



County of San Diego

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TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

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

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2022

BHS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, organizations across the globe and across various industries have and continue to evaluate and redefine how they operate. At the County of San Diego (County), a key shift that has occurred is the re-envisioning of the County's General Management system (GMS). The GMS is a comprehensive operational guide that applies management principles to County operations to ensure the best service provision to people in the region. In the last several months, the County has reimagined its operational approach to planning and decision making by integrating the GMS with the updated [Strategic Plan](#) adopted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) earlier this year. This takes the GMS in a direction that is reflective of today's communities while preserving the core management principles of strategic planning, operational accountability, enterprise-wide collaboration, and employee connection.

The County's Strategic Plan and GMS are guiding governance documents for County agencies including the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and at the core of the GMS is community engagement. This has always been a part of HHSA's work; however, this shift now embeds community engagement in the County culture and puts it at the center of our operations. The centering of community engagement recognizes the importance of partnering and collaborating with stakeholders to inform programs, services, and resources provided by the County.

Over the last several months, BHS has worked to examine existing and emerging resources at the departmental, Agency, and enterprise levels to identify mechanisms and opportunities to increase awareness and improve community understanding of behavioral health resources and Continuum of Care (CoC) priorities. Based on lessons learned through the current pandemic and feedback received by BHAB, the department has expanded the scope of work for its Community Engagement Services contract with the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), and is also actively evaluating how this contract may augment the work of other current contracts designed to support community engagement including communication, media, outreach, and education efforts. These assessments have occurred in tandem with BHS' continued department reorganization, through which community engagement efforts are being transitioned to a new, centralized team to enhance coordination throughout BHS and provide more dedicated support for year-round activities related to the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Community Program Planning (CPP) Process. Activities and resources described below have been identified through this preliminary review as mechanisms and/or opportunities to broaden and

enhance the department's community engagement beyond existing BHS programs, contracts, and staff efforts.



County of San Diego GMS reimagined

COLLABORATING WITH TEAMS ACROSS HHSA

In addition to bolstering the department's workforce dedicated to community engagement, BHS is identifying new ways to collaborate with staff in other HHSA departments to collectively optimize community engagement. In particular, BHS is in the process of threading closely with the Office of Equitable Communities housed within HHSA's new Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities, as well as the *Live Well San Diego* Support Team. Both groups possess an array of opportunities through activities and platforms that they oversee to embed, cross-thread, and increase the dissemination of behavioral health information and resources to the community. A broad overview of their work is described below, in addition to specific opportunities for collaboration with BHS that have already been identified and/or are underway.

HHSA Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities (HSEC)

HSEC was established in July 2021 at the direction of the Board and builds upon HHSA's regional service delivery model previously in place before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. HSEC's mission is to ensure equity among all San Diegans, foster a community that is welcoming to new residents, and reduce homelessness in the region. Three separate offices within HSEC direct programs and services to ensure equitable access to vital resources for communities and individuals from all walks of life. Offices within HSEC include the Office of Homeless Solutions (OHS), the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA), and the Office of Equitable Communities (OEqC).

OHS coordinates efforts to prevent and address homelessness, designs and implements evidence-based programs, and provides outreach and case management to individuals experiencing homelessness. OIRA leads HHSA's immigrant and refugee affairs and collaborates with the community and local resettlement agencies to provide resources and information through a variety of activities countywide to support immigrants. Lastly, OEqC focuses on enhancing community engagement and collaborating and devoting efforts to meet the needs of underserved communities, with a focus on embracing diversity, social and health equity, economic inclusion, and poverty reduction. Dedicated

OEqC staff are based throughout the county in communities to serve as the primary contact for partners and residents.

Related Opportunities:

- *Work with Regional Community Coordinators (RCC)*
Within OEqC, there are six new Chief, Departmental Operations positions dedicated to advancing and building upon existing and emerging community engagement efforts. These individuals focus solely on the priorities of a single HHS region, are headquartered within the community, and are knowledgeable and representative of their assigned region. RCCs serve in an executive liaison capacity and are a central point of collaboration for stakeholders. BHS is working closely with each RCC to create and refine tailored, region-specific approaches and resources that reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of each region's communities and address stakeholder priorities and requests. The department is also working with each RCC to ensure they are aware of BHS programs, services, and CoC projects and facilities supporting their individual regions. BHS is collaborating with RCCs this winter to host educational opportunities within each region on illicit fentanyl, opioid overdose prevention education, and/or other substance use prevention topics.
- *Engage Regional Community Leadership Teams*
OEqC is also responsible for the facilitation of the County's longstanding Regional Community Leadership Teams (CLT). A total of five CLTs (Central, South, East, North Central, and North County) comprised of community leaders and stakeholders are hosted throughout San Diego County and exist to collaboratively assess, develop, and guide priorities and activities to improve the well-being for their respective region. These teams are co-led by one or two community leaders and the RCC for the HHS region. Each regional CLT helps to identify and actualize goals and objectives in alignment with the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision. All CLTs have identified mental health and/or substance misuse as an area of concern and are in the process of launching dedicated subcommittees to advance unique efforts to improve behavioral health for individuals living in their specific region. There is also a weekly newsletter and Facebook page for each CLT. Region-specific content for both of these communication platforms is informed by CLT members in collaboration with OEqC staff.
- *Equip New Community Health Workers*
OEqC's recently added new staff positions to specifically expand capacity for outreach and education and ensure underserved and underserved populations receive critical updates, including information on behavioral health resources and services. New positions include vacancies for the County's new [Community Health Worker](#) (CHW) job classification, approved earlier this year in addition to the County's new [Peer Support Specialist](#) (PSS) job classification. These new positions aim to uplift and increase the County's utilization of more grassroots approaches to community engagement led by experts with lived experience and/or intimate knowledge of a particular race/ethnicity, community of shared identity, and/or geographic region.

CHWs support community engagement and public health by serving as an intermediary and connecting directly with individuals, families, and care and community organizations to provide navigational support, facilitate access to services, and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. CHWs and CHW Liaisons for specific race/ethnicity populations and community groups, including but not limited to, Black and African American, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, refugee and immigrant populations, and the LGBTQ+ community are in the process of being hired. As these additional team members are onboarded, BHS is working to equip these staff with the BHS and behavioral health knowledge and materials to help stakeholders get involved and stay informed of CPP and other community activities. This threading will help foster connections with stakeholders and inform access to behavioral health care.

HHSA Office of Strategy and Innovation

HHSA's Office of Strategy and Innovation (OSI) is comprised of communications, health promotion, data, and operations specialists who work together to lead and support *Live Well San Diego* strategies and outcomes for County departments and the community. OSI acts as both a County facilitator and a backbone organization for the [Live Well San Diego](#) vision to help stakeholders make connections and leverage partnerships to maximize impact in the community and across the County enterprise. Staff lead a variety of efforts to connect organizations throughout the region, empower stakeholders with comprehensive data to inform decision-making, and facilitate collaborative opportunities year-round to provide updates and involve partners in the vision to create a just, sustainable, and resilient region that is healthy, safe, and thriving.

One of the larger teams within OSI is the *Live Well San Diego* Support Team (LWSD ST). This team supports and connects partners through community sector-specific telebriefings and communications, large summits and networking opportunities throughout the calendar year, and also provides education and technical assistance on well-being related topics. It is also responsible for administrative management of LiveWellSD.org, the *Live Well San Diego* Newsletter, *Live Well San Diego* accounts on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and Tik Tok, and other key countywide resources.

Related Opportunities:

- [Inform Content Available thru LiveWellSD.org](#)
The robust [LiveWellSD.org](#) website presents an opportunity to highlight the work of behavioral health partners and thread key efforts and resources in the region. BHS is collaborating with the LWSD ST to explore and design a Behavioral Health "[Topics](#)" page based on stakeholder expressed interests. Pages focused on health equity, healthy food systems, worksite wellness, healthy schools, and aging are already available through the site. A "Behavioral Health" Topic page would supplement BHS' existing webpages that primarily focus on programs and services and present an opportunity to further feature the department's longstanding "[It's Up to Us](#)" campaign, [countywide prevention initiatives](#), as well as other community-led and community-based activities for stakeholders to learn, become involved, and increase their personal behavioral health literacy.
- [Engage Live Well San Diego Sectors](#)
Health promotion staff within the LWSD ST coordinate and facilitate recurring sector-specific telebriefings and newsletters to keep stakeholders informed of County public health guidance and recommendations, resources, best practices, and opportunities for networking and collaboration. Primary *Live Well San Diego* Sectors include: Community-Based, Faith-Based and Rural Organizations; Businesses, Youth, and Education both K-12 and institutes for higher education. BHS is working with LWSD ST staff to develop a system for integrating behavioral health information and BHS updates into telebriefings and newsletters on a rolling basis.
- [Increase Accessibility to Behavioral Health Education and Resources](#)
The LWSD ST leads coordination of the *Live Well San Diego* Speakers' Bureau (SB) Program and Live Well on Wheels (LWOW) Mobile Office Program. These two programs provide additional mechanisms to share behavioral health education and resources with community members, particularly those living in more rural, harder-to-reach areas of the county. The SB Program is a free program to help residents better understand their overall health through 30-60 minute tailored in-person or virtual presentations. Interpreters are available to assist with presentations in multiple languages. LWOW buses are fully equipped to offer a variety of materials and resources and can be requested by stakeholders to participate in community-based events to help bring resources out and to the community where people are. BHS is working with the LWSD ST to enhance the department's ability to track, triage, and respond to stakeholder requests for behavioral health-related presentations through the SB Program and also looking at behavioral health resources via

LWOW buses. Most recently the department has discussed how LWOW buses may support the County's Comprehensive Harm Reduction Strategy and distribution of naloxone.

- *Collaborate with Youth Advocates*

BHS is also working to increase visibility to behavioral health topics, programs, and concerns through collaborations with the *Live Well San Diego* Youth Sector and young advocates on its Youth Leadership Team, established in 2021 following Board approval in October 2020. The Youth Sector was added to the *Live Well San Diego* vision to empower, engage, and amplify youth voices. Youth ranging in age from 16-24 years old collaborate to organize and lead youth-focused conversations and events that facilitate a space for open discussions affecting youth and young adults. Youth advocates are also responsible for the development of social media content for *Live Well San Diego's* Instagram and Tik Tok accounts.

BHS is working with the Youth Sector on an ongoing basis to identify relevant activities to highlight behavioral health topics to diverse youth throughout the region, gather feedback on BHS programs and services for children, youth, and families, and promote information to the community on Instagram and Tik Tok. Recent collaborations have included a youth-led "*Let's Talk Mental Health*" Instagram Live series, promotion of [Check Your Mood Day 2022](#), and conversations about how to best message to youth about substance use, illicit fentanyl, and overdose prevention. Youth participating in the sector's Youth Leadership Team will be coordinating a series of school-based town halls and workshops this winter in collaboration with BHS to share substance use prevention content and educate their peers and the community. Youth from the new *Live Well San Diego* Equity Ambassador Program will also be collaborating on the town halls by developing outreach content and assisting with promotion.

2022 Live Well Advance

Among the numerous countywide annual events implemented by the LWSD ST, the Live Well Advance (Advance) is perhaps the largest and most comprehensive. The Advance brings thousands of partners and stakeholders together to network, learn about new tools and best practices, and participate in breakout sessions, workshops, and interactive activities. Leaders from every sector gather to participate in efforts to advance the *Live Well San Diego* vision. The County of San Diego also hosts a parallel conference in partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education focused on student well-being and engagement. The Advance will return to an in-person format on December 7, 2022, and focus on a variety of important topics, including mental health and preventing substance misuse.

Based on stakeholder feedback, BHS is working closely with the LWSD ST to feature key sessions and exhibitors to discuss priority behavioral health topics and resources. This year's agenda and content are still being finalized, however, participants can expect sessions related to illicit fentanyl, harm reduction and naloxone, crisis and diversionary services, stigma reduction, behavioral health workforce challenges, community input for the MHSA CPP Process, partnerships for behavioral health equity, how creative arts can support therapy and recovery, and several other behavioral health-related discussions. This year's Advance is anticipated to draw more than 4,500 attendees, the largest attendance of record for the event to date.

NEW ENTERPRISE-WIDE RESOURCES LAUNCHING

At the County level, there are also several efforts in progress to support the update to the GMS and enable departments and teams across the County enterprise to enhance community engagement. BHS is working with colleagues within the County Communications Office, County Technology Office, and Office of Equity and Racial Justice to explore how approaches to overlapping priorities can be integrated to produce the best and most comprehensive experiences for stakeholders. This is particularly relevant

to BHS' departmental efforts to ensure programs and service information and delivery are as inclusive and equitable as possible.

Related Opportunities:

- *Leveraging Countywide Communications Resources*

As part of the Board's Framework for the Future, the Board approved the development of a working group of communications stakeholders to create an enterprise-wide communications strategy and plan to ensure equitable, culturally responsive, inclusive, and trauma-informed processes for creation and distribution of County documents and communications. Key outcomes and components of this work included the establishment of a Language Services team within the County Communications Office and investments by the County to enhance its capacity to translate and interpret information. BHS is consulting with members of this team to assess key updates to enhance translation of departmental materials.

- *County Technology Office - Digital Experience Team*

A new Digital Experience Team has also been established within the County Technology Office. This group is charged with working with departments and teams throughout the enterprise to evaluate and improve information and resources provided to the community digitally. BHS is consulting with members of this team to assess key updates for existing departmental websites to improve community accessibility and eliminate communication or language barriers.

- *Countywide Online Engagement Platform*

The County has recently invested in an online engagement platform to provide an additional resource to community members wanting to stay informed and engaged with specific County of San Diego projects. The platform will be used across all business groups within the County enterprise, including HHS. It is a dedicated public participation tool that facilitates ongoing interactions and bi-directional communication in the virtual space, providing access to project event notifications, forums, polls, questionnaires, and other opportunities for community input. Stakeholders will be able to complete a free, one-time registration process at <https://engage.sandiegocounty.gov/register> and receive updates on projects of interest to them. As HHS launches its section of this new platform, BHS will be able to provide project-specific pages for stakeholders to learn and be engaged with various CoC-related projects and community conversations, including MHS stakeholder trainings and other activities that support the CPP Process.

BHS will continue to engage and collaborate with BHAB on community engagement opportunities and connect members to broader engagement efforts within the HHS enterprise.

BHS SPECIAL EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Screening to Care Initiative Request For Proposal (RFP) 11615

This program was created to address mental health treatment needs of middle school students regardless of insurance status. Proposals are due November 18, 2022. The full RFP packet can be accessed on BuyNet at <https://buy.net.sdcounty.ca.gov/>

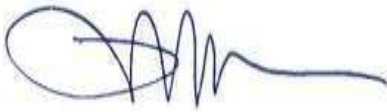
Save the Date: December 7, 2022, Live Well San Diego Advance Conference & School Summit

The 7th Annual Live Well Advance Conference and School Summit will be held in-person on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, at the San Diego Convention Center. This year's theme is Building an Equitable Future. The Conference brings thousands of partners and stakeholders together to network, learn about new tools and best practices, and participate in breakout sessions. Leaders from every sector come together to participate in efforts to advance the shared vision of a healthy, safe, and thriving San Diego Region. Registration to attend the event will be opening soon.

Tri-City Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) Groundbreaking

On Monday, October 17th the County and Tri-City Healthcare celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Tri-City PHF in Oceanside. Located at the western edge of the Tri-City Medical Center campus, the new 13,560 square foot, 16-bed facility will provide psychiatric inpatient care to address the region's need for behavioral health services. The County of San Diego and Tri-City Medical Center partnered to plan, design, and build the new facility, which will complement other available services in the region, including the County's Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) and the two Crisis Stabilization Units (CSU's) in Vista and Oceanside. The County will fund the initial development and construction of the \$27.6 million facility, and Tri-City will repay half of the construction costs through a devotion of land for the project and services within the new facility. Once operational, services will be jointly funded by the County and Tri-City. Construction of the project is set to begin in November and is slated for completion in February 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



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