

## **DBH Launched WE2 Program (*Wellness, Weight Loss, Emotion Control, and Exercise Program*)**

The Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) is at the forefront of delivering integrative medical care to our county's most vulnerable residents. With the recent technical title change from Psychiatrist to Behavioral Health Physician, DBH can now enhance its team with multi-board-certified physicians. This advancement allows the department to offer more comprehensive care across a range of medical specialties for individuals experiencing mental illness and substance use disorders. Chronic medication use and long-term unhealthy behaviors can lead to significant weight gain, increased cardiac risk, reduced quality of life, and premature death. Addressing these metabolic health challenges through impactful treatment aligns with the county vision of replicating great ideas and bringing them to scale.

The WE2 program is a 16-week wellness initiative designed specifically for individuals managing psychiatric conditions and wanting to improve their physical and mental well-being. Aimed at preventing and managing metabolic-related diseases while promoting overall health, each week, participants engage in education/treatment group classes that focus on weight loss, emotional well-being, nutrition, and physical activity. Led by nurses and supported by board-certified physicians in Obesity Medicine and Lifestyle Medicine, the program is grounded in the six pillars of lifestyle medicine: nutrition, physical activity, stress management, restorative sleep, social connection, and avoidance of risky substances. This approach equips participants with sustainable tools for long-term health improvement. Participation does not require a referral. Eligibility is limited to individuals who meet program criteria and are actively receiving behavioral health services at one of the county operated outpatient clinics in Fontana, Ontario, and Rialto. The program includes weekly classes over a 16 week period and integrates evidence-based practices from both physical and behavioral health disciplines. Thus far the response from the individuals attending the program has been enthusiastic.

The WE2 program was developed by, Dr. Rafik Saleh an Addiction Medicine Physician with DBH, at the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) annual conference in Denver, CO in August 2025. Currently, the program is in its pilot phase, which commenced in mid-September 2025. Eight DBH nurses have successfully completed comprehensive facilitator training, achieving perfect scores on the post-training exam. The 16-week curriculum is now being implemented with 10 individuals at the Fontana clinic and three individuals at the Rialto clinic. Additionally, Spanish translation services are available and have been utilized by three participants. The program is rapidly expanding with the Phoenix Clinic in San Bernardino being the next to provide the program.

Concurrently, physicians at the Fontana and Rialto clinics have launched a GLP-1 pilot treatment to complement the WE2 program. This initiative utilizes medications intended for diabetes and weight management to support individuals struggling with obesity, metabolic challenges (including diabetes or pre-diabetes), and elevated cardiac risk. Participants identified for the GLP-1 pilot are encouraged to maximize health outcomes through an integrated approach that combines medical treatment with lifestyle modification through the WE2 program.

DBH plans to extend the WE2 program to all DBH-operated outpatient clinics across the county upon successful completion of the pilot phase. This countywide expansion will support broader strategies to promote wellness, prevent chronic disease, and advance health equity throughout San Bernardino County.

For more about the WE2 Program and other DBH programs visit <https://wp.sbcounty.gov/dbh/>