



SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD (BHB)

Regular Meeting

Via ~~1~~ teleconference

December 15, 2021 – 5:00 -7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Chair Kandris
Vice Chair Barrett
Carolyn Cooper
Cary Martin
Douglas Vigil
Gertie Kandris
Mary Avanti
Dr Mudaldu Vasudevan
Pamela Keese -Wyre
Supervisor Kathy Miller

Board Members Absent/Excused:

Jeff Giampetro
Joretta Burlington
John Weston
Karen Ivy
Sabrina Flores-Eng

Also Present:

Greg Diederich, HCS Director
Tony Vartan, BHS Director
Cara Dunn, BHS Assistant Director
Isabel Espinoza, Administrative Secretary
Angelo Balmaceda, MHSA Coordinator
Sgt. Rich Graham, Tracy PD
Alexis Bernard
Edna Ealey-Fields
Tony Anderson, VMRC
ASL Interpreters Stephanie and Brian

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

II. DIRECTOR'S REPORT - *Tony Vartan*, MSW, LCSW, Behavioral Health Director

A. NACT report was submitted to DHCS

B. Staffing Shortage

The State's assessment is that BHS is short approximately 115 mental health service providers, particularly clinicians and 2 psychiatrists. BHS is looking at corrective action regarding the psychiatrists by moving staff between departments.

C. BHS estimates that the need is closer to 130 to 135 new mental health services providers.

D. BHS is going to the Labor Board tomorrow (12/16/21) with regional compensation comparisons and will ask for funding recommendations. A recommendation was sent to the Board of Supervisors and BHS is waiting for them to make a decision.

Since BHS is not general fund dependent, there is sufficient funding for adding needed positions.

BHS currently has a 23% vacancy rate. Historically vacancy rates had fluctuating, however, BHS has lost a large number of staff to the school system because of its inability to compete with wages despite the Board approving a 16-18% raise for some staff.

There is a shortage of mental health workers nationwide. Despite staff shortages, caseloads have continued to increase since no client is turned away.

III. NEW BUSINESS 15 MINUTES

- A. MHS Community Planning - *Angelo Balmaceda*, MHS Coordinator
Angelo announced the upcoming MHS Community Convenings schedule for the annual MHS Plan update.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee – Gertie Kandris
- GOVERNOR NEWSOM signed SENATOR SCOTT WIENER'S SB 221 legislation into law December 14, 2021. SB 221 establishes clear timely access standards for HMOs that operate under Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) and health insurers that fall under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Insurance (CDI) requiring them to provide follow-up appointments and other forms of care within ten business days, unless a provider believes a longer gap is appropriate. With COVID-19 exacerbating an already dire mental health and substance use crisis facing our country, timely access to mental health care is important. One in four people age 18 to 24 has seriously considered suicide in the past 30 days. San Francisco reports overdose deaths far outpace COVID 19 deaths by a margin of three to one. SB 221 is sponsored by the National Union of Healthcare Workers representing more than 4,000 mental health & substance use disorder clinicians and other healthcare workers. SB 221 follows up on Senator Wiener's SB 855 which became effective Jan 1, 2021 expanding the California Mental Health Parity Act of 1999 requiring Health Plan Insurers to treat mental health treatment equal to physical health treatment.

V. REMINDERS

- A. Next Behavioral Health Board meeting will be January 19, 2022. For information, please contact Luke Vlavianos at 209-468-8750 or via e-mail at lvlavianos@sjcbhs.org

IX. ADJOURN TO JANUARY 19, 2022 at 5:00 P.M.