects, messaging about the Community Experience Partnership (CEP), and integration of community members into various aspects of programming. Additionally, existing health promotion work done countywide and funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), along with community health outreach work, will transition to this team.

The BHS Strategy and Finance Unit is led by the Assistant Director and Chief Strategy and Finance Officer, Nadia Privara Brahms.

BHS Workforce Growth

BHS continues to experience growth and as part of the FY 2022-23 Operational Plan, the department added new dedicated workforce through the **addition of 115 new County positions** as follows:

Direct Services

- 15 positions to provide custodial services within the San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital (SDCPH) and Edgemoor.
- 12 positions to provide behavioral health services that support youth in County care due to changes to the State's Juvenile Justice Division.
- 37 positions to provide outpatient and case management services, including new peer support positions, within County-operated mental health clinics.

Clinical and Administrative Oversight and Support

- 5 positions to support harm reduction efforts.
- 46 positions to enhance and oversee contracted services across BHS, and to support critical administrative functions across the department.

BHS SPECIAL EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

7th Annual Live Well Advance Conference – December 7, 2022

The County of San Diego welcomed more than 2,000 attendees to the San Diego Convention Center on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, for the 7th Annual Live Well Advance Conference & School Summit. The event brought community partners and stakeholders together to network, learn about new tools and best practices, and participate in breakout sessions, workshops, and interactive activities. More than a third of this year's content concentrated on mental health and substance use prevention topics in alignment with local priorities. Featured speakers included contractors and partner organizations, as well as representatives from the County's Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department.

Behavioral health highlights from the conference include:

- The highest attended behavioral health breakout sessions (with over 100 participants per individual session), included: Community and Parent Guide to Fentanyl (115 attendees); Finding Help for Behavioral Health Crises: Response Teams and Lifelines for Support (105 attendees); and Pediatric Integrated Care: Together Tackling Our Youth Mental Health Crisis (113 attendees).
- Nearly 70 participants attended input sessions with UC San Diego to learn about the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Community Program Planning Process and provide input on local behavioral health priorities; an additional 50 attendees participated in the demonstration of BHS' Community Experience Partnership data dashboards.
- BHS staff also facilitated interactive booths throughout the day focused on stigma reduction and harm reduction.
- Nearly 2,000 doses (997 two dose kits) of naloxone were distributed to participants in partnership with the Harm Reduction Coalition of San Diego.
- *It's Up to Us #StigmaFreeSD* Photo Booth was well visited throughout the day by attendees who had their photo taken with selected statements that resonated with them related to mental health and/or substance use disorders.
- After the main conference, more than 50 partners gathered for a reception to network and specifically discuss programming opportunities related to behavioral health.

Birth of Brilliance "Be the Change" Conference- February 23, 2023

The third annual Birth of Brilliance "Be the Change" virtual conference is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2023, from 8:15 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. A cultural fair will take place in-person the following day

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on Friday, February 24, 2023, from 4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. Registration is now open at www.BirthofBrilliance.com

Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CICAMH) Conference – April 21, 2023

Save the Date for the hybrid 8th Annual Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CICAMH) Conference: Building Resilience through Family Engagement scheduled for Friday, April 21, 2023. More information will be available soon. For questions email: CICAMH.CONFERENCE@GMAIL.COM.

Respectfully submitted,



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