

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD  
**DISPARITIES REDUCTION COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES ■ Tuesday, May 3, 2022**

<p><b>Members Present</b>          Marlen Torres, Chair          Stephanie Escoto, BHAB          Genevieve Flores-Haro          Janis Gardner, BHAB          Michael Rodriguez, BHAB          Elizabeth R. Stone</p> <p><b>Others Present</b>          Priscila Hazrun, Interpreter</p>	<p><b>Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) Managers/Staff Present</b>          Joanna Peterson, Management Assistant / Zoom Engineer          Vickie Poliquin, BHAB Assistant</p> <p><b>NEXT MEETING:</b>  <b>Tuesday, June 7, 2022, 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM</b></p> <p><b>Zoom Meeting:</b>  <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87680728818?pwd=b3dCdjBNcGszRUJ4VzM2TXY1cJlJQT09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87680728818?pwd=b3dCdjBNcGszRUJ4VzM2TXY1cJlJQT09</a>  <b>Meeting ID:</b> 876 8072 8818  <b>Password:</b> 156974  <b>Dial-in:</b> 669-900-9128</p>
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Note: The committee has not yet approved these minutes. There may be additions/deletions or corrections before the minutes are accepted in final form.

	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS/ ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
I.	<b>Call to Order</b> Chair Torres called the meeting of the Disparities Reduction Committee to order at 4:40 PM following the instructions that were provided by Joanna Peterson on how to access interpretation services.		
II.	<b>Roll Call</b> Vickie Poliquin conducted the calling of the roll and confirmed that a quorum of the Committee members exists.		
III.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> Ms. Torres welcomed all meeting participants.		
IV.	<b>Approval of the Agenda</b> Ms. Torres asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Gardner moved to approve; Mr. Rodriguez seconded. The motion to approve the agenda as written carried unanimously through roll call.	Agenda approved as written. <b>M/S/C</b>	
V.	<b>Approval of the April 12, 2022 Minutes</b> Ms. Torres asked for a motion to approve the April 12, 2022 minutes. Ms. Torres moved to approve; Ms. Flores-Haro seconded. The motion to approve the minutes as written carried by majority vote through roll call. Ms. Gardner, Mr. Rodriguez and Ms. Stone abstained.	Minutes approved as written. <b>M/S/C</b>	
V.	<b>Public Comments</b> None.		
VI.	<b>Chair Comments</b> Ms. Torres provided a recap of the first meeting of the Committee held on April 12. She conveyed a special thank you to Cynthia Salas, Equity Services Manager in the Office of Health Equity and Cultural Diversity, who kicked off the meeting with an overview of the work that VCBH is doing that also captured and highlighted disparities throughout the county. Ms. Torres advised that Cynthia Salas has graciously agreed to participate in the Committee meetings on a regular basis and will prepare future presentations.  Ms. Torres advised that the intent of today’s meeting is to talk about the Committee’s focus, goals and objectives and how they tie into larger discussions held at the BHAB’s General meeting level. She noted that Cynthia Salas will provide the Disparities in Ventura County presentation at an upcoming BHAB General meeting and future presentations will assist with the Committee’s decision making and for providing recommendations.		
VIII.	<b>New Business</b> A. Discuss the Committee’s Strategy Objectives and Next Steps Ms. Torres noted that there is an opportunity to begin inviting stakeholder community members to join and participate in the Committee meetings.  Ms. Torres invited Mr. Rodriguez to provide his perspective on how the work of the Committee will tie into the work of the General BHAB.		

Mr. Rodriguez provided information regarding the work that is in progress on the BHAB's FY2020-21 Annual Report and noted that the Committee's work will be instrumental in providing information for inclusion in the FY2021-22 Annual Report that is being planned for release earlier in fiscal years (September or October).

Ms. Stone commented on the style and content of previous Annual Reports and asked whether the content will shift toward covering the continuum of services. Mr. Rodriguez advised that the shift is projected for the FY2021-22 Annual Report with the assistance of the Disparities Reduction Committee in identifying specific disparities and gaps in service. Ms. Stone noted that it would be beneficial to request that all BHAB Committees be asked to identify this information as well.

Ms. Torres summarized that the Disparities Reduction Committee will provide information for the period July 2021 through June 2022, which encompasses the establishment and work of the Disparities Reduction Workgroup, the transition of the Workgroup into a Committee and the two meetings held in April and May 2022. Mr. Rodriguez confirmed the accuracy of Ms. Torres' summary.

Ms. Gardner discussed Cynthia Salas' offer to inquire whether studies would be derived from the Safety Racial Equity Advisory Committee composed of community leaders, law enforcement leadership, District Attorney, Probation, the Sheriff's Office and Police Chiefs. Ms. Gardner noted that this Committee would be an excellent resource to derive information and asked about the make-up of the Committee and how to contact the Chair or Co-Chair to request a possible presentation. Ms. Flores Haro advised she is a member of the Committee, provided specific information about the make-up and described topics that have been discussed. She noted that the next meeting is scheduled for May 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM and are public meetings for those interested in attending.

Discussion took place about how presentations from other Committees might enhance the goals of the Disparities Reduction Committee. Currently, a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Counsel, chaired by Cynthia Salas, a Safety Racial Equity Advisory Committee and a Health Equity Committee exist. Ms. Flores-Haro provided the make-up of the Health Equity Committee and offered to provide the complete membership list at the next meeting. Ms. Torres advised that she has given a lot of thought to how the Disparities Reduction Committee's feedback will tie in with the work of the various committees.

Ms. Stone provided her perspective on the number of health-focused organizations that focus on the needs of diverse, marginalized and under-resourced communities and suggested the Disparities Reduction Committee get connect with these organizations to learn more, particularly with the start-up of California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) and addressing social determinants of health.

Mr. Rodriguez expressed agreement with including as many voices as possible without reinventing the wheel, acquiring as much information as possible and partnering with the various committees with a goal to reduce disparities on a variety of different issues.

Ms. Stone agreed with Mr. Rodriguez noting that the Committee should not be paralleling but becoming familiar (asset mapping) to find commonalities and connections and to look outside the boundaries of the BHAB to the entire continuum of services. Ms. Stone asked whether there is a centralized list of the various committees that have been formed. Ms. Torres noted that discussions have taken place regarding a "Community Information Exchange" that might be the start of a central hub with this type of information available.

Ms. Torres summarized the discussion:

- Interest in learning more about other organizations and potentially inviting them to provide a presentation;
- Confirmed that Cynthia Salas will continue to be a part of the meetings and provide periodic presentations;
- Conduct a strategic exercise, in general, to ensure that the Committee's goals and objectives are in place; and
- Continue holding group-style discussions.

	<p>Ms. Stone asked at what point the Committee would begin inviting members of the community that do not necessarily have a position in an organization but those that might have a concern or interest in being involved and participating in the Committee meetings.</p> <p>Ms. Gardner noted that community participation in the BHAB meetings has been a long-term challenge. Vickie Poliquin offered information regarding the current distribution lists that are utilized to send BHAB meeting announcements that could be considered for use in sending out the newly formed Disparities Reduction Committee meeting announcement to a wider audience. Vickie Poliquin will send the referenced distribution list to Ms. Torres for review and consideration for use.</p> <p>Ms. Gardner noted that the BHAB’s Prevention Committee provides its Mission Statement at the top of the agenda and suggested adding the Mission Statement to the Disparities Reduction Committee agenda to assist with conveying the purpose of the Committee to members of the public. Ms. Torres agreed noting that she will consider the suggestion at a future point in time.</p> <p>Ms. Torres provided positive feedback regarding Ms. Stone’s suggestion regarding “asset mapping” that suggested the Committee begin scheduling presentations that will serve to share information. Ms. Stone spoke of an idea to reach out to high schools or community colleges and connect with teachers who might have students interested in doing a special project on an aspect of reducing disparities in their community and be offered a spot on the Committee to present their work. Ms. Flores-Haro concurred with the idea noting that students would more than likely be comfortable joining on Zoom to share their stories and consideration be made to adjust Committee hours to a later time when students or community members might be more available.</p> <p>Mr. Rodriguez read the section in the BHAB Bylaws that provides the mission of the Committee: “Advocate for improved access to appropriate mental health services, substance use disorder services and co-occurring disorder services by working towards and advocating for eliminating disparities in service delivery to and access by underrepresented and underserved communities, including but not limited to those based on race, ethnicity, language, age, gender, disability, gender identity and sexual identity.” Ms. Torres pointed out the importance of the word “access” within the statement and agreed with placing the Committee’s current mission statement on its agendas.</p> <p>Ms. Escoto raised the point of thinking about what is keeping people from participating as opposed to how the Committee can improve, such as holding the meetings later, producing informational flyers and thinking about the cultural implications and how the implications impact people’s willingness to engage in receiving services.</p> <p>Ms. Stone noted the importance of providing access to services that are designed to best serve all cultures and for modifying services so that they build on and respect the strengths that people bring. Further discussion ensued regarding the meaning of “access” to services</p> <p><b>B. Discuss Future Presentations</b>  This agenda item was discussed within several areas of agenda VIII.A.</p> <p>Ms. Torres advised that the Committee is scheduled to meet monthly for a few months prior to converting to a bi-monthly schedule.</p>		
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b> The meeting adjourned at 5:34 PM.		