

MINUTES  
San Bernardino County  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING**  
January 7, 2021 - 12:00-2:00 pm

**Commissioners Present:** Monica Caffey, Lorrie Denson, Vickie Mack, Michael Grabhorn, May Farr, Carol Kinzel, Jennifer Silvestri, Victoria Ogunrinu, Akin Merino, Veatrice Jews

**Excused Absence:** Catherine Inscore, Jennifer Spence-Carpenter

**Absent:** Susan McGee Stehsel, Christopher Masa

**Guests:** Not available, guests attended via webex.

Minutes recorded by Raquel Ramos, Clerk of the Behavioral Health Commission (BHC).

**CALL TO ORDER/ ROLE CALL**

Chair Dr. Monica Caffey called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. and roll call followed.

**Tab 5:** Review Minutes of November 5, 2020.

**APPROVED**

Motion/Second: Carol Kinzel/ Michael Grabhorn

AYES: May Farr, Lorrie Denson Monica Caffey, Vickie Mack, Jennifer Silvestri, Victoria Ogunrinu, Akin Merino, Veatrice Jews

ASBSTAIN:

ABSENT: Catherine Inscore, Susan McGee Stehsel Christopher Massa Jennifer Spence-Carpenter

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Gil Navarro provided a public comment as a Non-Attorney Representative. He noted the following concerns: Many undocumented families not want to use Medi-cal services for their children in Mental Health, because the Trump Administration stated it would be a negative point on future Legalization. Is there low income qualification for service? Also South Coast Counseling services is not provide an appeal process to the clients,when services are being terminating.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chair Caffey advised the group that she is conducting a training for parents and staff at Chaffey School District on COVID 19 coping skills. She is working with PAVE and national organization that advocates and supports legislation against tobacco and nicotine use. This organization focuses on the outcomes of youth that vape and how it affects their development, behavior and family dynamics. This organization also provides resources for families with youth who vape.

**COMMISSIONERS' REPORT**

**First District:**

Commissioner Lorrie Denson shared that she participated in the Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) Annual Awards Ceremony and thanked DBH for their work on the event. She will be attending the upcoming District Advisory Committee (DAC) and has scheduled a representative from Helping Hearts to present. She is continuing to work with Burning Bush in starting an educational ministry in collaboration with the Adelanto School District. The educational ministry is holding zoom meetings geared towards supporting parents with tips and trainings on distance learning and mental health support; Chair Caffey with be presenting to this group.

Commissioner Michael Grabhorn shared he also participated in the BHC Annual Awards Ceremony. This past month he met with three Deputies from Apple Valley and discussed the Crisis Intervention Training they received from DBH. A 24/7 warming shelter is open at the George Airforce Base. Due to COVID new clients are only accepted Mondays and Fridays. He acknowledged Commissioner Mack for her contribution of 15 boxes for the homeless.

Commissioner Vickie Mack shared that she also participated in the BHC Annual Awards Ceremony. This past month she attended the Bias Workshop to Combat Racism held by the city of Adelanto and is continuing her work on the statewide peer certification efforts. She referenced the governor's budget being released and how it will impact behavioral health locally.

### **Second District:**

Commissioner May Farr shared that she has not been very active this past month, she is continuing to care for her son and expressed her appreciation for those that advocate for behavioral health.

Commissioner Carol Kinzel shared she is continuing her work with Rim Communities Youth Organization and the Mountain Homeless Coalition. The Mountain Homeless Coalition has purchased cabins in Big Bear for housing for the homeless and low-income household, she is assisting in preparing the cabins for residents to move in. Some have already began moving in. She plans to attend the DAC where she is working to have someone present on about the work being done in the cabins and the resources available. She plans to attend the Poverty Awareness Symposium. The Point in Time Count has been cancelled due to COVID.

Commissioner Jennifer Silvestri shared that she participated in her first BHC Annual Awards Ceremony. She is working with Commissioner Carol Kinzel to get organized and informed for the DAC. She plans to attend the Cultural Competency Advisory Committee and join some subcommittees.

### **Third District:**

New Commissioner Victoria Ogunrinu expressed her gratitude and excitement in hearing all of the working that is being done by the Commission and DBH. She shared that she is a retired Arrowhead Regional Medical Center Assistant Hospital Administrator. She is interested in Acute Care, Crisis Stabilization, Transition of Programs, Patient Grouping and Managed Care, as well as the Homeless Program and how it relates to COVID-19.

### **Fourth District:**

Commissioner Akin Merino shared that she participated in the BHC Annual Awards Ceremony and is continuing her work in trauma informed care locally and globally. She is a member of Teacher Mental Health providing support to teachers during this public health emergency. She emphasized on the importance of communities having information on resources available to them during the public health emergency. She shared she is on the mental health panel for the Chaffey Union School District.

### **Fifth District:**

Commissioner Veatrice Jews shared that she is continuing her work with Faith Based and African American communities affected by mental health disorders and continuing her involvement in programs that will benefit the African American community.

## **Tab 5: DATA NOTEBOOK PRESENTATION: Use of Telehealth Technology**

Presenter: Marina Espinosa, Deputy Director

- The California Behavioral Health Planning Council is a consumer and family member advisory board that advocates on behalf of those with severe mental illness to advise the legislature on behavioral health issues, policies and priorities in California. The data notebook is an opportunity for the Behavioral Health Commission to collaborate with the county to identify critical issues related to behavioral health.
- This year's data notebook focused on Telehealth and other strategies to provide services during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Services include Adult Residential Care Facilities (ARF), Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD), County Homeless programs and services, Child Welfare Services and Telehealth Technology.
- In FY 2019-20, DBH assisted 275 consumers with some or all of the costs to reside in a licensed in an ARF. The county provided 44,302 ARF bed days. The Centralized Hospital Aftercare Services (CHAS) Long-Term Care team maintains records of consumers currently utilizing administrative days in hospitals, awaiting placement at ARFs or similar levels of treatment. Currently, twenty-seven (27) consumers are awaiting this placement. However, there have been significant delays to the placement of consumers into appropriate treatment facilities due to the COVID pandemic and regulations.

- Within San Bernardino County, there are four (4) facilities that are classified as IMDs: Two (2) of these facilities are licensed as Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) and certified as Institutions for Mental Disease (IMDs). These SNF-IMDs are considered non-acute psychiatric inpatient facilities. Two (2) of these facilities are Fee-For-Service (FFS) Acute Psychiatric (AP) hospitals, which provide acute inpatient psychiatric care.
- DBH paid some or all the cost of IMD treatment for 2,174 unique individuals. DBH paid a grand total of 42,015 bed days.
- New programs implemented during FY 2019-2020 the following programs were implemented or expanded to those that are homeless and have a severe mental illness: Emergency Shelters, Temporary Housing, Transitional Housing, Housing/Motel Vouchers, Supportive Housing, Safe Parking Lots, Rapid re-housing, Adult Residential Care Patch/Subsidy, Other: InnROADs project uses a multi-agency case management model to provide innovative outreach and engagement to individuals experiencing homelessness. Multidisciplinary Engagement Teams are stationed regionally throughout the county in conjunction with services provided by a Mobile Treatment Team. Health services provided include counseling, medication, and basic physical health screenings. In FY 19/20, the InnROADs teams connected with 1,123 persons and 1,282 services were provided.
- San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) has committed tremendous resources to serving children and youth in group home care. In 2016, DBH created the Children's Residential Intensive Services (ChRIS) program in order for youth to receive EPSDT Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Services within their group home setting. San Bernardino County DBH currently contracts with 29 ChRIS providers. This past fiscal year, the ChRIS program provided treatment to about 815 unduplicated youth. These youth were provided about 54,400 discrete mental health services at a total annual cost of about \$7,400,000.
- San Bernardino County DBH has received many children and youth requiring a group home level of care from another county. San Bernardino County DBH recognizes the method of accounting for this population is difficult and may not be completely accurate if another county does not notify San Bernardino County, as required by the CA Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). The established state procedure is that when a youth is moved to another county, the placing agency is to send a notice to the mental health plan of the host county. San Bernardino DBH received notices for approximately 350 unduplicated youth for group home placement in FY 19-20 which is likely to be a significant undercounting. San Bernardino County DBH is working with its Research and Evaluation program to obtain a more accurate count.
- San Bernardino County placing agencies have placed about 756 unique children needing group home level of care in another county during the Fiscal Year 19-20. The total number of placements in another county is 1,182 over the same period, counting multiple placements for the same youth.
- The COVID-19 public health emergency has led to an extremely rapid expansion in development and implementation. Telehealth is an effective method of providing quality behavioral health services and potential to increase access to rural and remote areas; however, barriers to client access needs to be considered and addressed.
- As a result of the public health emergency DBH: Increased availability of telehealth services, Expanded of the kinds of services provided via telehealth, provided Telehealth training for staff and providers, made changes to staffing to facilitate telehealth coordination, made changes to technology/software to facilitate telehealth, conducted community outreach to promote telehealth services.
- DBH used WebEx to continue to provide Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, and suicide prevention and general services presentation to community members, including several school district staff. 90 individuals completed MHFA training. DBH conducted 132 virtual and in-person outreach events, reaching an estimated 69,786 people with information regarding DBH services. DBH increased its social media marketing, resulting in an increase of followers and impressions (the number of times DBH content is viewed on a person's screen.). DBH Facebook posts about services were viewed 902,259 times. DBH Twitter posts about services were viewed 229,442 times. DBH increased its production and/or participation of informational videos and produced or participated in over 60 videos on our services, with an innumerable number of views on the internet. Videos were posted to DBH YouTube account, Facebook account, blog, or on the page of the organization producing the video.

- San Bernardino County DBH uses in house providers for telehealth, many of the contract agencies in our network of care use in house while others utilize contracted providers.
- Consumers are able to receive behavioral health telehealth services via personal home computers, On mobile devices such as a cell phone or tablet, On a landline phone – This is the primary modality we are using. Audio only, and at community clinics or wellness centers. Clients can also receive services from Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) Centers, Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP), and Children Residential Intensive Services (ChRIS).
- Some of the challenges that consumers have regarding accessing and utilizing telehealth services include: Lack of computer or mobile devices to access telehealth services, Lack of privacy in the home, Lack of availability of internet services in the area, Distrust of telehealth services, Inadequate internet connection/bandwidth to use telehealth services, Lack of knowledge regarding the availability of telehealth services, Cannot afford internet service or mobile data plan, and difficulty filling/receiving prescriptions that are prescribed via telehealth services.
- The county provides the following accommodations to assist consumers who have barriers to accessing telehealth services: language interpretation for telehealth services, text based services for consumers that are deaf or hard of hearing, clinic wellness center or community based telehealth access sites, and assistance in securing a mobile device or internet connections including equipment loans.
- DBH is currently moving towards implementation of an EHR and lack of currently having one makes it difficult in the provision of services at times as we currently use paper charts to read historical information about consumers or experience difficulty in obtaining some data that would only be available in an EHR.
- Increased access for those with significant medical problems that make it difficult to leave their homes, mothers/single parents/guardians that have multiple children now don't have to worry about child care to attend an appointment, and consumers who lacked transportation no longer have to worry about arrangements or spending a large portion of their time using public transportation.
- Telehealth claims were being denied in error. DBH was informed by DHCS on 10/07/20 that we can now replace the erroneous denials. Additionally, DBH has experienced lost reimbursement (used to be able to bill travel time when staff completed field-based services but they are no longer travelling due to COVID-19 pandemic).
- Consumers and providers have both expressed their interest in continuing telehealth services. There is better access to care. It will be important to have options that meet the needs of our patients. Due to the vast area of San Bernardino County (largest county in the United States at 20,105.32 square miles) with populous areas but also have large geographic areas that are remote and rural such as mountain areas, Morongo basin and high desert regions as well as frontier areas such as Big River and Trona, with the use of telehealth, DBH provides clients the ability to be seen timely and without travel.
- DBH has concluded that telehealth may not be for everyone (clients and/or providers); however, it is a needed option because although it is not fool proof, it does increase clients' access to DBH providers which leads to increased compliance, increased number of services, ability to meet or exceed network adequacy, and may improve client outcomes. Additionally, the use of telehealth brings to light that even if our system of care assists clients in obtaining free cell phones and obtains telehealth equipment, unless internet access is addressed nationwide, not only in the rural and frontier areas of San Bernardino County, telehealth tools exist for some areas but the internet infrastructure is lacking so the utilization cannot come to fruition. It is recommended that any available funding be redirected to address internet infrastructure in CA so that all areas can utilize the option of telehealth.
- The data notebook and presentation will be posted on the Behavioral Health Commission website following this meeting.
- For questions or more information please contact Marina Espinosa at 909-252-5147 or [mespinosa@dbh.sbcounty.gov](mailto:mespinosa@dbh.sbcounty.gov).

## **NEW BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS**

Identify Commissioner to Prepare Presentation Findings:

- Commissioner Vickie Mack, volunteered to prepare today's presentation memo of findings.

**Tab 8:** Present 2021 Slate of Officers

Commissioner Lorrie Denson presented the 2021 slate of prospective officers:

- Chair – Monica Caffey
- Vice Chair – Michael Grabhorn, May Farr
- Secretary – Carol Kinzel, Vickie Mack
- Treasurer - Lorrie Denson, Akin Merino, Michael Grabhorn

Commissioner Merino requested to be removed from consideration for Treasurer. Clerk Ramos will send out duties of each position to assist commissioners with their voting selection at the next meeting.

**Tab 9:** Approval to Pay California Association of Local Mental Health Boards/Commissions Annual Dues \$1,500

### **APPROVED**

Motion/Second: Lorrie Denson/ Carol Kinzel

AYES: May Farr, Monica Caffey, Vickie Mack, Jennifer Silvestri, Victoria Ogunrinu, Akin Merino, Veatrice Jews, Michael Grabhorn

ASBSTAIN:

ABSENT: Catherine Inscore, Susan McGee Stehsel Christopher Massa Jennifer Spence-Carpenter

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Veronica Kelley provided the following report to meeting attendees:

- She wished attendees Happy New Year and acknowledged the horrific things that took place at the capital on January 6. It may be triggering to some and may be perceived as domestic terrorism. She encouraged everyone to pay attention to self-care and led the group in a restorative breathing exercise.
- San Bernardino County and neighboring counties are in the midst of a COVID surge. It is important that we all continue to wear a mask and watch our physical distancing, wash our hands, stay home if we are sick. DBH has experienced a spike in employees testing positive for COVID. DBH recently lost an InnROADS staff, Dr. London. She passed away a week ago from COVID. Dr. Kelley acknowledged field based staff that are continuing to provide services in the field.
- Dr. Kelley is serving on the states Community Vaccine Advisory Committee as a representative of the County Behavioral Health Director's Association. She is the only representative speaking for behavioral health clients and service providers. As you may know vaccines are going to be administered in tiers. Tier 1 A is the first tier of vaccine administration and will include health care providers, this includes essential staff, emergency medical technicians, those working in congregate care. Within 1-A is psychiatric care, mental health and substance use disorder outpatient services. 1-B will be in two phases, 1-B tier 1 will include those 75 years and older, workers in education and child care, non-medical emergency service providers, and anyone in food and agriculture. 1-B tier 2 will include those 65 years of age or older, transportation industry, construction, critical manufacturing, homeless. Phase 1 C will include anyone 50 and older and anyone 16-59 with medical issues or comorbidities.
- The Department of Health Care Services has agreed to delay some behavioral health audit requirements during the public health emergency.
- Some DBH staff have been repurposed to assist with county services. For example, as you will recall some DBH staff have assisted with the Skilled Nursing Facility Taskforce. Some nurses DBH are also being training to administer the vaccine.
- The Governor's budget will be released tomorrow. We believe Behavioral Health will be receiving some funding. The Federal Government is going to issue a \$600 stimulus check. There is also funding marked for housing, we just don't have details. We are also hearing that there will also be an extension of the eviction moratorium.

- We have two new Supervisors, Colonel Cook for the First District and Supervisor Baca for the Fifth District. You will recall former Supervisor Lovingood was this Commission's Board member, we are not sure if Colonel Cook will serve in the same capacity, however we will update the group once we are notified.

**OUTSIDE AGENCY REPORTS**

No outside agency reports.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

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*Monica Caffey, Chair*  
Behavioral Health Commission

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*Raquel Ramos*  
Clerk of the Behavioral Health Commission