

RIVERSIDE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 7, 2022 • 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL – Madam Chairperson, Tori St. Johns called the Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) meeting to order at 12:02 pm.

Commissioner attendance was taken by roll-call.

ADOPTION OF AB 361 RESOLUTION NO. 2021-001 – Ms. St. Johns commenced the vote for “AB 361 to authorize teleconference meetings for the Behavioral Health Commission for an additional 30-days.” The BHC Liaison conducted votes by roll-call; Commissioners unanimously approved the adoption of the Resolution.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS – Madame Chair, Tori St. Johns, greeted everyone in attendance and commented on the ongoing fires in the Hemet and those being evacuated due to the severity of the conditions.

COMMISSION MEMBER REMARKS – Brenda Scott announced that the NAMI Walk is scheduled for November 5 at Diamond Valley Lake and her team are registering groups that would like to have a resource booth at the event. NAMI is also holding Family-to-Family classes, which are offered in both English and Spanish.

Greg Damewood reported he recently completed his ethics training and raised the topic of the Commissioner's requirement to complete the Form 700. Mr. Damewood noted that the Form 700 presents a barrier for some who may be interested in volunteering for the Behavioral Health Commission. The required completion of the Form 700 may be deemed as intimidating by some and Mr. Damewood believes that in many ways the BHC shouldn't be required to complete the form as the Commission does not make decisions or approve budgetary items. Additionally, Mr. Damewood shared that he researched this topic and found that Orange and San Bernardino County Commissions are not required to complete the Form 700.

PUBLIC REMARKS – Lisa Morris recognized Pauline Euclid Bartlett, Senior Clinical Therapist, for going above and beyond her duties by taking some clients on field trips as a way to have them to gain new experiences, spend some time outdoors, and help integrate them into the community. Ms. Bartlett took on this challenge in the midst of the pandemic, which has been the toughest time for many. Ms. Morris noted that these clients struggle with serious behavioral health challenges, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Ms. Bartlett took some photos of their adventures, which Ms. Morris shared to the Commission and the public. The photos showed consumers participating in the activities and no longer identifying themselves by their diagnosis, which is what they're used to doing. These are clients who typically stay in bed, refuse to socialize, and/or refuse to leave the facility. These are also the clients that utilize the afterhours programs, which took a hit during the pandemic. Ms. Bartlett took the initiative to consider her options, safety protocols, and decided to take the clients out into the community, such as museums, the Lavender Fields, Huntington Beach, and others. Clients were exposed to the outdoors, new experiences, and culture.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – Minutes were accepted as written.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – (Please note: Director's Report was moved up on the agenda per Director's request). Dr. Chang reported that the staff are working diligently on the Recovery Villages for Coachella and Hemet. The crisis teams are expanding and a newer iteration has been developed known as the Global Crisis Management Teams. Executive Management have met with elected officials and the governor's office in an effort to show the incredible work done by Riverside County. The argument being, Riverside County does amazing work despite the severe funding inequality as a result of the '91 and '11 Realignment.

CARE Court will be participating in a cohort together with California Behavioral Health Director's Association, which is the Federal Drug Association. There are 51 other counties participating in this and CARE staff is working diligently to advocate for our county.

NEW BUSINESS

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – STRONGER TOGETHER – Dakota Brown, Cultural Community Liaison with People with Disabilities Subcommittee. Ms. Brown briefly reported that September is National Guide Dog Month, to celebrate the efforts of U.S. guide dogs as a way to raise awareness and appreciation for guide dog schools across the country.

Ms. Brown explained that a disabled individual is identified as a person with physical disability, deaf and hard of hearing, loss of limb/amputations, and mental health diagnosis. The Subcommittee explores positive approaches in terms of providing assistance to those with disabilities. The Subcommittee was formed under CCRD, which is Riverside County's plan to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services. It is behavioral health care that fosters connection and a sense of belonging through respectful interactions.

Cultural competence places a significant emphasis on lived experience as it is an important component of "person-centered care." Each cultural community liaison build and steers a subcommittee that represents the perspective of each population's interest. A list is available for those interested in learning who the representatives are and their contact information. People with Disabilities Subcommittee is connecting with stakeholders within disability culture to get feedback on how RUHS-BH can provide services that are more transparent, accessible, disability-friendly, and culturally informed. Disability is a natural part of the human experience, much like gender and ethnicity. Disability is simply one of the many natural characteristics of being human in the U.S. One out of every four adults lives with at least one disability, however, in California, it's approximately one out of three. Part of the subcommittee's work is celebrating the innovations that are breaking down barriers for people with disabilities, so they may live as independently as possible and achieve personal and care goals.

Disability is an accepted and valued part of humans – neurologic and physical diversity. Advocates focus on improving participation in society with the help of adaptive equipment or improvements to the social and physical environment.

The difference between 'impairment' and 'disability' is that an impairment is a consequence of an injury or disease to one's health, body, and functioning. 'Disability' according to the newer social model, is defined as a system of barriers of derogatory attitudes and social exclusion that make it difficult for them to attain autonomy and functionality. In addition to the usual awkwardness, we may have about offending someone, we as a people, need to learn how to sit with discomfort. Many cultures, especially cultures that value and run on capitalistic systems, place a high emphasis on a person's ability to contribute to society. When there are physical barriers that prevent certain populations from contributing to society, the group may be perceived as a burden and therefore, shunned. This explains why there is a great deal of fear among people of becoming disabled and alternately, offending a disabled individual due to miscommunication.

Ms. Brown shared that there is a perspective regarding 'disabilities' that should be highlighted as the rest of the population greatly benefits from their contribution as a whole. For example, in the 1960's and 1970's sidewalks did not have 'curb cuts' or what the ADA defines as 'ingress/egress' access (i.e. ramps and curb cuts). Anyone confined to a wheelchair were unable to maneuver their way around as the sidewalks were not designed to accommodate wheelchairs. However, thanks to a group of brilliant and persistent disabled students from Berkeley, their city was the first in the nation to implement curb cuts in the design of their sidewalks. This innovation, which stemmed from the disabled community's need and right for autonomy, resulted in the streets and sidewalks becoming more accessible in major commercial areas as it accommodated the use of strollers, dollies, pulling carts, luggage, crutches, etc. This was referred to as the "curb cuts effect;" in fact, nine out of ten pedestrians will walk straight toward the curb cut when crossing or accessing sidewalks, etc. Ms. Brown noted that when an accommodation is made for the most vulnerable, the rest of the population also experience the benefits. In fact, the 'curb cuts' is but one of many innovations developed to assist our vulnerable population in gaining more independence and autonomy. Seatbelt laws were initially established to protect children; closed captions were initially developed for the hearing impaired or deaf and hard of hearing, which serves the rest of the population that spend time in a gym, a loud sports bar, restaurant, airports, lobbies, etc. Entry doors that open automatically or offer the option of a push button for wheelchairs, also help assist those pushing a cart, stroller, dolly, or a delivery person with a handful of packages. Automatic doors (with or without a push button) were developed for wheelchairs, as a result, it also helps people with packages, carts, strollers, etc. There is a long list of diagnoses, disabilities that make you more likely to have a sensory processing disorder, such as fibromyalgia, autism, and PTSD. Sensory friendly environments and adaptive fashion is on the rise, such as less use of unnecessary flickering lights, jarring sounds, and unpleasant smells; as well as the removal of shirt tags by clothing companies and tennis shoes with springs in the heel as a way to help and improve mobility. Often, such accommodations and accessibility features are an afterthought rather than a priority. Advocates are calling on universal and inclusive design processes to guide development and design from the beginning. Ms. Brown noted that designing or developing things to help accommodate ALL people has no real negative impact, but instead, enhances the experience for everyone. Ms. Brown continued, that there seems to be an ingrained suspicion within society that by intentionally supporting one group takes away from another and that making efforts to provide proper accommodations is "inconvenient and expensive." However, fact of the matter is, when we give support where it is needed, we create the circumstances that allow those who were previously left behind to participate and contribute to

society, which ultimately is a benefit for society overall. Alternately, if we ignore the challenges that are faced by the most vulnerable, those challenges become a drag on their wellbeing, prosperity, and ultimately, economic growth. “Crip” culture is a unifying force across disabilities and is considered an inclusive term representing people with divergent physical and psychological differences. The term “crip” is not a derogative term like “queer,” as their population reclaimed the term. Today, they are teaching Crip Theory in colleges as a way to explore the experience of disability and to acknowledge the history of exclusion and social barriers. Crip Theory considers disability to be a viable identity variable that should be acknowledged and celebrate.

Everyone benefits when businesses accommodate customers with disabilities equal access to goods and services. This is the largest minority group, in society. There is a great deal of discretionary spending power with regard to people with disabilities. Disabled individuals do not go to restaurants, shopping centers, movie theaters, concert venues, and sporting events alone, they typically bring their family and friends. There is a great deal of research proving that companies that are more diverse, inclusive, and innovative are far more profitable than those of their counterparts.

There are world renowned individuals with disabilities that have made remarkable contributions to society and the world, overall. Albert Einstein was famously known for having a learning disability. John Forbes Nash, portrayed by Russel Crowe in *A Beautiful Mind*, won a Nobel in 1994. Mr. Nash was diagnosed and struggled with schizophrenia, but despite this, he made an incredible contribution to society and his name will go down in history. Temple Grandin is an animal behaviorist and autism activist. Ms. Grandin has a master’s in animal science and is someone who struggles with sensory environment sensitivity. Ms. Grandin channeled and utilized her sensitivities to promote changes to livestock industry, including humane slaughtering practices. Thomas Edison suffered from Scarlet Fever as a child and was nearly entirely deaf in both ears. There is a remarkable array of contributors to culture, science, civics, and the arts, who’ve met and overcame disability barriers. Activist and author, Harry Harriet McBryde Johnson, stated “the absence or presence of a disability is not a predictor of happiness. It’s typical of able-bodied people to assume that having a disability results in a life of misery, but data has shown that people with disabilities consistently report a higher quality of life or better than those of their counterparts. This was determined by assessing their overall social determinants of health. The technical term for this is “structural determinants of health,” which include economic stability, home environment, etc.

In terms of being an ally, we need to come from a place where inclusion is the focus to serve and advocate for everyone. We must answer the question of, “who” is at the table; are they “representative” of the population; and do they have “lived” experience. Ms. Brown suggested that we come from a place of empathy as opposed to sympathy. Sympathy, can generally objectify people, even more so for those with disabilities as it focuses on their impairments as opposed to their strengths. Tropes of pity create a disability narrative that their lives aren’t worth living, which is only exacerbated by the common saying among those whom demean the disabled – “better dead than disabled.” Alternately, the term “super crip” is of a person having a disability and having extraordinary ability to compensate. This portrays people with disabilities as one dimensional saints who exist only to inspire and open the hearts of abled people.

The language is changing surrounding disability, the term “handicapped” is no longer a commonly used word to describe someone with a disability. It implies that the individual is held back in the race, as opposed to being weighed down. “Accessible,” is now the preferred term, which is becoming more and more common as the ongoing advocacy continues on. Ms. Brown noted that certain terms are so embedded within our language and idioms that it will take a bit of practice and conscious effort to switch to more positive-leaning verbiage. It is a constant learning process and can be challenging at times, however, when we know better, we do better.

Ms. Brown added that if there are consumers with disabilities interested in doing advocacy work or know of anyone that would be interested, to please contact her for more information about their meetings and subcommittee membership. The more advocates we have sharing the wisdom of their lived experience, the more RUHS-BH is able to better provide appropriate services to the community. For those interested to further engage in a full conversation about disability etiquette, including crip culture, serving the deaf and the blind, those with service animals and speech challenges, and other hidden disabilities. All the subcommittees are currently developing and delivering trainings in the community to help educate both the served and underserved populations, family members, and friends of those with a disability. The meeting schedule is consistently updated and everyone is encouraged to participate.

Ms. Brown concluded her presentation with a quote from the book “Too Late to Die Young,” by Harriet McBryde Johnson, “Living our strange and different lives however we choose and manage to live them is a contribution to this struggle. Living their lives openly and without shame is a revolutionary act.”

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) **MHSA UPDATE** – David Schoelen reported that MHSA is offering trainings on how to interact with someone who experience psychosis. Mr. Schoelen explained that it will assist staff on how to better understand and engage with those members of the community. The Mental Health Services Act is largely about anti-stigma campaigns for mental health; Dakota Brown’s role with disabilities is focused on the disabled community, which is not normally served by the behavioral health department.

Mr. Schoelen reported that the MHSA Annual Update was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 30. Once their office returns the documents, MHSA will be able to submit the report to the state. As this particular update is completed, MHSA staff are beginning to plan the next 3-year plan. The report will be an update on the 3-year plan, which includes not only an annual update process, but some of the goals that they will be exploring over the course of the next three years. Updates regarding the actual planning cycle and timelines will provided as they move forward.

The state has announced its second program review for all counties. Some counties have already begun their evaluation and MHSA received its first review of its programs in 2019. The state’s program review is based on a tri-annual system, therefore MHSA has a review scheduled later this year. Mr. Schoelen and staff are preparing for the evaluation, where the state will example the more qualitative aspects of programming and ensure regulatory compliance from all aspects of the programming.

PEI Manager, Diana Gutierrez is actively promoting Suicide Prevention Week. Ms. Gutierrez accepted a proclamation from the Board of Supervisors last week, acknowledging this as Suicide Prevention week. This will run congruent to September is Suicide Prevention Month and its planned activities. Updates will be provided regarding events as the weeks progress.

- 2) **SAPT UPDATE** – April Marier reported that in addition to September's Suicide Prevention Month, it is also Recovery Happens Month for SAPT. A big thanks to the media team for their creativity and talent releasing videos throughout the month on all of the Department's social media platforms. They will also be hosting a Recovery Happens event on October 13 at Fairmont Park. There will be dance contests, banner contests, and many other activities. Providers are coming to join celebrate the event, so all are welcome to attend.

Prevention services have also been increased in schools. Ms. Marier noted that they've heard from several schools initially not providing services, and are now interested in implementing it on their campus. Ms. Marier and staff are currently meeting with different schools to help youth services grow across Riverside County.

Staffing updates, they recently added two new Senior Family Advocates to the substance abuse program. They held their first Family group in the desert region with 15 participants. Ms. Marier noted that this was not their first group, however, it was the first big one that was open to the community.

Ms. Marier reported that in the last two weeks, they launched two new MOMS Programs in the clinics. The Perris and Palm Springs clinic both offer perinatal programs and each had their open houses a few weeks earlier. For those interested in touring the facilities, please contact Ms. Marier for arrangements. Ms. Marier noted that they are growing and reaching out to the community in every way possible. Their focus is currently launching additional perinatal programs in substance use clinics to be able to reach out to the community of women struggling with addictions while pregnant or after giving birth. This is something they plan to further expand and some marketing, i.e. billboards, social media, etc.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

DESERT REGIONAL BOARD: Jim Grisham and Tori St. Johns reported that they received a presentation on the Fill-a-Backpack project and Dr. Quinn shared her experience calling 211 and the information she gleaned from the phone call.

Mr. Grisham reported that he and his Intervention subcommittee have visited some gun shops as part of their suicide prevention efforts. They are working on material to share with these shops to help reduce the risks, help decrease access to lethal means, as well as protect the community they sell guns to. This is an effort they hope to undertake in all three regions. Mr. Grisham noted that while some shops are open to hearing the information, some of the much larger companies are simply refusing. However, they will continue to pursue these efforts, despite negative or indifferent feedback from certain shops.

MIDCOUNTY REGIONAL BOARD: Brenda Scott reported that they had a presentation from Tony Robinson and Dakota Brown on the Unruh Civil Rights Act. They also received updates from Mid-County manager, Venise Russ. Ms. Russ discussed the number of people in various clinics – 600 clients in Temecula and 700 in Perris.

WESTERN REGIONAL BOARD: Greg Damewood reported that they had their meeting on July 6. Dakota Brown also presented at their meeting and Western Region's Adult Services Administrator, Lisa Jackson, shared that they are going through a big hiring process to fill positions. Their next meeting is later in the day at 3:00 pm, all are invited to attend.

ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE COMMITTEE: Brenda Scott shared both her reports for Adult and Older Adult System of Care. They met on July 28, the last Thursday of the month, at noon. They had a presentation from the cultural liaison regarding LGBTQ.

CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE: Ms. St. Johns reported that they met on July 26 and will hold their next meeting on September 27.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE: Mr. Damewood reported that they met on July 13 by Zoom. Mr. Damewood encouraged everyone to take a look at the annual report for Criminal Justice. All those that contributed to the annual report did an excellent job, as it is rich with information.

HOUSING COMMITTEE: Ms. Scott reported that they received a presentation from Sean Frederickson regarding the HOME Program, which stands for Homeless Outreach, Mediation and Education Program.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Dr. Walter Haessler reported that due to the fires in Hemet, Brenda and April were unable to participate. They discussed student attendance and how it's taken a hit since COVID, and many counties, like Los Angeles, is experiencing low attendance in schools. There's also a sharp rise in violent activities and disciplinary issues at school.

OLDER ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE COMMITTEE: Ms. Scott shared that Tony Ortego shared activities ongoing in the Western Region. They have approximately 700 clients and 35 are in Full Service Partnership.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE: None

VETERANS COMMITTEE: Rick Gentillalli reported that their main concern in the committee is if the Mission Act, which allow veterans to go to their own physician as opposed to the Veterans Administration (VA).

(Continued)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – Mr. Damewood requested for site reviews to be discussed and if there is a way it can be conducted virtually, if possible.

ADJOURN – The Behavioral Health Commission meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm.

Dr. Walter Haessler, BHC Secretary
Maria Roman, Recording Secretary

FY 2022/23 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION ATTENDANCE ROSTER

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

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