



# County of San Diego

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**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**  
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**LUKE BERGMANN, Ph.D.**  
DIRECTOR, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

May 1, 2020

TO: The Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

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

## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT – May 2020**

### **ACTION ITEM: AGREEMENT WITH PALOMAR HEALTH BOARD LETTER**

An immediate priority of the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care is the enhancement of hospital-based crisis stabilization services in North San Diego County. Hospital-based crisis stabilization units (CSU's) provide emergency psychiatric services within a hospital's emergency or urgent care unit to individuals who are experiencing a psychiatric crisis to stabilize them and connect them to ongoing services that meet their individual needs. Services must last less than 24 hours and include crisis intervention, ongoing assessment and stabilization, medication administration, consultation with family and outpatient providers, and linkage and/or referral to follow-up community-based services and resources. Hospital-based crisis stabilization services reduce unnecessary hospitalizations by diverting individuals from emergency departments and inpatient care, whenever possible, stabilizing and connecting them to community-based behavioral health services for ongoing care.

With the suspension of inpatient psychiatric beds and a CSU at Tri-City Medical Center, Palomar Health currently operates the only inpatient psychiatric service and the only CSU in North San Diego County. On June 25, 2019 the Board approved the expansion of crisis stabilization services at Palomar, including adding additional patient recliners. This recommended action seeks to address this need to enhance crisis stabilization services in North San Diego County by authorizing the Director of the Department of Purchasing and Contracting to negotiate an amendment to, and upon successful negotiations, amend an existing contract with Palomar Health to expand hospital-based crisis stabilization services from 8 to 16 patient recliners and to include a one-time payment of \$1 million to Palomar Health to be applied toward ongoing equipment and facility costs of the new hospital-based crisis stabilization unit, adjacent to the Palomar Medical Center Escondido in the North Inland Region of San Diego County.

**It is THEREFORE staff's recommendation that your board vote to support the authorizations and approvals needed to advance the recommendations in this Board Letter.**

**ACTION ITEM: VOTE TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH 2019 BHAB ANNUAL REPORT**

The BHAB Annual Report is a requirement of local behavioral health boards/commissions, per State statute. The report is intended to convey information on the work of local behavioral health boards, provide comparisons between each California county, and share best practices. Reports are publicly available and maintained online by the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions.

On March 5, BHAB received a draft of the 2019 Annual Report, as compiled by BHS staff with input from the BHAB Chair, workgroup chairs, and multiple BHAB members. Feedback was solicited and incorporated into a final draft for review. The 2019 BHAB Annual Report is provided in the May BHAB Meeting Packets for approval by vote of the full BHAB.

**It is THEREFORE, staff's recommendation that your board vote to approve the 2019 Annual Report as drafted, and authorize staff to submit it to the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions on behalf of BHAB.**

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

May 1-31, 2020 May Is Mental Health Month

BHS is, in collaboration with community partners, planning ways to celebrate May Is Mental Health Month amid the impacts of COVID-19 and required physical distancing. Planned activities include:

- May Is Mental Health Month webpage with green ribbon activities and links to mental health resources;
- County News Center story promoting May Is Mental Health Month;
- Social media posts through the It's Up to Us campaign and County social media;
- Short presentation during an upcoming County COVID-19 briefing bringing attention to May Is Mental Health Month; and
- BHS May Is Mental Health Month Community Calendar of mental health focused virtual events offered by community organizations. If you are planning a virtual event that you would like posted on our calendar, please send the information to Nancy Page ([Nancy.Page@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Nancy.Page@sdcounty.ca.gov)).

NAMIWalks/ HHSa Wellness Expo

This event works to raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and provides resources to those experiencing mental health issues and their families. In 2020, NAMIWalks San Diego was redesigned to be a Virtual Walk and will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2020, in conjunction with the NAMI National Walk.

NAMI San Diego is working on details to hold a virtual Wellness Expo on the same day. For more information or to register for the event, please visit: [www.NAMIWalks.org/sandiegocounty](http://www.NAMIWalks.org/sandiegocounty)

### Behavioral Health Recognition Dinner (BHRD) Postponed

The 34<sup>th</sup> annual Behavioral Health Recognition Dinner originally scheduled for Friday, May 29, 2020, has been postponed. A new date has not yet been set. The planning committee is hopeful the rescheduled recognition dinner can occur in August. Stay tuned for additional details.

### Recovery Happens Annual Community Event

This event is scheduled for Saturday, September 12, 2020, at the Waterfront Park in downtown San Diego. BHS staff and community partners on the planning committee are monitoring ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and physical distancing requirements. As the event date approaches, more information about any planned changes needed to accommodate current public health orders will be shared.

### **BHS COVID-19 UPDATES**

During this time, BHS has been working to ensure client and staff safety, maintain continuity of care for those we serve, and work with our local public health colleagues in implementing public health orders. BHS will continue to provide guidance to staff and contracted service providers through a series of communications to complement State, federal and other local guidance issued. Topics have included information on State guidelines, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regulations, protective equipment, stress management, contract administration, and contract compliance. BHS has also created a COVID-19 website with information about business operations, staffing, service delivery, and other key topics (link below).

BHS and its contracted providers continue to work to transition to use of both telephonic and telehealth modalities for the provision of behavioral health services as appropriate, and has provided best practices and resources for our providers transitioning to these methods. To help clients remain connected to telehealth and telephonic services, BHS created a resource document with information on internet and technological resources for low income individuals who may otherwise rely on public access (link below).

Additional COVID-19 resources, information, and self-care tools for mental health and wellbeing are available on the BHS and County of San Diego websites.

### **Behavioral Health Services COVID-19 Resources**

([https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/covid19\\_resources.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/covid19_resources.html))

- Online and phone support
  - 2-1-1 San Diego can assist people with accessing community, health, social, and disaster services
  - Access and Crisis Line (ACL), a 24 hour/7 days per week phone line which offers support from experienced counselors on all behavioral health topics (1-888-724-7240).
- Information for families, parents, and caregivers
- Strategies for coping during COVID-19
- Emotional health, mindfulness, and meditation practices
- Informative resources from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Diego, the California Governor's office, the CDC, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the California Department of Public Health, and the Administration for Community Living.
- [Free and Low Cost Internet Access During COVID-19 Flyer](#)

Additional County of San Diego COVID-19 resources are available at <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/coronavirus.html>, including:

- [Coronavirus in San Diego](#) Daily updates on positive cases and other data
- [Prepare for a Pandemic](#) Plans, supplies, and social distancing
- [Community Sector Support](#) Information
- [Health Professionals](#) Guidelines, reporting, and public health advisories
- [Care for Your Mental Health](#) Resources for family and caregivers
- [Hand Washing Stations Map](#)

For more information, the public can watch [County of San Diego briefings](#) (Monday-Friday daily at 2:30 pm), visit [www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com), or text COSD COVID19 to 468-311 to subscribe to County COVID-19 updates.

Respectfully submitted,



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Behavioral Health Services

LB/ns

cc: Nick Macchione, MS, MPH, FACHE, HHSA Director  
Aurora Kiviat, MPP, Assistant Director and Chief Operations Officer  
Cecily Thornton-Stearns, MFT Assistant Director and Chief Program Officer