

**BHEC Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

**Facilitated by:** Deana Helmy, County Co Chair; Iliana Soto Welty, Community Co Chair

**Community Members:** Sohail Eftekhazadeh, Michael Arnot, John Reynolds, Johnice Williams, Luna Lu, and Brian Gilbert

**County Members:** April Thornton, Teresa Renteria, Belinda McCleese, Daniel Gibbs, and Lu Pham

- Request by Michael Arnot to add to agenda: letter to the board of supervisors to continue OPHE. BHEC's role is to provide recommendations to Chief of MHRS and suggested items to the agenda must be submitted in advance.
- **Sohail Eftekhazadeh approved the August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, minutes; Michael Arnot seconded; all approved.**

**Member reflection- Belinda McCleese**

- International sign language day, including 200 different sign languages around the world, were described. Different cultures have different versions of sign language much like other forms of communication. The blue light is a symbol that represents the place of deaf people at the table. She wants other deaf people not to be seen as islands and that sign be validated as an official language.

**Business**

**Subcommittee/Workgroup Updates**

- **Spirituality Committee-** Daniel Gibbs
  - This committee is active in its outreach to connect faith communities to county services and promote faith as an important component to many individuals' recovery.
- **The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Committee –** Belinda McCleese
  - A description of the recent in-person, three-and-a-half-hour workgroup retreat was provided. The retreat included County and community representation and focused on solving problems and brainstorming solutions. At the event, survey results, that helped define problems and barriers, were reviewed. The next meeting will be held on Zoom and reports describing it will be given.
- **LGBTQ Committee-** Lu Pham
  - The creation of safe zone posters, that had never been done before, was announced. The collectively designed posters were created through the new management from AOA and will be dispersed throughout the county.
  - Talks of stigma for the LGBTQ community, and how they relate to different cultures, were given as a presentation.
  - Ways to bring The County OC ACCEPT Program back were discussed.
  - The creation of a currently unnamed training was put forth. A summary will be provided at the next public meeting.
- **Black/African American Committee-** Johnice Williams
  - They are assessing their outreach capacity.
  - There are plans to improve community communication due to positive changes.
  - It was suggested that providing food might improve attendance at their events.
  - Johnice Williams will take a leadership role at the next Black History Month Festival

### **National Suicide Prevention Month & National Recovery Month**

- Teal and purple ribbons, representing the occasion, and the lighting up of multiple county buildings will continue through the rest of the month.

### **Recovery Happens Picnic**

- 650 people registered for this successful event. It included OC Navigator representation, a band, and many activities. It is anticipated to be a yearly event.

### **Next Public Meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup>**

- The Last Panel had a positive response.
- Cultural competency updates and progress on stated goals will be given.
- An invitation for Michelle Smith to speak about the MHSA 3-year plan changes has been sent.
- Fun and interesting theme ideas were discussed.
- The importance of public engagement and input, like giving community members a role, was emphasized. It will provide guidance for the following year. It will focus on a 3-year trajectory and the progress of 3 identified goals.

### **Next BHEC Steering Committee Meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup>.**

- The frequency of meetings, and whether to stick with BHEC quarterly meetings, was discussed.
- Are 3-4 Public meetings a year acceptable?
- Discussion on whether meetings should be open to observers.

### Next Meeting

October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023

1:00pm-2:30pm

At Behavioral Health Training Center