

RIVERSIDE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES FOR MAY 4, 2022 • 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL – Chairperson, Rick Gentillalli called the Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

Commissioner attendance was taken by roll-call.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS – None

COMMISSION MEMBER REMARKS – Brenda Scott thanked Dr. Chang and staff for doing a great job presenting on the proposed Hemet Recovery Village at the Hemet City Council meeting. Ms. Scott reported that Dr. Chang and his team did such an excellent job presenting and answering questions from the community and Council members, that they received a letter of support for the proposed project.

Greg Damewood reported that he's had some email discussions with administrative staff from the Board of Supervisors Office regarding Form 700 and stated that Commissioners may want to speak to their respective [district] Supervisor and explain that the BHC is more of a "board" than a commission. Mr. Damewood expressed that the BHC has no control over finances, hiring, and termination of staff and does not function in the same way "Parks and Recreation" does, where they are charged with allocating funds. Mr. Damewood added that as a member of the Membership Committee, he would like to have as few barriers as possible for new BHC members coming on board, stating that the Form 700 may be intimidating for someone with mental health challenges.

Jose Campos announced that he is resigning his post and has submitted his letter of resignation from the BHC. Mr. Campos explained that his duties and workload has increased and will be unable to continue as a Commissioner due to conflicts in schedule.

PUBLIC REMARKS – None

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – Dakota Brown noted a few corrections – Minutes reflected that she works for Consumer Affairs, which she no longer does, and Innovations is not involved, only Cultural Competency. Additionally, the "serial litigants," were not fraudulently portraying a disabled person; serial litigants were legitimately disabled, but considered litigious and greedy for actively searching and reporting ADA violations for monetary gains.

Minutes were approved as corrected.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Dr. Matthew Chang gave an update on Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BCHIP). Dr. Chang reported that Deborah Johnson and her team has worked diligently on submitting their proposals for the Recovery Villages in the cities of Hemet and Coachella, as well as a new behavioral health wellness center that can serve as a psychiatric facility replacement.

Dr. Chang thanked Ms. Scott and her group for their support and attending the Hemet City Council Meeting. Dr. Chang reported that they were able to get the City Council's approval and letter of support to build out the Recovery Village in Hemet. They hope to build out these villages, which will have a continuum of care to fill current gaps.

Dr. Chang noted that they have become quite adept with Full Service Partnership (FSP) as they have remained focused in keeping individuals out of the hospital and jail, as well as prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless. These are critical goals in terms of consumers meeting "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs." FSP provides support on the lower level of the pyramid and Dr. Chang hopes to move consumers up towards "self-actualization," with the build-out of the Recovery Villages. In addition to housing, health services, and substance abuse services, there is also a focus on educational training and vocational training. The Recovery Villages also offer "animal hotels," for consumers with pets. There have been several consumers that declined services in the past because they were not permitted to bring their pet. They hope that with the "animal hotel" feature, it will allow them to serve more consumers. Dr. Chang noted that these type of projects are critically important, as it targets services we currently don't offer. The Recovery Villages will also include children's mental health services and urgent care beds, which fills another gap as there are currently no kid-kid inpatient beds in the County.

Care Court is a new initiative by Governor Gavin Newsom, which is similar to Laura's Law. Care Court is an additional option in terms of getting consumers linked to appropriate levels of care. There is some concern that Riverside County might not receive additional funding for this new initiative, but Dr. Chang noted that the Department will continue to advocate for the county and will try to mitigate any funding issues that may arise from this initiative.

Dr. Chang reported that CalAIM has presented some opportunities that will help further the integration with local community health plans (IEHP and Medi-Cal). Working with local community health plans can be beneficial for consumers and help the Department expand its ability to provide services and access.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) **APPOINT NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR FY 22/23 BHC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS** – Greg Damewood, Richard Divine, and Rick Gentillalli were appointed to determine a new slate of candidates for the upcoming election.
- 2) **LONG COVID OVERVIEW PRESENTATION** – Mariah Lofgran from RUHS-Public Health gave an overview presentation on Long COVID or post-COVID condition, which is relatively new and is still being investigated. Long COVID is deemed as an umbrella term that encompasses all post-COVID conditions they are witnessing in their patients. Patients not only experience physical symptoms, but mental health symptoms as well. Long COVID is experienced by those who were hospitalized as well as those who tested positive for COVID, but experienced no symptoms.

Ms. Lofgran shared two video testimonies of patients currently experiencing symptoms from Long COVID. Isaiah, age 26, tested positive for COVID in October 2020. Three weeks later he began

experiencing Long COVID symptoms – difficulty breathing, chest pains, heart palpitations, nausea, and dizziness. The second testimony was from Caitlin, age 20, tested positive for COVID in November 2020 and in January 2021, she began experiencing Long COVID symptoms. Caitlin previously played varsity soccer in high school, now she gets winded just from walking. She also has trouble remembering things and has even experienced some memory loss.

Ms. Lofgran reported that symptoms of Long COVID may include difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, fatigue, overall exhaustion after performing small tasks, brain fog, coughing, chest and stomach pains, headaches, heart palpitations, joint and muscle pain, diarrhea, sleep disorders, fevers, dizziness, nausea, rashes, and even menstrual cycles. They also experience a change in their taste and smell, which in some cases take a long time to return or don't return at all. There is also the "COVID toes," which is either discoloration of their toes or they experience strange sensations in the toes. Mental health related symptoms include trouble with memory, memory loss, inability to concentrate or focus, sleep disruptions (unable to sleep or sleeping too much), depression, anxiety, changes in mood, extreme emotions and PTSD following their ICU experience.

There's a significant number of people experiencing Long COVID, that did not exhibit any symptoms or may not have been tested at all and are unaware of what they are experiencing. RUHS-Public Health estimates that there is upwards of 180,000 people in Riverside County that may be affected by post-COVID conditions. Additionally, they have witnessed patients of all ages experience Long COVID, not only the elderly population. Many have expressed shame talking about their symptoms, especially because they're unable to explain or describe symptoms they're having. Many have been told their symptoms are not real or that it's all in their head because they "don't look sick." This is prevalent among those that experience brain fog, trouble with memory, memory loss or struggling with sleep. This has resulted in a great deal of fear, anxiety and depression for many that experience Long COVID because many of them feel alone and misunderstood. There are currently no specific treatments available for this condition, however, providers are trying to identify and understand the symptoms and try to treat the symptom.

Ms. Lofgran noted that the best thing we can all do now is to be empathetic and compassionate and listen to individuals we encounter in our various provider roles. Advocacy is also incredibly important as there are currently no support groups or advocacy groups for those struggling with Long COVID. It's important for patients to get linked to support groups, so they know that their symptoms are real and that there are more people experiencing this condition than they initially believed.

Ms. Lofgran shared one more story of someone that struggled with Long COVID. Heidi was a wife, mother, writer, and actress. She contracted COVID and later experienced Long COVID symptoms. As a result of her symptoms, Heidi died by suicide. In a letter, Heidi explained that in her darkest moments, she told her husband that if she did not get better, she did not want to continue living. "I was not suicidal," Heidi wrote, "but I couldn't see any quality of life long term and there was no end in sight..." Ms. Lofgran shared this story to point out that Heidi was someone that had access to

resources and came from a good family, but despite this, she was still unable to get the support she needed. Ms. Lofgran noted, that if Heidi struggled to find support, how much more for those who have difficulty getting access to health care and/or mental health care.

After Ms. Lofgran's presentation, she shared some resources and links to the CDC, advocacy and support groups, as well as the ADA guide for Long COVID. Fliers are available in English and Spanish through Public Health's website.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) **MHSA UPDATE** – David Schoelen, MHSA Services Administrator, reported they are in the middle of their public hearing process. The Plan and public hearing videos will be posted on Monday, May 9 and will be up until May 22. Community members can provide feedback by phone, voicemail, email, electronic forms, and hand written forms.

Mr. Schoelen announced that they have a new Workforce Education and Training (WET) Manager, Nisha Elliot. Ms. Elliot has worked for the Department for 21 years and brings a great deal of experience to her position.

Ms. Elliot announced the individuals receiving this quarter's "Employee Recognition" award – Donna Sliva, Kimmy Samberson, and Miguel Rodriguez. All three recipients received a plaque commemorating their achievement.

- 2) **SAPT UPDATE** – Rhyann Miller, Deputy Director, announced that Assistant Director, Deborah Johnson, was recently featured in the Inland Empire Magazine for "Women in Medicine." A link to the article will be sent to everyone to read at their convenience.

Mr. Miller reported that on Saturday, April 30, they hosted their first in-person (COVID-safe) Friday Night Live Awards Ceremony since the pandemic began. There was approximately 600 kids and family members that attended the ceremony at the Rubidoux Drive-In. They celebrated their achievements and active youth participation in the community and their respective chapters across 68 schools. Will Harris noted that a video of the ceremony is available and will share it to everyone after the meeting.

Mr. Miller thanked the Executive Team for allowing them to host their 2022 Recovery Happens Event in-person (COVID-safe). The event will be held in October and more details will be provided as they are made available.

California SUD Counselor Association, LA County, and California Behavioral Health Directors Association are putting together a package revamping the certified counselor biannual renewal process and registry renewal. Mr. Miller noted that they are finalizing the draft and will be submitted to the state. A copy will be available for everyone to review.

Lastly, Mr. Miller reported that they will be hosting their SAPT provider meeting on Thursday, May 12 and discuss the continuing rollout of the CalAIM packages. They have received a great deal of inquiry regarding contractor's ability to bill during the assessment process. Mr. Miller explained that they will be having this discussion at their next meeting and will hold a Q&A segment to address other inquiries. They will also be going over peer support services and service code roll out and implementation. Shannon McCleerey-Hooper will go over the new certification process, supervisory training process, documentation reform, and trainings and policies from Quality Improvement (QI) that will assist contractors and county clinics to implement the accounting policies, which will be active in July 2022. Mr. Miller noted that they will schedule an additional SAPT provider meeting in June to deliver the final packages, policies, workflows, training schedules to all providers and county clinics to prepare for the July 2022 rollout.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

DESERT REGIONAL BOARD – Richard Divine reported that the Board met on April 12. They received a presentation from James Grisham on the Intervention Department process of the Riverside County Suicide Prevention Coalition. They also had a discussion with Dr. Quinn regarding the Window Walk Gallery. Mr. Divine reported that they have moved out of the gallery at The Rivers and they are working on finding a new space for the next May is Mental Health Month event.

MID-COUNTY REGIONAL BOARD – Kim McElroy reported that they received a presentation from Ms. Ynez from Perris Mental Health Urgent Care. Diana Gutierrez presented on May is Mental Health Month activities and events. Traci Cornelius from Riverside County Office on Aging presented on the various services offered by their Agency. They also received updates regarding the new MOMS Program in Perris and new supervisors recently hired for Lake Elsinore and Hemet. They've also hired new Clinical Therapists in Lake Elsinore and Licensed Vocational Nurses in Perris.

WESTERN REGIONAL BOARD – Mr. Damewood reported that they are meeting later in the afternoon at 3:00 pm and all are welcome to attend. Minutes will be available after they approved.

ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE – Ms. Scott reported that they met on April 28 and their next meeting is May 26. They received a presentation from IEHP; Dakota Brown presented on disabilities; and they received updates from each region's supervisors.

CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE – Tori St. Johns reported that they met on April 26. They also received a presentation from Dakota Brown regarding the Unruh Act. Kelly Grotsky shared that they rolled out the new shortened children's assessment form (age 0-20) that day. Lastly, Ms. St. Johns reported that on May 30, they will be accompanying Supervisor Perez to Blythe.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE – Mr. Damewood reported that they went over collaborative courts, recovery opportunities, collaborative mental health and diversion, Patton updates, Whole Person Care, and staffing updates. Minutes will be available after they are approved.

HOUSING COMMITTEE – Ms. Scott reported that they met on April 12. They received updates for CalAIM and they continued their discussion regarding a Room and Board Coalition. They met with Inland Psychiatric Medical Group and the mayor of Hemet to discuss the potential of a Room and Board Coalition. Ms. Scott noted that they have expressed interest in the Coalition and will continue working on getting it established in Riverside County.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Walter Haessler reported that they had a presentation and discussion on Laura’s Law and it’s implementation. It was described as a work in progress as there are many other programs encouraging those in need to sought out help.

OLDER ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE COMMITTEE – Ms. Scott reported that they received an update presentation from Chris Duffy regarding Peer Support and Resource Center. Ms. Scott shared that there are staff shortages everywhere, as people are relocating, moving to different programs, or leaving the department altogether. Ms. Scott noted that some has left the Department for better pay elsewhere.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE - None

VETERANS COMMITTEE – Mr. Gentillalli reported that they received a great presentation on the Suicide Prevention Coalition. Mr. Gentillalli noted that the number of veterans that die by suicide every day is devastating. They hope to be more proactive with the Coalition and share information regarding veterans and veterans services.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – None

ADJOURN – The Behavioral Health Commission meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm.

Tori St. Johns, BHC Secretary
Maria Roman, Recording Secretary

FY 2021/22 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION ATTENDANCE ROSTER

| MEMBERS | JUL | SEP | OCT | NOV | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| April Jones, District 3 | P | P | P | P | A | P | P | P | P | |
| Beatriz Gonzalez, District 4 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | |
| Brenda Scott, District 3 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | |
| Carole Schaudt, District 4 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | A | |
| Daryl Terrell, District 5 | P | A | P | P | P | P | P | P | A | |
| Debbie Rose, BOS Rep. Dist. 2 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | A | |
| Greg Damewood, District 5 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | |
| Jose Campos, District 2 | P | P | A | P | P | P | P | P | P | |
| Paul Vollandigham, District 5 | ML | ML | ML | P | P | P | P | P | P | |
| Richard Divine, District 2 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | |
| Rick Gentillalli, District 3 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | |
| Victoria St. Johns, District 4 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | |
| Dr. Walter Haessler, District 1 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | |

Present = P • Absent = A • Medical Leave = ML