

ORANGE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD



The Bay by Pamela Blaser

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



ORANGE COUNTY 2023 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Don Wagner
Chairman
3rd District Supervisor



Doug Chaffee
Vice Chairman
4th District Supervisor



Andrew Do
1st District Supervisor



Vicente Sarmiento
2nd District Supervisor



Katrina Foley
5th District Supervisor



MESSAGE FROM BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR

The OC Health Care Agency's (HCA) Behavioral Health Services (BHS) is pleased to collaborate with the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAB) in presenting the BHAB's Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors and the diverse stakeholders of Orange County. As a department, our mission is to provide high quality mental health and substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery support to the residents of Orange County.

The BHAB impacts communities by promoting awareness about mental health and substance use disorders, reducing stigma and discrimination related to behavioral health conditions, fostering diversity, and encouraging and supporting the principles of recovery, wellness, and resiliency in the community. One of the primary functions of the BHAB, in statute (WIC 5604.2), is to advise the Board of Supervisors and the Director of BHS on local community needs and concerns regarding mental health and substance use disorder issues. During 2023, the BHAB provided important feedback to BHS to help improve transparency and service delivery so that a of the Orange County community can better understand our mission and our services.

BHS has worked with BHAB throughout the past year to ensure community understanding of the current system of care, receive feedback to improve programs

and services, and work more collaboratively with the BHAB on future behavioral health endeavors. Together we have increased the BHAB's visibility in order to encourage a more diverse membership.

I remain struck by the BHAB's dedication, volunteerism, and genuine concern for the community's behavioral health needs as well as their commitment to improving the behavioral health system of care. It is a pleasure to serve alongside the BHAB in promoting and providing recovery-based and wellness driven services. We have challenging times ahead, but working together will better enable us all to change the challenges into opportunities to better serve and support our diverse communities.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Veronica Kelley".

Dr. Veronica Kelley, LCSW
Director, Behavioral Health Services

MESSAGE FROM THE BHAB CHAIR

2023 was a busy year for the Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB), coming out of the shadow of COVID pandemic restrictions. Similar to prior years, the BHAB sought to become better informed about existing County mental health and substance use disorder programs and services, including the clinical and administrative resources in place to manage them. The Board also participated in a variety of opportunities and events in the community to inform the public about the responsibilities of the Board, and to recruit new members to fill current vacancies. At present, efforts by the BHAB to increase client and family member representation remains a high priority.

A renewed effort to strengthen the foundation of the BHAB led to the restructuring of its working committees that will allow for a sustained and consistent focus on the current issues impacting the behavioral health of children, adults, and older adults in Orange County.

New members appointed to the BHAB this past year have also assisted with expanding our ability to represent the community in a manner that reflects the diversity of the Orange County population going forward. The BHAB invites consumers and/or their family members to consider joining the Board in the coming year.

The BHAB has received regular updates from BHS leaders regarding the following

issues that could have a significant impact on how the HCA's Behavioral Health Services programs are structured and prioritized moving forward:

- Opioid Abatement Plan
- California Advancing and Innovation Medi-Cal (CalAIM)
- Mental Health & Recovery Services (MHRS) reorganization
- Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act
- SB43
- Mobile Crisis Benefit
- Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) modernization (Proposition 1)

The BHAB will continue to monitor how these legislative initiatives and local efforts unfold in the next year.

Sincerely,



Alan Albright, LMFT
Chair, Behavioral Health Advisory Board



ABOUT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

The Annual Report of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) is submitted in accordance with the California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 5604.2(a). Under state law, the BHAB is required to review and evaluate the behavioral health needs, services, and special projects in the Orange County community. The BHAB's requirements also include advising the Orange County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and HCA's Behavioral Health Director as to any aspect of the local behavioral health programs.

The BHAB is comprised of 14 volunteer members, plus one member of the BOS. Each supervisor makes an individual appointment, and the BHAB Nominating Committee also recommends the appoint-

ments of new members. The categories of membership include:

- Member of the Board of Supervisors
- Consumer
- Family Member
- Mental Health Professional
- Public Interest

The BHAB serves as a link between the BOS/BHS and the community by enhancing public input into the execution of community behavioral health care services. The BHAB met regularly, twice a month at a Study Committee Meeting and a General Meeting. These meetings are open to the public and public comment is encouraged to voice community input on all aspects of behavioral health services.



Living Still by Bijan Rae (aka GRVYRD)



A Rose by Rose Larson

MEET THE 2023 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento
2nd District Supervisor

Alan V. Albright, LMFT
Chairman for 2023
Treatment and Recovery Specialist

Frederick Williams, LMFT
Vice Chair for 2023
Treatment and Recovery Specialist

Hector Bustos
Appointed September 2023
Public Interest- 2nd District Appointee

Karyl Dupée, LMFT
Family Member

Susan Emerson, LCSW, CATC IV
Person in Recovery

Matthew Holzmann
Family Member

Stephen McNally
Family Member

Chinh Tuong Nguyen
Public Interest - 1st District Appointee

Kristen M. Pankratz, MSW
Person in Recovery

Linda Smith
Appointed November 2023
Public Interest - 3rd District Appointee

Duan Tran, MSW
Public Interest - 4th District Appointee

Chase Wickersham
Public Interest - 5th District Appointee

Vacant MHB positions as of 12/2023
Family Member
Person in Recovery

BHAB Committies

Children and Youth Committee
(established in 2023)

Older Adults Committee
(ongoing committee)

Substance Use Disorder Committee
(established 2023)

Study Committee
(established 2023)

Data Notebook
(Ad Hoc)

Nominating Committee
(Ad Hoc)

Committee Liaisons

Behavioral Health Equity Committee (BHEC)
Duan Tran
Fred Williams

California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards & Commissions (CALBHB/C)
Steve McNally
Karyl Dupee



Sweet Home at Last by Nettie Martinez

BHAB 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. **Site Visits:** The BHAB members conducted the following site visits:

- Be Well
- Project RENEW
- Phoenix House
- OASIS
- US Vets

2. **The BHAB actively participated in community events and activated at the following tabling events:**

- Swallows Parade (March)
- Community Resources and Health Fair (Centennial Park- SA) (March)
- Meeting of the Minds (May)
- Voices for Awareness/ Facing Fentanyl Concert and Car Show (May)
- OC Pride in Santa Ana (June)
- 2023 Juneteenth Celebration at Centennial Park (June)
- Recovery Picnic (September)
- Recovery Rally (September)
- 2023 OC Public Safety & Reentry Conference (October)
- Vanguard University Wellness Fair (October)

3. **The BHAB members collectively attended conferences throughout the year:**

- California Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions Quarterly Regional Meeting (January, April, June, October)
- Behavioral Health Planning Council Quarterly Meetings (January, April, June, October)

- NATCON23 Conference (May)
- Meeting of the Minds (May)
- 2023 Southern Region Student Wellness Conference (July)
- 2023 OC Public Safety & Reentry Conference (October)
- 2023 Veteran Health and Wellness Summit (October)
- 10th Annual California Addiction Conference (October)

In addition to conferences, the BHAB continuously attended committee meetings in the community, such as:

- Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Planning Advisory Committee Meetings
- BHEC meetings
- Equity in OC

4. **The BHAB received a variety of presentations throughout 2023:**

- January:
 - MHSA Innovation Update – OC Navigator (Dr. Armen Arevian, Chorus)
- February:
 - MHSA Fiscal Update (Julia Rinaldi, CEO Budget)
 - Housing and Supportive Services Overview (Linda Molina)
- March:
 - Be Well Update (Marshall Moncrief and Karen Linkins)
 - MHSA 3-year Plan Overview (Michelle Smith)

- April:
 - MHSA Update (Michelle Smith)
 - MHSA Public Hearing
- May:
 - MHSA Update (Michelle Smith)
 - External Quality Review Organization (EQRO) Overview and Findings for Orange County (Azahar Lopez)
- June:
 - Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Update (Mark Lawrenz)
 - Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Follow-up (Anthony Padilla)
 - Children and Youth Services (CYS) Contract Expansion Follow-up (Dawn Smith)
 - MHSA Update (Michelle Smith)
 - EQRO Follow-up Presentation (Azahar Lopez)
 - MHSA Fiscal Update (Julia Rinaldi, CEO Budget)
- July:
 - EQRO Follow-up (Azahar Lopez)
 - MHSA Update (Michelle Smith)
 - CYS Clinical Evaluation and Guidance Unit (CEGU) (Alice Kim, Paola Bautista)
- August:
 - MHSA Update (Michelle Smith)
 - MHSA Fiscal Overview (Mike Geiss) (State level overview)
- September:
 - MHSA Update (Michelle Smith)
 - Didi Hirsch Update (Bhuvana Rao)

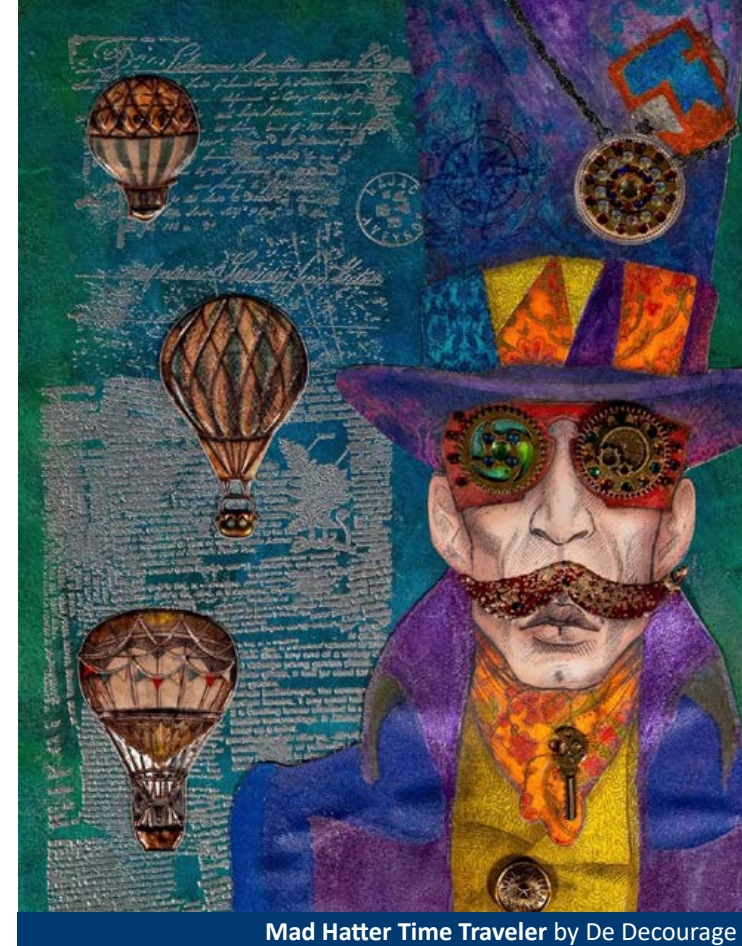
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2024 GOALS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE YEAR

1. Continue to focus on developing the newly formed BHAB committees of the BHAB, encouraging them to identify and formulate focus areas for their committees.
2. Committees of the BHAB will formulate recommendations and present them to the BHAB as a whole.
3. Attend BOS meetings to represent BHAB and seek to thoroughly understand BOS functions. The BHAB would like to have a greater presence during February through May meetings.
4. Create a survey for community members at tabling events that BHAB attends. This will allow for a greater understanding of how aware the community is of mental health and recovery services and where the needs and gaps may be.

- Data Notebook
 - MHSa Innovation Update: OC Navigator (Armen Arevian)
 - MHSa Fiscal Update (Julia Rinaldi, CEO Budget)
 - October:
 - Opioid Abatement Plan (Mark Lawrenz)
 - November:
 - Care Court Update (Annette Murgditchian)
 - MHSa Update (Michelle Smith)
 - Data Notebook Review
- 5. The BHAB gained new members on the board and was actively involved in implementing new recruitment strategies. In doing so, the BHAB established the following recruitment forms:**
- Supplemental Form: for Membership to allow for the Nomination Committee to further reach all populations that represent the County of Orange.
 - BHAB Informational Sheet
 - BHAB Recruitment Letter
- 6. The BHAB actively attended Board of Supervisor’s Meetings to demonstrate support of Behavioral Health Services agenda items.**
- 7. The BHAB leadership formalized the following policies and procedures:**
- BHAB in the Community Policy and Procedure
 - Site Visit Form

- 8. The Chair established new BHAB committees:**
- Children and Youth Committee
 - Substance Use Disorder Committee
- 9. Letters of recommendation to the BOS and BHS Director.**
- Letter of support for Promoting Equity Diversity and Inclusion (February 2023)
 - Letter of Mental Health Services Act (MHSa) Substantive Recommendations (May 2023)
- 1. Create a standing MHSa community forum** comprised of local stakeholders, including adults, transitional-age youth, and seniors with Serious Mental Illness and/or SUD; families of children, adults, and seniors with SMI and/or SUD; providers of services, law enforcement agencies, education, social services agencies, veterans, representatives from veterans organizations, providers of alcohol and drug services, health care organizations, and other important interests (see Calif. W&I Code 5848 (a)).
- The primary functions of the standing community forum, at a minimum, would include the following:
- a) Meet regularly to assist the County to identify challenges and barriers in the development and delivery of



Mad Hatter Time Traveler by De Decourage

- a) MHSa-funded services and make recommendations for strategies to address these challenges.
- b) Remain informed about current stakeholder meetings and the funding and program recommendations made by members of these groups.
- c) Review all MHSa funding proposals and provide critical feedback to ensure that funding is allocated to services for identified needs and priorities.

- 2. Ensure Orange County and its contractors meet and exceed goals and expectations relative to the recruitment and retention of MHSa funded program staff by:**
- a) Incorporating streamlined onboarding processes to reduce the time staff vacancies remain unfilled.
 - b) Ensuring that the salaries and wages for individuals employed by the County and its contractors are consistent with current living wage standards.
 - c) Forming collaborative relationships with local high schools, colleges, and universities to promote and facilitate opportunities for students to seek employment in the public behavioral health sector.
- 3. Dedicate additional funding and resources to the development and dissemination of public-facing information specific to MHSa plans, resources and access to services in a manner that is:**
- a) User-friendly
 - b) Reflective of the cultural/ linguistic diversity and demographics of the county
 - c) Readily and routinely updated, and publicly available.



OC Links^{24/7}
855-OC LINKS
(855-625-4657)
OC Navigator.org



Behavioral Health Services
www.ochealthinfo.com/bhs
Office: (714) 834-6023

Behavioral Health Advisory Board
www.ochealthinfo.com/bhs/about/mhb
OCBHAB@ochca.com

Clerk of the BHAB
Karla Perez
Office: (714) 834-5481

Calm After the Storm by David Guzman