

2020

County of San Diego Behavioral Health Advisory Board Annual Report





County of San Diego Board of Supervisors



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County of San Diego



Nick Macchione
Director
County of San Diego Health and
Human Services Agency



Dr. Luke Bergmann
Director
County of San Diego Health and
Human Services Agency,
Behavioral Health Services

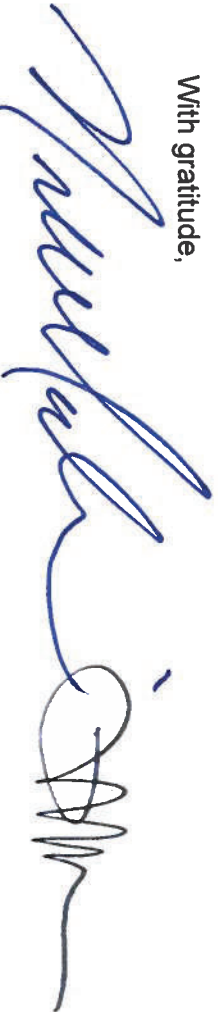
A Message from the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency

The Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) has, with dedication and vision, continued its dual role of providing input to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and to the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Behavioral Health Services (BHS) administration throughout 2020. As the County advances the *Live Well San Diego* vision, it is our responsibility to ensure the voices of stakeholders, consumers, and experts from the community are at the forefront as we continue to plan for enhanced service delivery to ensure all San Diegans are building better health, living safely, and thriving. BHAB continues to play a fundamental role in ensuring we maintain an engaged community network even in the face of uncertainty and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated profound shifts in the delivery of behavioral health services.

BHAB is crucial to the ongoing pursuit of the BHS vision – to achieve a transformational shift from a model of behavioral health care driven by crises to one driven by chronic or continuous care and prevention through the regional distribution and coordination of resources to keep people connected, stable, and healthy. To realize this vision BHS is prioritizing work across three strategic pillars: commitment to a population health approach, enhancement of population health metrics, and the pursuit of the Triple Aim – improving the experience of care, improving the health of populations, and reducing per capita costs of health care. BHAB's involvement and insights are pivotal to inform ongoing bodies of work to transform the continuum of behavioral health services in San Diego County.

Throughout 2021, many issues within these strategic pillars will be brought to BHAB for consideration, analysis, input, and support as HHS and BHS continue to develop exceptional services within a strategic framework that is inclusive of community stakeholder collaboration. We rely on BHAB's expertise and guidance to achieve meaningful milestones and to work collaboratively in addressing the challenges and opportunities in the upcoming year. We will continue to build a better system, through an equitable lens, not only for our populations needing behavioral health services, but for our community as a whole. We thank the members of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board for submitting the following report detailing the work of BHAB in 2020.

With gratitude,



Nick Macchione, FACHE
Agency Director, County of
San Diego Health and Human
Services Agency

Dr. Luke Bergmann
Director, County of San Diego
Health and Human Services
Agency, Behavioral Health Services

Behavioral Health Advisory Board


On December 2, 2014, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors established the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Advisory Board. Per California statute, each County Behavioral Health Advisory Board has the responsibility to:

1. Review community mental health needs, services, facilities, and special problems
2. Serve in an advisory capacity to local governing bodies and Behavioral Health Directors

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Advisory Board is to review and evaluate the community's behavioral health needs, services, programs, facilities, and procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement in the planning process.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego this 2nd day of December, 2014.


DIANNE JACOB
Chairwoman, Board of Supervisors
County of San Diego, State of California

The above Ordinance was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Cox, Jacob, D. Roberts, R. Roberts, Horn

ATTEST my hand and the seal of the Board of Supervisors this 2nd day of December, 2014.

THOMAS J. PASTUSZKA
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By 
Christina Gomez, Deputy



Ordinance No. 10361 (N.S.)

12/02/14 (18)

Board of Supervisors Minute Order establishing the Behavioral Health Advisory Board, 12/02/14

Behavioral Health Advisory Board's 2020 Year in Review

BHAB holds regular monthly public meetings, on the first Thursday of the month, and all interested individuals are encouraged to attend. This year, however, was the first time BHAB meetings were held virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions that limited public gatherings. Of the 11 meetings held in 2020 only three were held in-person, prior to the onset of COVID-19 restrictions.

Despite the challenges and uncertainties posed by the pandemic, BHAB continued their monthly meetings - with exception to April being dark. Members provided input and guidance on seven items regarding local behavioral health services that went before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) and approved six additional action items. Monthly meetings featured focused, facilitated presentations, and discussion that broadened BHAB members' understanding and perspective, enabling them to represent the needs and interests of their communities more fully, in addition to informing their advisory board recommendations that shape behavioral health service delivery in the region. BHAB also welcomed two new appointed members to the advisory board.

2020 BHAB by the Numbers

2

New board members appointed to BHAB

13

Actions Items approved

11

Presentations on County programs, facilities, or initiatives

7

Board Letters reviewed and approved

JANUARY

BHAB was to start the year by acting on two Board Letters, one detailing an agreement between the County of San Diego (County) and Tri-City Healthcare District for the construction of a psychiatric health facility to address urgent and emergent behavioral health needs in North San Diego County and the second provided an update on County efforts to advance the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care across all regions and districts. Dr. Bergmann discussed the details of both items and addressed BHAB member questions, however, due to the lack of a quorum board members were not able to take any formal action or vote on the two items.

FEBRUARY

Dr. Nicole Esposito, BHS Assistant Clinical Director, came in before BHAB to present the guidelines developed by County staff for oversight of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services offered through local, County-contracted Opioid Treatment Programs. The concerns and questions of the advisory board were addressed, and the advisory board approved the recommended guidelines. Additionally, Dr. Danyte Mockus-Valenzuela, BHS Prevention Manager, came to BHAB to share information about the community engagement planning process for 2020, as well as opportunities for board and community members to participate in the planning process.

MARCH

saw BHAB continue in its essential role of reviewing and supporting Board Letters. Sarah Gordon, Public Safety Group Program Manager, presented a Board Letter to establish the County's first formal pre-trial mental health diversion program. Developed in partnership with BHS, Sheriff's and Probation Departments, the Public Defender, and District Attorney's Office, this program is designed to expand community-based treatment options and reduce the number of individuals cycling through psychiatric crisis and jail largely due to untreated mental illness. Additionally, Dr. Bergmann provided the board with an update on the progress toward establishing a behavioral health hub in the North Central region of the county and in partnership with Rady Children's Hospital. March also featured a presentation from Dr. Kristi Koenig, Emergency Medical Services Medical Director, and Kurt Mechals, Chief of Family Protection with the County's District Attorney's Office, describing the San Diego County Health CARES Initiative aimed at improving prevention and response practices for domestic violence and strangulation.

APRIL

the emerging COVID-19 pandemic crisis and resulting Public Health Order limited public gatherings and resulted in BHAB going dark for the month. BHAB's Executive Officers and BHS staff explored options to move the BHAB meetings onto a virtual platform. The expansion of the technical competence and capabilities of BHAB members and BHS staff allowed

for the adoption of new meeting practices in preparation for the BHAB meeting to transition onto Zoom for the remainder of the year beginning with May.

MAY

At each BHAB meeting, the BHS Director, through the Director's Report, provided updates on BHS programs, Board Letters, and activities involving BHS staff and contracted service providers. In May, Dr. Bergmann provided BHAB with an overview of the pandemic's impact on BHS operations, staffing, and service delivery. This included efforts undertaken to ensure client and staff safety, maintain continuity of care, and support mental health and well-being during a time of unprecedented social transition. In response to emerging challenges and new demands, BHS created a portal on the BHS website for COVID-related resources, information, and self-care tools, as well as best practices and tips for community members and service providers. In addition to addressing questions and concerns regarding COVID-related impacts to operations and services, Dr. Bergmann presented BHAB with the agreements to provide one-time funding to Palomar Health to expand hospital-based crisis stabilization services in North County. BHAB voted unanimously in support of this action.

JUNE

In June, Andy Pease, HHSA's interim Chief Operations Officer, came before BHAB with information on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the County's planned utilization of the \$334 million in Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) funds received by the County. Dr. Bergmann outlined the planned use of the \$15 million allocated for BHS needs, including providing funding for supplies, telehealth capacity, electronic health record upgrades, care coordination, and enhanced outreach and engagement.

JULY

Nick Macchione, HHSA Director and Director of the County's T3 (Testing, Tracing and Treatment) Strategy, provided a timely and informative presentation outlining the County's T3 initiative to combat further transmission of COVID-19. Dr. Nicole Esposito, Assistant Clinical Director for BHS, provided a focused update of T3 activity related to BHS contracted providers and facilities. In addition, BHAB was given a list of local advisory boards, councils, and public BHS meetings to consider assigning members to attend these meetings to broaden their group advocacy efforts.

AUGUST

Alex Heyer, from the San Diego Workforce Partnership, and Tom Stubberud, with the Corporation for Supportive Housing, provided the board with an update on the San Diego Behavioral Health Work Well Strategic Plan for 2020-2024. They outlined the key goals of the strategic plan: to enhance training opportunities, engaging employers as key partners, enhancing data collection and analysis for data-driven decision-making and to identify and pursue

additional funding opportunities. August also saw Dr. Bergmann present a Board Letter outlining BHS efforts with Paradise Valley Hospital to create a crisis stabilization unit (CSU) in the South Region to address the urgent need to provide services for mental health emergencies at the Bayview facility.

Annually in **SEPTEMBER** the BHAB Chair appoints a Nominating

Committee of at least three persons to select a slate of Executive Committee Officers to be elected to serve for the upcoming year. The 2020 Nominating Committee comprised of Bill Stewart, Jenifer Mendel, and Shannon Jaccard were confirmed by the entire BHAB. In addition to planning for leadership continuity within BHAB, Dr. Bergmann provided an update on the increase in fentanyl-related overdose deaths which tripled since 2019. In response to the alarming rate of fentanyl-related overdose deaths, the BHAB members approved the creation of an urgent workgroup focused on overdose death prevention.

OCTOBER was highlighted by a presentation by Nadia Privara Brahms,

Acting Assistant Director of Operations, Chief Operating Officer with BHS, in which she provided an overview of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Three-Year Program and Expenditure Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2022 through 2022-2023. Discussion focused on the allocation of the \$192.8 million MHSA budget to key areas of investment including services for prevention, homelessness and housing, children, crisis intervention, special populations and workforce education and training. Through an action item, BHAB voted to support the MHSA Three-year Plan. Additionally, Dr. Bergmann provided an update on the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care and the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System which included updates on the four new/expanded regional CSU's, Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) pilot project in the North Coastal Region, and the CARES Act.

NOVEMBER BHAB received a presentation by Dr. Luke Bergmann on

the Housing Conservatorship Board Letter, wherein he discussed findings of the Housing Conservatorship Working Group. After consideration of the challenges and opportunities the determination was made to forgo implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 1045 and SB 40 in the county and instead leverage care coordination work through the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care to serve the conservatorship population. BHAB members brought forth questions to the presentation and voted to support this Board Letter. November also saw an update on the last phase of the Five-Year Strategic Housing Plan, presented by Dr. Piedad Garcia, BHS Deputy Director, and Simone Ruff, Corporation for Supportive Housing Director. The update included accomplishments, opportunities, and key strategies in accordance with the Behavioral Health Housing Plan goals. Finally, the members voted on two action items: to approve the slate of 2021

BHAB Executive Board Officers presented by the nominating committee; and to approve the 2020 Data Notebook for submission to the Department of Health Care Services.

DECEMBER

To close out the year BHAB resolved to strengthening their focus and governance for the upcoming year. Informed by the Continuum of Care and Building Better BHAB Workgroups, William (Hudson) Harris, Population Health Strategist with BHS, led a discussion to finalize the BHAB strategic goals and priorities for 2021. BHAB also took an initial step towards amending their bylaws with an action item approving a draft of the revised BHAB bylaws to be submitted to County Counsel for review. The revised bylaws, presented to BHAB by Jerry Hall, Chair of the Building a Better BHAB workgroup, reflect changes in BHAB operations, improved internal governance, and ensured conformity with the current California Welfare and Institutions Code, as modified by AB 1352. December also marked the introduction of Dania Barroso-Conde as the new BHAB Coordinator for BHS.

2020 Behavioral Health Advisory Board Workgroups

At the annual BHAB fall retreat, members determine the priorities for the following year's workplan and identify the workgroups needed to pursue meeting the priorities and objectives for the upcoming year. The following three workgroups were formed to address the 2020 priorities of BHAB:

Building a Better BHAB (BBB) Workgroup – Chair Jerry Hall

The focus of the BBB workgroup was to improve BHAB processes to increase BHAB's effectiveness. To that end, the BBB focused on two areas: first, the BBB recommended that the BHAB bylaws should more carefully define various member roles along with membership criteria to ensure that these align with the Welfare and Institutions Code and recommended that the BHAB bylaws be reviewed every five years; second, the BBB focused on strategies to help BHAB achieve the member identified goals from the 2019 fall retreat. Working with BHS staff, the BBB worked to define achievable strategic goals, which included recommending to the Executive Board to improve the BHAB general meeting format, content, and presentations. The recommendations of the BBB were shared at the fall 2020 retreat resulting in defining strategic goals for the upcoming year and the formation of 2021 workgroups.

Overdose Prevention Workgroup – Chair Phillip Deming

In March 2020, a presentation was provided on the Overdose Mapping Tool - a data system used to identify trends, in addition to linking public health, public safety, and prevention. The workgroup acknowledged concerns regarding the protection of confidentiality and explored approaches to ensuring clinical and justice needs were being identified and addressed. The workgroup also reviewed the drug take back program and law enforcement's involvement, the fentanyl crisis, and the negative impacts of alcohol abuse. Given the complexity and importance of the issues addressed by this workgroup it was determined that group's efforts would continue in 2021 as the Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) workgroup.

Continuum of Care – Chair Michael Matthews

The Continuum of Care (CoC) workgroup's focus was on building a system of care that is more inclusive and easier to navigate. The workgroup advocated for the inclusion of wrap-around services, beyond medication management and therapy, with a greater focus on housing and access to physical healthcare. In addition to their regular meetings, members of the workgroup met with key BHS staff including Dr. Bergmann, Dr. Krelstein and Dr. Esposito in order to remain engaged as the CoC focus shifted due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these changes the group remained steadfast in their resolve to identify strategies to support building a better system of care. The workgroup held deep discussions regarding the intersection of the justice system and the CoC. They also explored the possibility of a justice system representative being appointed to BHAB. They recommended engaging in more dialogue with public safety representatives regarding the treatment of people of color and community members with behavioral health needs, this particular focus informed the need to create a Criminal Justice workgroup for 2021.

Looking Forward: Behavioral Health Advisory Board Priorities in 2021

BHAB identified priority areas of focus in 2021, resulting in the formation of strategic goals with an emphasis on enhancing BHAB's value to the community and to be completed through the efforts of distinct workgroups.

The 2021 Strategic Goals and respective workgroups are as follows:

Criminal Justice (CJ) CoC Workgroup – 2021 Strategic Goals

- Strategic Goal #1: Build BHAB's internal knowledge base by engaging with stakeholders and investigating the impact of behavioral health system of care disparities in the criminal justice system.
- Strategic Goal #2: Build BHAB's internal knowledge base by engaging with stakeholders and learning about evidence-based best practices surrounding community-based public safety programs utilizing the sequential intercept model.
- Strategic Goal #3: Build BHAB's internal knowledge base by exploring restorative and transformative programs with justice-involved people with behavioral health needs to better understand the spectrum of care while addressing disparities.

Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) CoC Workgroup – 2021 Strategic Goal

- Strategic Goal #1: Build BHAB's internal knowledge base to support BHS efforts to improve AOD services by serving as the bridge between the community and BHS, resulting in structured and synthesized feedback from the AOD system of care with a focus in the area of prevention.

Stakeholder Engagement Workgroup—2021 Strategic Goal

- Strategic Goal #1: Build BHAB Member and stakeholder knowledge and capabilities to make more timely and informed contributions to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and BHS by becoming better informed on issues affecting the community, especially underserved populations, as well as issues of health equity, starting with the annual Community Planning Process (MHSA Three-Year Plan).

The following goal will fall within the purview of the BHAB Executive Committee, guiding the BHAB meeting structure and external engagement.

- Strategic Goal #1: Maximize BHAB Members' abilities to focus on BHAB's strategic goals by strengthening the diversity of stakeholder engagement to shape recommendations on meetings day and time, structure, content, presentations, and strong stakeholder feedback loops.

For questions about BHAB please contact Dania Barroso-Conde, Dania.Barroso-Conde@sdcountry.ca.gov. All meetings are open to the public and interested parties are encouraged to attend the meetings and provide public comment. Meeting materials and the public comment form can be found on the BHAB website located at <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs.html> (*click on BHS Councils & Behavioral Health Advisory Board*).

This report was prepared by County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services staff in collaboration with and by approval of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board.