



ORANGE COUNTY



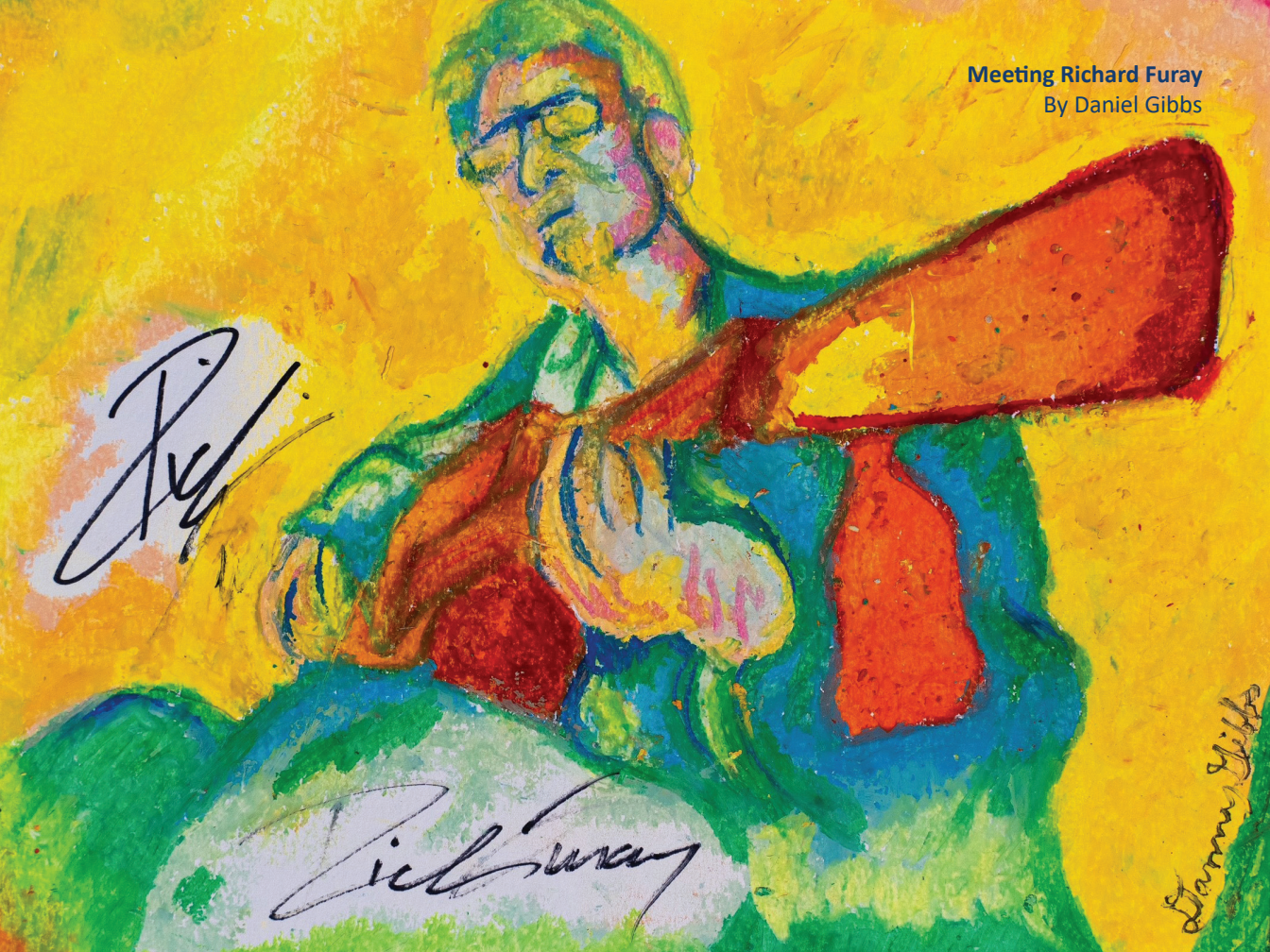
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

Freedom

By Elizabeth Cruz De Aikin

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Meeting Richard Furay
By Daniel Gibbs



ORANGE COUNTY 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Don Wagner
Chairman



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Supervisor

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Supervisor

Katrina Foley



5th District
Supervisor

MESSAGE

FROM BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTOR

The OC Health Care Agency's (HCA) Behavioral Health Services (BHS) is pleased to collaborate with the Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) in presenting the BHAB's Annual Report to the Orange County Board of Supervisors (BOS) 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, California.

The BHAB impacts communities by promoting awareness about mental health and substance use disorders, reducing stigma and discrimination related to behavioral health conditions, valuing diverse opinions, and encouraging and supporting the principles of recovery, wellness, and resiliency in the community.

BHS has worked with the BHAB throughout the past year to ensure greater understanding of the current system of care within the community, respond to feedback to improve programs and services, and work more collaboratively with stakeholders on future behavioral health endeavors.

I remain inspired 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. Their dedication is more important now than ever as we begin to shift the behavioral health system to meet the many State and Federal changes impacting the health care system. It is a pleasure to serve alongside the BHAB in promoting and providing recovery-based, 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.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Kemmer".

Ian Kemmer, LMFT
Director, Behavioral Health Services

MESSAGE

FROM BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR

The year 2024 marked a period of significant change for public behavioral health — not only in Orange County, but throughout California. With the narrow passage of Proposition 1 in March (approved by voters by just 50.2% to 49.8%), a major shift began in how funding for mental health care, substance use treatment, and homelessness services may be utilized.

BHAB has closely monitored how funding for existing services will be impacted and how new programs will be planned and implemented in accordance with Proposition 1 (for more information go to: <https://www.calbhbc.org/bhsa.html>). Of particular concern is the impact on local prevention programs and services, which will now fall under the responsibility of the California Department of Public Health. (for more information go to: <https://www.calbhbc.org/bhsa.html>). Other issues that the BHAB has monitored over the past year include the implementation of Proposition 36 (2024), which established a new treatment-focused court process for certain drug possession offenses. For example, it allows people convicted of possession of illegal drugs (specifically, those who possess drugs such

as methamphetamines or fentanyl or those who have two or more past convictions for drug crimes) to be charged with a "treatment-mandated felony" instead of a misdemeanor in some cases. Upon completion of treatment, charges can be dismissed.

Also on the watch list is the implementation of SB 43 (2023), which expanded the definition of "gravely disabled" to include individuals who, because of severe substance use disorder, or a co-occurring mental health disorder and a severe substance use disorder may now be considered "gravely disabled". The bill also expanded the definition of "gravely disabled," to include the inability of a person to provide for their personal safety or necessary medical care as a result of chronic alcoholism. The BHAB will continue to monitor these items in 2025.

Lastly, we experienced the loss of an integral member of our board this past year. Karyl Dupee, who had served on our BHAB since December 2016, passed away in November 2024. Karyl was a fierce advocate for the older adult population in Orange County and a generous contributor to the many other issues this board has addressed over the years. Karyl's advocacy in support of developing a system of care for older adults living

with both behavioral health and physical/neurocognitive conditions came to fruition in November 2024, when the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63) Oversight and Accountability Commission approved Orange County's Older Adults Innovations Project. This project, which Karyl inspired and championed, will focus on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Alan V. Albright

Alan Albright, LMFT
Chair, Behavioral Health
Advisory Board

Heavenly Feather
By Rose Larson



ABOUT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

The Annual Report of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board 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 BOS and BHS 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 appointments of new members. The categories of membership include:

- Member of the BOS
- Consumer
- Family Member
- Mental Health Professional
- Public Interest

The BHAB serves as a link between the BOS and BHS by enhancing public input into the delivery of community behavioral health care services. The BHAB met regularly, holding two meetings each month: 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.



MEET THE **2024** BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento
2nd District Supervisor

Alan V. Albright, LMFT
Chairman for 2024
*Treatment and Recovery
Specialist*

Frederick Williams, LMFT
Vice Chair for 2024
*Treatment and Recovery
Specialist*

Hector Bustos
*Public Interest- 2nd District
Appointee*

Carla DiCandia
Consumer

Karyl Dupee, LMFT
Family Member
*Member from March 2023 –
November 2024*

Susan Emerson, LCSW, CATC IV
Consumer
*Member from March 2023 –
September 2024*

Matthew Holzmman
Family Member
*Member from March 2023 -
December 2024*

Stephen McNally
Family Member

Chinh Tuong Nguyen
*Public Interest- 1st District
Appointee*

Kristen M. Pankratz, MSW
Consumer
*Member from March 2023-
June 2024*

Linda Smith
*Public Interest- 3rd District
Appointee*

Duan Tran, MSW
*Public Interest- 4th District
Appointee*

Chase Wickersham
*Public Interest-5th District
Appointee*

**Vacant BHAB positions as of
12/2024:**
Family Member
Family Member
Consumer

Flamingo Luna Llana
By Apolonio Martinez

COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

BHAB COMMITTEES

- Children and Youth Services Committee
- Older Adults Services Committee
- Study Committee
- Adults Services Committee
- Substance Use Disorder Committee
- Executive Committee

ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Steven McNally, Chair

A review of the following specific issues by the Adult Services Committee was initiated in 2024 and incorporated participant dialogue, community input, and information provided by various BHS (BHS) staff:

- Increasing community participation in the BHAB and committee process. Areas such as organizational development, communication tools, meeting dates and times, and access to information are being explored (ongoing). Community access to and awareness of OC Links, OC Navigator, CalOptima Beneficiary Line, and 211 OC are being discussed (ongoing) Quality of Services and Ongoing Feedback Loops: Among the many programs provided by the County, a primary focus of the committee has been on Crisis Response, as it affects everyone regardless of demographics, geography, or income levels (ongoing)
- Quality of Services and Ongoing Feedback Loops: Among the many programs provided by the County, a primary focus of the committee has been on Crisis Response, as it affects everyone regardless of demographics, geography, or income levels (ongoing)
- Increasing community awareness of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA Plan), county resources for individuals experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and substance use disorders; and shelter services and resources (ongoing)

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

Linda Smith, Chair

A review of the following specific issues by the Children and Youth Services Committee was conducted in 2024 and incorporated both information requests by the committee and presentations provided by various BHS staff:

- Youth suicide rates in Orange County as reported in the 2023 Conditions of Children Report (ongoing)
- Referral Process for Children and Timely Access to Services (completed)
- Services for children who identify as LGBTQ+ (ongoing)

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Fred Williams, Chair

A review of the following specific issues by the Substance Use Disorder Services Committee was conducted in 2024 and incorporated both information requests by the committee and presentations provided by various BHS staff:

- SUD Residential Services and Outpatient Services

- Withdrawal Management
The Committee recommended and conducted a total of three (3) site visits: Vera's Sanctuary, ART team, and Phoenix House Outpatient Program. They provided evaluation reports to the BHS.

OLDER ADULTS SERVICES COMMITTEE

Karyl Dupée, Chair

Activity around the following specific issues by the Older Adult Services Committee occurred in 2024 and incorporated both participant dialogue, community input; information requested by the committee from, and presentations provided by various BHS staff:

- A recommendation that the County initiate an annual report called "Behavioral Health Conditions of Older Adults in Orange County," provided specifically to older adults (age 65+) in Orange using multiple indicators of the behavioral health of the County's older adult population (submitted)
- A recommendation that in-person training and informational presentations by the OC HCA be made available on a regular basis to various community groups to ensure that they remain familiar with the crisis services that are available to

the public, how to access those services, and what to expect when crisis services are requested (submitted)

- Another recommendation from this committee included the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation (INN) P.I.V.O.T. project, which offered funding for such a program for older adults with co-occurring neurocognitive disorders and mental health conditions. With the Oversight and Accountability Commission's (OAC) recent approval of this project, the OAC expects to expand its support into the implementation phase. The OAC will also continue to monitor how Prop 1 will impact mental health services for the Older Adult community (completed)

BHAB

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1

Site Visits - The BHAB members conducted the following site visits:

- Vera's Sanctuary for Women / Sanctuary Recovery Center
- Phoenix House Adolescent Outpatient Program (SUD)
- Assessment for Residential Treatment Team (ART)

2

Community Events and Outreach - The BHAB actively participated in community events and activated at the following tabling events:

- Meeting of the Minds (April)
- OC Pride Parade and Festival OC Fair and Events Center, Costa Mesa (October)
- 2024 Juneteenth Celebration at Centennial Park (June)
- Recovery Picnic (September)
- Irvine Valley College Walk of Hope, Suicide Awareness (September)
- Walk of Hope Resource Fair at Cypress College 2024 (September)
- Vanguard University Wellness Fair (October)

3

Conferences Attended by BHAB Members - 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)
- Meeting of the Minds (April)
- In addition to conferences, the BHAB continuously attended committee meetings in the community, such as:
 - Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Planning Advisory Committee
 - Behavioral Health Equity Committee
 - Crisis Intervention Training Steering Committee
 - Child Welfare System Improvement Partnership
 - QMS Community Quality Improvement Committee

4

The BHAB received a variety of presentations throughout 2024:

- January:
 - BHAB Retreat
 - MHSA Fiscal Update
- February:
 - Crisis and Acute Care Services Overview
- March:
 - Overview of MHSA Plan Update for FY 2024/25
 - Psychiatric Advanced Directives (PADs) Update
- April:
 - Overview of MHSA 30-day Public Comment Period, Comments Received
 - Public Hearing: MHSA Plan Update for FY 2024/25
- May:
 - Follow-up to Crisis and Acute Care Presentation
 - Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Continuum of Care
- June:
 - Update on MHSA Substantive Recommendations
 - Be Well Campus Update and MHSA Fiscal Update
- July:
 - Planning and Strategizing for 2024
- PADs: Project Overview and Digital Platform Demonstration, and Follow-Up to CAT/PERT Services
- August:
 - MHSA Update
 - MHSA Revenue and BHSA Look Ahead
- September:
 - Office of Suicide Prevention Update
 - Behavioral Health Re-Entry Services: Jail to Community Re-Entry Program (JCRP)
- October:
 - Opportunity Knocks (OK) Program Presentation
 - CYS Services Overview: Outpatient and Full- Service Partnership Services for Children 0-12 Years of Age
- November:
 - BHS Campaigns Update: First Responders for Mental Health and OCTA Campaign
 - Community Program Planning Process Overview and Timeline for Prop 1
 - Be Well Campus Update
 - BHS Onboarding Process

5

The BHAB actively attended monthly meetings of the BOS to demonstrate support for BHS agenda items.

6

The Chair established new committees of the BHAB: Adult Services Committee

ADVISORIES TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIRECTOR IN 2024

The following formal communication and advisories were submitted to the Orange County BOS and BHS Director in 2024:

Meeting the Needs of Older Adults in Orange County

The BHAB applauded the OC HCA’s (HCA) successful submission of an Older Adults Innovations Project which was proposed by the BHAB’s Older Adult Services Committee (chaired by Karyl Dupee, LMFT). This proposal was approved by the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63) Oversight and Accountability Commission on November 21, 2024.

The intent of this project moving forward is to develop a system of care for older adults living with both behavioral health and physical/neurocognitive conditions, which may include individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Currently, this combination of services to specifically address the complex needs of this special population in Orange County are not in place.



Data and Reporting Improvements

The BHAB voiced strong support of the intent of the HCA to begin tracking behavioral health data associated with the older adult population separately from the general adult age group in order to more closely monitor the needs of this particular segment of our community and the services being provided.

Data and Reporting Needs

The BHAB recommended that the HCA create an annual report to the community that provides information on the behavioral health services provided specifically to older adults, age 65+, in Orange County using indicators that include the following:

- Number served by BHS annually
- Number served by BHS, by race/ethnicity
- Number of services provided by type of outpatient program
- Number of Bed Days, by Type of Inpatient Placements

- Rate of Orange County Hospitalizations for Mental Illness and Substance Abuse by City of Residence
- Mental Health Hospitalization Rates by Diagnosis and Race/Ethnicity
- Rate of deaths due to suicide

This data can serve as a useful tool for current and future program planning aimed at addressing gaps in services and monitoring trends in the behavioral health conditions impacting the aging population in Orange County.

Targeted Community Education & Outreach

The BHAB heard from several community groups (e.g., faith-based organizations, public service and other community resource entities) in Orange County who frequently encounter individuals who appear to be in need behavioral health and/or crisis intervention services. Unfortunately, these groups report that they are often unaware of how to obtain immediate assistance in dealing with

these individuals who might benefit from County behavioral health services.

In-person training and informational presentations by the OC HCA should be made available on a regular basis to ensure that concerned community groups remain familiar with the crisis services that are available to the public, how to access those services, and what to expect when services are requested.

Karyl Dupée

September 18, 1949 – November 17, 2024



Karyl was an active and engaged Board member since 2016 and served as an example for us all.

She was a staunch advocate for the older adult population and for those in need throughout the community.

Karyl exemplified how to advocate without becoming adversarial and commit to a cause without giving up.

Karyl will be missed, but we celebrate her many contributions and for a life well lived.

My Recovery
By Kim Johnson



Bloom Where You Are Planted
By Celia Rennie

Bloom where you are Planted



Behavioral Health Services

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Behavioral Health Advisory Board

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Clerk of the BHAB

Karla Perez, (714) 834-5481

