

# Behavioral Health Equity Committee (BHEC) Steering Committee Meeting

March 27, 2025  
1:00pm - 3:00pm

**Facilitated by:** **Co-Chair, Dr. Deana Helmy, LMFT, MBA** **Co-Chair, Luna Lu, Psy.D**  
Ethnic Services Manager, OC HCA Clinical Director, AASCSC

**In Attendance:** Deana Helmy, Luna Lu, John Reynolds, Johnice Williams, Katie Tran, Mario Ortega, Virginia (Gina) Arvizu-Sanchez, Andrew Parker, April Thornton, Belinda McCleese, Teresa Renteria, Wesley Shain

## I. Check-In, Welcome, & Reflection

- Deana Helmy called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m., and each member was introduced.
- On January 23, 2025, meeting minutes were approved as read; Teresa Renteria moved the minutes, and Johnice Williams seconded the motion.
- Reflection—Deana Helmy led the reflection on cultural awareness and insight into Ramadan, which is coming to an end, to acknowledge Orange County’s Muslim population preparing for Eid al-Fitr.

## II. Business

- Luna Lu debriefed the February 20, 2025, public meeting highlighting the song performance from the Black/African-American (B/AA) subcommittee and the collaboration of both presentations and the Spirituality subcommittee.
- Deana Helmy updated the audience on steering committee members stepping down and remaining active and asked that Rebecca Freeman, Co-Chair for Spirituality, join the committee.
- Reported the interested allies joining the LGBTQ+ subcommittee that emerged from the last public meeting.
- Shared BHSa's Community Program Planning (CPP) team wants to schedule focus sessions with each subcommittee with BHS's consulting partners within the next couple of months to support the BHSa Integrated Plan that will start in July 2026.
- Steering Committee Member(s) asked Deana Helmy and Wesley Shain to provide more information on CPP scheduling focus sessions and these ad-hoc meetings to support identifying community gaps and needs within the Behavioral Health and Substance-Use System of Care.
- Belinda McCleese (via an ASL interpreter) expressed concerns about the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) interns' inability to complete their clinical hours because the program is ending due to the budget restrictions from Prop. 1.

- Teresa Renteria commented on the DHH interns' concerns, expressing that BHS leadership had been aware of this provider population matter. Steering Members advised the DHH subcommittee to raise issues with BOS and BHAB.
- Belinda McCleese (via an ASL interpreter) reported on behalf of the DHH subcommittee, which will convene on April 7, 2025, to provide more information.
- Andrew Parker reported on behalf of the Substance-Use Disorder (SUD) subcommittee that the workgroup aims to meet monthly and recently participated in the OC CHIP—SUD workgroup led by Mark Lawrenz, BHS - SUD, Assistant Deputy Director.
- Virginia (Gina) Arvizu-Sanchez, on behalf of the Indigenous and Native American (I/N) subcommittee, reported that housing, transportation, tutoring, dental care, and mental health services remain challenges. The subcommittee is seeking a place to have circled conversations.
- Luna Lu, on behalf of the Asian and Pacific Islanders (API) subcommittee, reported planning an event on May 3rd to celebrate Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month.
- April Thorton and Johnice Williams reported on behalf of the B/AA subcommittee that participation was high at the last meeting. Additionally, there's an opportunity to present at a meeting in April at the Council on Aging Southern California (COASC).
- Deana Helmy, on behalf of the Spirituality subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee will present at Hoag Hospital—Newport Beach.

### **III. Announcements**

- Johnice Williams announced three (3) upcoming Juneteenth events in Orange County:
  - Saturday, June 14, 2025, Orange County Heritage Council - Juneteenth Festival at Pearson Park in Anaheim.
  - Thursday, June 19, 2025, City of Buena Park - Juneteenth Celebration of Freedom at Boisseranc Park.
  - Saturday, June 21, 2025, BIPOC Orange County - OC Juneteenth Freedom Celebration at Great Park in Irvine.
- 2025 Meeting of the Minds Conference, Friday, April 25, at the Anaheim Marriot.

### **IV. Public Meeting Agenda Planning**

- Luna Lu reported that an email would engage the LGBTQ+ and API subcommittees to support May's public meeting.

**Next Steering Committee Meeting: April 24, 2025**

**Next Public Meeting: Thursday, May 29, 2025, 12:00pm - 3:00pm**