

## **RIVERSIDE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION**

MEETING MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 5, 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 12:00 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.” Paul Vallandigham made the motion to approve; seconded by Rick Gentillalli; and 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 shared that she attended a Suicide Awareness event hosted by Peace from Chaos in Blythe on September 10. Riverside University Health System – Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH) was very well represented with Cultural Competency and Take My Hand, just to name a few.

**COMMISSION MEMBER REMARKS** – Brenda Scott reported, in relation to suicide prevention, she is a member of a post-vention committee and that the Suicide Prevention Coalition is doing a great deal of work surrounding prevention and post-vention, for those that have lost someone to suicide. Diana Gutierrez leads this Coalition and for those interested in attending, they will be hosting another conference on Thursday, October 27.

Additionally, Ms. Scott added that she has been attending several meetings with cultural liaisons and learned that RUHS-BH has a “Land Acknowledgement for Indigenous Peoples of Southern California.” Ms. Scott noted that it is either incredibly forward thinking or we’re finally catching up with the times; as the land we stand on is originally owned by indigenous peoples.

Greg Damewood shared an article he read regarding a facility in Apple Valley, which reported severe and blatant abuse of consumers that the owners were arrested for their crimes. Mr. Damewood noted that we should continue to remain vigilant and supportive of those staying in facilities.

**PUBLIC REMARKS** – None

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** – Minutes were tabled for October.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Dr. Chang responded to the Commission’s inquiry regarding CARE Court, which is a newly implemented bill by Governor Gavin Newsom. The intention of CARE Court, which stands for Community Assistance Recovery and Empowerment Act, is to re-direct individuals with behavioral health challenges into the appropriate care/treatment. In terms of who qualifies under the CARE Court, Dr. Chang noted that its definition is relatively narrow with specific diagnoses. The minimum age to qualify is 18 and the diagnoses severe, i.e. schizophrenia and other psychosis disorder; which Dr. Chang finds “limiting.” The

individual is not clinically stabilized and ongoing voluntary treatment, with at least one of the following: unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervisions and the person's condition is substantially deteriorating; and the person is in need of services and supports in order to prevent relapse or deterioration that would likely result in grave disability or serious harm as defined in Section 5150. CARE Court is meant to be the least restrictive alternative necessary to ensure the consumer's recovery and stability; and it is likely that the consumer will benefit from participation in the care plan/agreement based on estimates provided by the administration under President Joe Biden. It is projected to apply to approximately 7,000-12,000 people in California and it is being implemented in a two-phase approach. There is a cohort, which will go live on October 2023 and the rest of the state will go live by December 2024. Riverside County is included in the first cohort along with Glenn County, Orange County, San Diego, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and San Francisco County.

California's Civil Commitment laws are among the most protective in the nation due to the way the Lanterman-Petris-Short-Act (LPS) was written. Dr. Chang shared that he sat in a meeting with behavioral health agency staff from Wisconsin and learned that they have a similar code to California's 5150, however, there is a transition in which the consumer can potentially face a number of court hearings and/or placed under some form of conservatorship. Dr. Chang noted that it was interesting to learn and a good reminder of how laws differ from state to state; and that California's current laws are such that they are very protective of the individual and their civil liberty.

While there are shared concerns with CARE Courts, its fiscal component presents an issue as it relates to the county's inequitable funding due to the 1991 and 2011 Realignment. The state will invest heavily in funding the housing component of the plan, however, will not be providing additional funding to the counties to support the plan. The state's position is that all 58 counties have enough funding to accommodate this bill in addition to their respective MHSA funding. Although this may be true for a majority of the counties in the state, Riverside County is an exception as the funding formula for Realignment bills of 1991 and 2011 have not been adjusted to take size and growth of the population into consideration. The county receives nearly \$200 million less than should be appropriate for its size and significant growth over time – Riverside County accounts for 6% of the population, but receives only 3% of the funding. Other counties have MHSA funding utilized as needed, but for Riverside County, it is the absolute backbone of their service provision. More updates will be provided as they are available. Dr. Chang reported that they are involved with the California Behavioral Health Directors Association and all the counties involved in cohort one will be meeting to determine how this will be implemented.

**CELEBRATE RECOVERY:** Will Wynn, Program Manager for Family Advocate, introduced this month's Celebrate Recovery Speaker. The Speaker shared that six years ago she struggled with addiction to methamphetamines and was later arrested. Due to her history, she was referred to the Mental Health Court in Hemet. In 18 months, she completed her program and graduated from Mental Health Court and was offered a position as a peer immediately after. The Speaker expressed her sincere gratitude for the staff and the programs that helped get her to a better place. Unfortunately, her son endured her years of addiction and the lifestyle it came with, that he himself is having his own bouts with the law and currently incarcerated in Riverside County. Her son shares the same diagnosis, but has been slipping through the cracks as he hasn't addressed his own struggles with addiction. Family advocates remain by her side to help

guide her in determining how to help her son get the help he needs. She hopes to see him become as healthy and successful as she is one day and to keep the efforts of helping others moving forward.

## NEW BUSINESS

1. **MENTAL HEALTH REHABILITATION CENTER:** Marcus Canon, Housing \*\*\*\*, gave the first update regarding the newly opened Mental Health Rehabilitation Center, located on Harrison Street in Riverside. It is a 59-bed facility licensed by the Department of Health Care Services, seven of which are reserved for individuals incompetent to stand trial. It is operated by Health Care Corporations and it provides a step-down option from inpatient and acute psychiatric care. It's designed to serve consumers or assist conservatorships.

The development of the facility was incredibly fast, as it took only months as opposed to years. Dr. Chang, Deborah Johnson, Melissa Noone, Rhyann Miller, and staff launched this facility as the COVID pandemic was surging. From the inception to the admission of the first client was a little over three months, which is unheard of. Dr. Chang has shared with this group previously that this was part of a larger overall COVID expansion of beds and according to the numbers, RUHS-BH offered more beds than every other county combined. While this was initially launched to deal with the COVID surge, it helped the Department step individuals down from ITF and down to a lower level of care. It continues to be a real valuable and necessary part of the system's continuum of care in ITF.

Mr. Canon explained that it was an incredibly challenging development project, as they restored an old county building that previously housed Juvenile Hall. In terms of cost and getting services up and running, there was a great deal of value in renovating an old building, but it did not come without its own challenges. MHRC is a 24/7 psychiatric care facility that offers individual therapy, group therapy, social skills, medication and psychiatry, nursing rehabilitation services, daily living skills, and discharge planning. Thus far, they've served 167 consumers with an average length of stay of seven months. There's a real need to build out this form of continuum of care, such as the Recovery Villages. Consumers do well in this environment and make it easier transitioning back into the community. The staff has a schedule of activities for consumers to participate in, such as talent shows, game nights, and craft nights, to help engage consumers. They also have outdoor basketball courts and grills for barbecuing; staff have done a phenomenal job giving consumers a more home-like environment.

Mr. Canon reported that there is a plan to build a "sister" facility called Restorative Transformation Center. This facility will have 30 beds and will be located on Reynolds Road. Proposals for the project have been reviewed, ranked, scored, and the winning bidder has been notified. The facility is expected to open in December 2022. This expansion will help position RUHS-BH properly with referrals from Laura's Law and eventually the CARE Courts.

## OLD BUSINESS

- 1) **MHSA UPDATE** – David Schoelen reported that the MHSA Plan has been adopted and submitted to the state, making this year's planning cycle complete. As this planning cycle comes to a close, they've begun pre-planning for the MHSA 3-Year Plan Update, which describes in detail the goals of MHSA

programming within those three years as well as updates regarding the progress and program outcomes.

Diana Gutierrez reported that they held their first in-person annual summit at the Riverside Convention Center on October 27. They will be presenting with two keynote presenters that will be talking about BIPOC youth and emerging trends in suicide prevention related to that population, as well as the firearm safety, which will be their two main focus over the coming year. Ms. Gutierrez invited those interested in participating and shared a flier in the chat with a link for registration. She also shared an additional flier seeking individuals interested in facilitating peer support groups for survivors of suicide loss. Studies have shown that individuals who have experienced a suicide loss are at a greater risk of suicide themselves and that an active post-vention response helps assist these individuals in processing their grief.

- 2) **SAPT UPDATE** – Rhyan Miller reported that they have a new family advocate for substance use in the Western Region, and will serve as the family advocate for Moreno Valley, Corona, and Riverside to help facilitate in-person groups where family members can come and support each other and learn about healthy coping skills. Mr. Miller reported that the team has truly blossomed and have heard nothing but positive feedback. The family advocate team not only offer support in county clinics, but provider clinics as well.

Lastly, Mr. Miller announced that the Recovery Happens event will be held at Fairmont Park on Thursday, October 13 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm and all are invited to attend. Volunteers will be at the park beginning at 8:00 am to begin setting up and are expecting a large turnout.

#### **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**DESERT REGIONAL BOARD:** Richard Divine reported that the committee met on September 13 and received a presentation from Sean Harris on the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Backpack Project and Holiday Collection and donation projects. They also discussed hosting their own NAMI Walk in the Desert region and work with some volunteers to coordinate the event.

**MIDCOUNTY REGIONAL BOARD:** Brenda Scott reported that they had a meeting on September 1 and received updates from the supervisors. Denise Miller, lead clinical therapist, introduced a client whom shared their story about receiving services at the clinic. He shared how he learned how to cope and regulate his emotions and not invalidate himself. He also learned how to be proud of his accomplishments, such as returning to school and making great progress in completing his first two years in college. Dennis Miller from the Temecula Clinic shared that the current case load stands at 550 consumers with 20 Full Service Partnership (FSP) clients. Venise Russ announced that she will be leaving her position in Mid-County and will begin working with Telecare. Dakota Brown provided a wonderful presentation on the Unruh Civil Rights Act and Tony Ortego gave an update on Mid-County Mature Adult Services.

**WESTERN REGIONAL BOARD:** Greg Damewood reported they met on September 7. They had a presentation about the National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month for September. Their next meeting will be held later in the day at 3:00 pm and Mr. Damewood invited all those interested in participating.

**ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE COMMITTEE:** Ms. Scott reported that the regional managers gave updates regarding vacancies and caseloads in various clinics. The Hemet Clinic has a caseload of 1,500 consumers with 60 FSP clients; Lake Elsinore has 608 consumers with 33 FSP clients; Temecula has 557 consumers with 20 FSP clients; and Perris has 669 consumers with 37 FSP clients.

**CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE:** Chairperson, Ms. St. Johns reported that they met on September 27. On November 5 and 6, there will be a PRIDE event in the Desert region. In most cities, their PRIDE events are in June, but due to the heat in the desert, their event is pushed to the first week of November. Bonita Ramsey will be one of the grand marshals of the parade and they will have bounce house for the little kids and a youth zone for the middle and high school kids. The PRIDE event in Palm Springs is a family-friendly event and all are invited to attend.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE:** Mr. Damewood reported that the committee met on September 14 at noon. They discussed crisis services, CIT training events, and the upcoming Recovery Happens event. Judy Nightingale provided an update regarding collaborations with the courts. The next meeting will be held in November and all are welcome to attend.

**HOUSING COMMITTEE:** Ms. Scott reported the committee met on September 13. The group discussed Housing's three ongoing projects, received a presentation on CES and HomeConnect, and discussed the room and board coalition update.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Dr. Walter Haessler reported that the governor signed a new law changing the regulations and procedures surrounding conservatorship, making it harder to obtain and easier to terminate.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** Richard Divine reported that he would like to have the Board of Supervisors Office contacted to determine if there are any volunteers interested in serving on the Commission.

**OLDER ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE COMMITTEE:** Ms. Scott reported that the group met on September 13 and will meet again the following Tuesday. They had a presentation regarding Riverside County's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. Staff provided an update regarding the number of caseloads – in the Western region there are 525 consumers and 130 FSP clients; Mid-County has 527 consumers and 108 FSP clients; Indio has 102 clients; Banning has 111 clients; and 185 in Desert Hot Springs.

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE:** Tabled

**VETERANS COMMITTEE:** Rick Gentillalli reported that committee had a presentation regarding a new FDA approved electronic medical device called Alpha Stem. The device helps with anxiety, insomnia, depression, and pain.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS** – Mr. Gentillalli requested to have a presentation regarding the Alpha Stem for the Commission. Several members of the Commission raised the topic of site reviews for the form and list of locations to be updated.

ADJOURN – The Behavioral Health Commission meeting adjourned at 1:43 pm.

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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	A							
Beatriz Gonzalez, District 4	P	P	P							
Brenda Scott, District 3	P	P	P							
Carole Schaudt, District 4	P	P	P							
Daryl Terrell, District 5	P	P	A							
Debbie Rose, BOS Rep. Dist. 2	P	P	P							
Greg Damewood, District 5	P	P	P							
Paul Vollandigham, District 5	P	P	P							
Richard Divine, District 2	P	P	P							
Rick Gentillalli, District 3	P	P	P							
Victoria St. Johns, District 4	P	P	P							
Dr. Walter Haessler, District 1	P	P	P							

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