



County of San Diego

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June 29, 2023

TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

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

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

EDGEMOOR DISTINCT PART SKILLED NURSING FACILITY (EDGEMOOR) UPDATES

Accomplishments/Announcements

- Edgemoor remains an overall five-star facility on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Five-Star Quality Rating System, achieving five out of five stars in all five rating categories (Overall Quality, Health Inspection, Quality Measures, Staffing, and RN Staffing).
- Edgemoor was recognized at the San Diego Health Care Association RAP session on April 13, 2023 by the County of San Diego and received a Certificate of Achievement for exceeding an 80% resident up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination rate.
- The County's Annual Blood Drive was held at Edgemoor on April 6, 2023. Our goal was to collect 30 pints and we collected 28 pints, which equates to helping save 84 lives.
- Edgemoor celebrated National Skilled Nursing Care Week (May 14th – 20th) and Nurses Week (May 6th – 12th) with a special presentation and meal on May 15th. The Nurse of the Year and Certified Nursing Assistant of the Year were both awarded during the presentation.

COVID-19 Update

California's COVID-19 State of Emergency ended on February 28, 2023, and the Federal Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 ended on May 11, 2023. As a result of these declarations, some skilled nursing home requirements have been lifted. Edgemoor continues to require masking in direct patient care areas and the main hallways, and has updated protocols for screening staff and visitors for COVID-19. Edgemoor continues to follow all other requirements of various local, state, and federal health organizations.

Facility Improvements

The planning and development of a 12-bed acute psychiatric facility into the existing floor plan of Edgemoor remains ongoing. Licensure of this new acute unit will provide continuity of care and access for patients from the skilled nursing facility for stabilization. Edgemoor will be licensed as a distinct part skilled nursing facility of the new unit and no longer be under the San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital's license. Licensure will require approval by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Department of Health Care Access and Information.

A new nurse call system is currently being installed and is anticipated to be completed in May 2024. The facility flooring project was completed, and various areas of the facility have new sheet vinyl. Edgemoor continues work on a dishwasher replacement and reconfiguration project; work is anticipated

to begin by early 2024. Other upcoming facility projects include roofing, additional electric vehicle charging stations, and parking lot resurfacing.

Finally, several IT projects are underway including a Payroll Based Journaling (PBJ) Custom Solution, NetSolutions Enhancements, and a Network Redundancy Update. Peraton – the County's contractor for Information Technology (IT) – and HHSA IT Services are also addressing issues with user experience and productivity. Many computers have been refreshed which has helped address connectivity and intermittent slowness. Additional wireless access points have also helped with Wi-Fi coverage.

Financial

Following the Federal Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 expiring on May 11, 2023, effective May 12, 2023, the Medi-Cal COVID-19 increased reimbursement ceased, and reimbursement rates were reverted to the rate year 2022-23 annual per diem rates.

An increase to the private pay rate received Board of Supervisors approval and will become effective July 1, 2023. The 17% increase in the private pay rate from \$775 to \$908 will support full cost recovery, as well as ensure alignment with current Medi-Cal rates.

Resident Occupancy

Occupancy remains at almost 100% of available beds. The Pico Neighborhood unit remains empty in anticipation of additional construction.

Recruitment and Hiring

Dr. Wendy Gibbons was appointed as Pharmacy Manager effective February 24, 2023. A new Assistant Administrator, Darren Kasai, started on February 14, 2023. The Assistant Administrator supervises the Social Services, Health Informatics, Rehab, Environmental Services (EVS), and Therapeutic Recreation departments. He also began rotating with the Administrator as the Administrator-On-Call for after-hours needs.

Edgemoor continues to pursue strategies to recruit and retain critical workforce. During the third quarter of FY 2022-23 the facility recognized one employee for ten years of service, one employee for fifteen years of service, and one employee for twenty years of service, highlighting the commitment of our employees to our patients and public service.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL (SDCPH) UPDATES

Leadership Change | Welcoming Lauren Mahalik as our new Social Work Behavioral Health Program Manager for SDCPH

Lauren started her County service in 2019 as a Licensed Mental Health Clinician working in the SDCPH's Social Work Department. In that role, she served as a direct care provider on several acute care treatment teams, specializing in collaborating with other disciplines to develop effective plans of care and individualized behavioral plans. She also worked within the emergency psychiatric unit with her primary focus on crisis assessment, stabilization, and care coordination. Lauren previously served as a member of The Joint Commission Readiness Committee and participated in the successful 2021 Joint Commission survey. Lauren was one of the subject matter experts for the implementation of the new electronic medical record system and has assisted hospital leadership in clinical workflow development and utilization review.

In 2021, Lauren began serving on the facilitation team for Culture of Safety, focusing on best practices with an emphasis on decreasing aggressive acts while enhancing staff and patient safety. Lauren has represented the Social Work Department for New Employee Orientation and assisted with training

nursing staff through the Social Work-Nursing Onboarding Preceptorship program. Lauren's strengths include building collaborative partnerships with internal and external service providers. She was recently identified as a Change Ambassador within BHS for elevating efficiency and quality of clinical services. She proactively brings new ideas to the hospital, which has streamlined treatment planning and patient care within the hospital. Her ability to embrace change and embody resilience under these challenging times has not gone unnoticed.

Mental Health Awareness

The SDCPH celebrated Mental Health Awareness Month in May with several activities celebrating self-care and honoring those struggling with mental health. We all know someone struggling with mental health issues, and sometimes the one struggling is ourselves. We collected tallies (211 collected) throughout the month of May to account for those we wanted to honor. Some of the self-care events hosted were: A Moment of Silence on May 2, 2023; Laughter Yoga; Tai Chi; Walk-It-Wednesdays throughout the month; and Pet Therapy from Love on a Leash. The hospital has also added routinely scheduled Employee Assistance Program (EAP) sessions for on-site staff support.

Development

A Leadership Development Series was implemented for Department Managers and the Leadership Council, made up of line staff. The series includes team building, identifying leadership philosophies/styles, characteristics of inspiring leaders, and developing values and strengths as a leader.

Nurses' Week was honored with a celebration and an all-staff team building event – including guest speakers: Dr. Denise Foster, Chief Nursing Officer; Angie Mitchell, Assistant Chief Nursing Officer; Nick Macchione, Agency Director; Dr. Luke Bergmann, BHS Director; Aurora Kiviat, BHS Assistant Director; and Dr. Krelstein, BHS Clinical Director.

Programming

Fentanyl Harm Reduction is prioritized at SDCPH. High risk areas were identified by our Risk Event Taskforce. Mitigation strategies are being implemented in phases including enhanced monitoring for change in condition, increased reassessment by nurses for patients who received psychiatric medications, and enhanced skin assessment and search of belongings.

BHS SPECIAL EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Behavioral Health Workforce Innovation Program Proposal Update

On June 15, 2023, BHS presented the Behavioral Health Workforce Innovation Program proposal to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) seeking their approval in utilizing Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation funds for this program. BHAB members Robin Sales, Carol Clemens, and Serita Polinaire provided public comment in support of the proposal. MHSOAC approved up to \$75 million in Innovation funding over five years for the training and tuition-reimbursement program and the upskilling components to meet professional needs; however, the housing incentive program was not approved. BHS will continue working with the MHSOAC on adjusting the housing incentive program and may return to the commission at a future date to revisit this component of the proposal.

BHS Receives National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards

In January, BHS nominated six programs for the National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards Program. This award recognizes programs for innovative approaches to providing new or needed services, improving the administration of existing programs, or promoting intergovernmental cooperation and coordination. We are pleased to announce all six BHS programs received NACo awards! Below is a description of the winning programs.

New Services

These three programs have added new capacity responsive to community need and are now an essential part of our behavioral health continuum of care.

- **The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)** program. Law enforcement agencies in San Diego County receive thousands of calls annually involving a psychiatric crisis. Many of those calls do not require law enforcement involvement and would be better served by a clinical response team. The MCRT program provides non-law enforcement, clinician-led, community-based crisis response with teams comprised of licensed mental health clinicians, case managers, and peer support specialists that conduct assessments, utilize de-escalation strategies, and connect individuals to appropriate services. The desired outcome is to mitigate the crisis at the point of contact in the field and to connect the client to ongoing supportive services designed to reduce the need for high-acuity level care and the increased cost associated with those services while providing a response that is appropriate and respectful of community and individual needs. Current providers of the MCRT program are Exodus Recovery serving the North Coastal Region, and Telecare Corporation serving the remaining Regions.
- **Community Harm Reduction Teams (C-HRT) and the Harm Reduction Interim Shelter** in San Diego aim to assist those who are experiencing chronic substance use, co-occurring mental health conditions, and homelessness. The program is a collaboration between the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and the City of San Diego Homelessness Strategies and Solutions Department. The services offered by C-HRT include street outreach, harm reduction, just-in-time services, case management, system navigation, permanent housing, behavioral health service referrals, and medical care referrals. The street outreach program is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team and operated by the Family Health Centers of San Diego. The shelter, run by Alpha Project, provides 44 beds and supportive oversight for individuals in transition to permanent housing. The program has seen positive results, including 200 individuals with improved health and quality of life, and 17 individuals transitioning to permanent housing (numbers as of January 2023 when the nomination was submitted). C-HRT provides resources and support to ensure a successful transition. Individuals are not required to be substance-free or attend treatment as part of their participation in the program.
- **North Coastal Live Well Health Center Community-Based Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU).** CSUs provide short-term psychiatric stabilization, reduce inpatient and emergency department utilization, and promote connections to community-based and residential programs as a critical component of the broader continuum of care. The goal of a CSU is to provide immediate behavioral health stabilization services that assist with reducing the severity of a person's level of distress associated with a serious mental illness or co-occurring disorder in a recovery-oriented environment. These services, lasting less than 24 hours, include a mental health evaluation and psychiatric assessment, crisis intervention, medication management, collateral, and disposition planning including linkage to ongoing outpatient services. Since 2018, there has been tremendous growth in this service line with six CSUs currently operational and a seventh being planned in El Cajon. Visit the [CSU webpage](#) for more information on all County CSUs. The North Coastal Live Well Health Center CSU, located in Oceanside and operated by Exodus Recovery, was nominated for excellence in care and for its state-of-the-art design. This 8,000-square-foot suite is calming and supportive of psychiatric stabilization with access to natural elements such as indoor and outdoor patios with water features and an abundance of greenery, including potted plants and three "living walls" with tropical-style plants. The facility has airy rooms with calming colors, a multi-purpose room with warm décor and recreational activities, and an overall relaxing environment that provides dignified care for people in psychiatric crisis.

System Optimization

These three bodies of work advanced our commitment to transforming our system of care through innovative solutions.

- **The Behavioral Health Continuum Optimal Care Pathways (OCP)** model aims to recalibrate and expand current services to ensure equity in services across the behavioral health continuum of care. It is a data-informed algorithm that quantifies the optimal utilization and the capacity needed across the system within four distinct domains: Community Crisis Diversion, Subacute Services, Community-Based Care, and Acute Inpatient Services. It is anticipated the implementation of the OCP model will significantly improve the behavioral health care continuum and lead to better outcomes that put individuals first, promote health equity, prevent homelessness and/or incarceration, and address the disparity faced by people with behavioral health issues. It will also connect people to the care they need, when they need it, to ensure wellness over the long-term.
- **The BHS Population Health Unit.** BHS endorses an approach to behavioral health that focuses on the health of the general population. The department is currently undergoing a transformation from a conventional behavioral health model to one based on population health principles. Population health refers to the overall health of a group of people, including health outcomes and factors that determine health, as well as the policies and actions that connect these components. To advance this new model, BHS has continued to grow its Population Health Unit since its establishment in 2021, along with its unique scope on data-driven, preventative initiatives and efforts. Central to the operations of the unit is the consolidation of behavioral health data and the use of analytical tools to gain a comprehensive understanding of the behavioral health situation in the county, including needs, strengths, outcomes, and disparities. This rich behavioral health data also enables the creation and implementation of novel programs and policies that address current trends and requirements.
- The BHS Project Management Office (PMO) represents a **Systems-Focused Approach to Enhancing Behavioral Health Care** and is dedicated to overseeing healthcare infrastructure and capital projects through cross-departmental, inter/intra-organizational, and public-private collaborations and partnerships. Designed to encourage collaboration across disciplines and promote strategic approaches to project work, the PMO acts as a central backbone unit, coordinating complex projects within short time frames by integrating subject matter experts from various departments and fields of expertise. The PMO provides project governance, metrics and reporting, and management tools to ensure that projects are completed within scope, budget, and timeline, ensures compliance with regulations and standards, promotes visibility into project progress and performance, and aligns projects with the County's Strategic Plan. The PMO team works together to process project approaches, facilitate decision-making, and resolve conflicts. In addition, the PMO strives to infuse project management principles throughout the department by providing training and continuous exposure to these principles. With its focus on collaboration and strategic approaches, the PMO plays a crucial role in ensuring the successful completion of our healthcare infrastructure and capital projects.

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.

Registration is open: <https://www.earlychildhoodmentalhealth-sandiego.com/>

Director's Report – July 2023

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'L. Bergmann', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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c: Nick Macchione, Agency Director
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