

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM)**  
**MINUTES ■ Monday, October 11, 2021**

<p><b><u>BHAB Officers Present</u></b>  Michael Rodriguez, Chair  Joe S. Ramirez, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair  Christopher Tejada, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair  Janis Gardner, Secretary</p> <p><b><u>Others Present</u></b>  Claudia Armann, BHAB  Ratan Bhavnani, BHAB  Gane Brooking, BHAB  Roberta Griego, NAMI Ventura County  Mary Haffner, Haffner Law Group  Anthony Marron, Pacific Clinics  Shawna Morris, Casa Pacifica  Patti Pape, NAMI Ventura County  Gina Petrus, Petrus Psychology  Chris Ridge, Ventura County Office of Education  Carolina Rodriguez, Homeland Language Services  Carole Shelton  Elizabeth R. Stone  Jerry Weaver</p>	<p><b><u>Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) Staff Present</u></b>  Dr. Sevet Johnson, Director  Cynthia Salas, Equity Services Manager – Office of Health Equity &amp; Cultural Diversity  Dr. John Schipper, Adult Services Division Chief  Vickie Poliquin, Temporary BHAB Assistant</p> <p>NEXT MEETING:  Monday, November 8, 2021, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.</p> <p>Virtual Meeting Via Zoom</p>
<p><i>Note: The committee has not yet approved these minutes. There may be additions/deletions or corrections before the minutes are accepted in final form.</i></p>	

	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS/ ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
I.	<p><b>Call to Order</b>  Chair Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.   Mr. Tejada advised all attendees of the details on how to access interpretation services.</p>		
II.	<p><b>Roll Call – Board Executive Committee Attendees</b>  Secretary Gardner confirmed that a quorum exists through roll call.</p>		
III.	<p><b>Approval of the Agenda</b>  Mr. Rodriguez asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Gardner moved to approve the agenda as written; Mr. Tejada seconded. The motion carried unanimously through roll call.</p>	<p>The agenda was approved as written.  <b>M/S/C</b></p>	
IV.	<p><b>Approval of the Minutes</b>  Mr. Rodriguez advised he received a communication from Mr. Harris requesting corrections to the minutes and summarized the requested corrections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under BHAB Officers Present – correct Member (Chair) Emeritus to Chair Emeritus. Mr. Rodriguez noted Article V-A of the Bylaws references Member Emeritus and that past practice has been to reference Chair in parenthesis to demarcate the position and suggested leaving “as is”.</li> <li>Under Item VIII – Director’s Update – Add his request that the BHAB be notified in advance of VCBH items that are on the Board of Supervisors agendas. Mr. Rodriguez requested adding that all VCBH agenda items can be found on the BOS website.</li> </ol> <p>Mr. Rodriguez asked for a motion to approve the September 13, 2021, minutes, as amended. Ms. Gardner moved to approve the minutes with the requested amendments; Mr. Tejada seconded. The motion to approve the minutes as amended carried unanimously through roll call.</p>	<p>The minutes were approved as amended. <b>M/S/C</b></p>	
V.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b>  Mr. Rodriguez welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a reminder of the guidelines within the BHAB’s Best Practices and Conduct Policy stating that members and participants should actively listen, focus on issues, speak in the first person - first language, refrain from swearing, refrain from personal attacks or criticism of self or others, speak one person at a time, refrain from sidebars, keep comments short, if possible, to avoid monopolizing the</p>		

	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS/ ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
	discussion, limit the use of acronyms and turn off or silence cell phones. He pointed out voicing disagreement does not violate the Policy and welcomes robust debate of issues and ideas and looks forward to continuing to collaborate and work together to improve meaningful access to behavioral health services to residents of the community. Brief introductions were made by provided by those Executive Committee members in attendance.		
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Public Comments</b> Elizabeth R. Stone expressed concern regarding the validity of the statements made in a newspaper article that reported information from a BHAB meeting and encouraged the BHAB to provide a mechanism to ensure that people are held accountable for the validity of public comments and information.		
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Chair Comments and Announcements</b> Mr. Rodriguez reminded the BHAB of its very defined roles as outlined in the Welfare & Institutions Code (WIC) Section 5604.2 that states they are charged with reviewing and advising with respect to behavioral health services.		
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Director's Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanked Chair Rodriguez for centering the BHAB on its charge under the WIC and regulations, as written, noting that unlike many other County Boards and Commissions, the BHAB is very different in that it is regulated under the WIC and speaks to the mission, the objective and how the BHAB's work is accomplished.</li> <li>• The California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) initiative that is transforming the provision of services of behavioral health across the State that also impacts health, dental and targeted case management for Medi-Cal beneficiaries continues its implementation coordinated by the Gold Coast Health Plan. The initiative is scheduled to "go live" in January 2022 and VCBH continues to prepare and work closely with Health Care Agency administration and Gold Coast Health plan to provide a seamless transition.</li> <li>• Highlighted two recent newspaper articles regarding the eight virtual Wellness Centers that are a great benefit to students.</li> <li>• Dina Olivas, VCBH's Youth &amp; Family Services Division Chief, will retire on Friday, October 15, with over 20 years of service with the Behavioral Health Department, and expressed gratefulness for all that she done to serve VCBH in a variety of capacities.</li> </ul> <p>Mr. Rodriguez asked for clarification regarding Dr. Johnson's reference to Department system planning. Dr. Johnson responded that system planning is a reference to how the Department plans to meet State guidelines and CalAIM initiatives which include changes in the meaning of medical necessity and how the Department can best prepare for the January 2022 deadlines and aiming toward 2027 when there will be just one mental health plan encompassing mild, moderate and severe mental illness.</p>		
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Executive Committee Member Comments and Announcements</b> There were no comments or announcements.		
<b>X.</b>	<b>Secretary's Report</b> Ms. Gardner announced that Mr. Clerici has been reappointed to the BHAB, that no other BHAB members terms are coming up soon and that overall attendance is good. She advised that letters have been sent to BHAB members who need to complete the required Ethics Training and information whether the training is available in Spanish for the BHAB's monolingual members is currently pending.		
<b>XI.</b>	<b>Old Business</b> A. Revision to BHAB Bylaws Mr. Rodriguez advised that this item relates to the conversion of the Disparities Reduction Workgroup to a BHAB Committee which will be placed on the October 18 General meeting agenda. There was no further discussion.		
<b>XII.</b>	<b>New Business</b> A. Evaluate September General Board Meeting to Identify Need for Improvement Mr. Tejeda suggested adding a summary statement of the BHAB's Code of Conduct Policy at the beginning of each meeting following the interpretation services instructions to serve as a reminder for participants to stay focused on topics. Ms. Gardner concurred.		

	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS/ ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
	<p>Mr. Tejada provided an Executive Committee member comment (ref: Agenda item IX) in reference to the data statistics in the recent newspaper article related to the percentage of people in custody that are on psychotropic medications. As a member of the Data Elements Workgroup, he asked for the best method to obtain this data when it becomes available from either the Sheriff's Department or VCBH. Mr. Rodriguez clarified that the data would be available through the Sheriff's Department and will reach out to Cmdr. Fryhoff to inquire on behalf of the Data Elements Workgroup.</p> <p>Ms. Gardner provided an Executive Committee member comment (ref: Agenda item IX) noting that Cmdr. Fryhoff will provide a presentation on the jail's Therapeutic Inmate Management Unit at the November Prevention Committee meeting for those interested in attending.</p> <p>B. Brown Act Public Emergency Allowances / Teleconferences – Requirements for Local Boards and Commissions Mr. Rodriguez provided information regarding the purpose of this agenda item referencing the memo from Dr. Robert Levin, Ventura County Health Officer, dated September 21 strongly recommending social distancing and continued remote meetings of legislative bodies to minimize the spread of COVID-19. He noted this will be an action item at all General meetings that will require an assessment and vote on continuing to meet remotely. It was clarified that no action is required of the Executive Committee. The item was tabled to the next Executive Committee meeting for discussion.</p> <p>C. 2021 Data Notebook – Due November 30 Mr. Rodriguez advised and clarified that the 2021 Data Notebook information was received from the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC) on September 17 and is due on November 30, 2021.</p> <p>Elizabeth R. Stone made a public comment offering her support to assist with the completion of the 2021 Data Notebook.</p> <p>D. BHAB Membership Identification Assessment – Survey Results Status Mr. Rodriguez advised that preparation of the Survey is in progress and asked that this agenda item be tabled to the November General meeting.</p> <p>E. Needs Assessment Board Letter Workgroup Report Discussion Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Workgroup met and that the most current draft of the Board Letter was distributed with the agenda.</p> <p>F. Presentation Requests Elizabeth R. Stone asked to present on the recent Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) grant to expand a variety of Peer Support work and opportunities. Mr. Rodriguez will follow up with Ms. Stone to discuss scheduling the presentation.</p> <p>G. Recognition Award Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Gardner recommended recognizing Dina Olivas, Youth &amp; Family Services Division Chief, who will retire after more than 20 years of services with VCBH. Ms. Gardner will work with Dr. Johnson to develop the Award.</li> </ul>	<p>Follow-up with Cmdr. Fryhoff regarding obtaining psychotropic medications statistic.</p> <p>Tabled to November 8 Executive Committee meeting for discussion.</p> <p>Add Establishment of 2021 Data Notebook Workgroup to Oct. 18 agenda.</p> <p>Tabled to November 15 General meeting.</p> <p>Add Needs Assessment Board Letter to Oct. 18 agenda for action or discussion TBD.</p>	Chair Rodriguez
XIII.	<p><b>Develop Agenda for Virtual General Meeting Scheduled for October 18, 2021 at 1:00 PM</b> Changes were agreed upon as follows:</p> <p><u>ADD:</u> D.5. Data Elements Workgroup Report – Jennifer Morrison, Chair (5 min.)</p>		
XIV.	<p><b>Public Comments</b> Elizabeth R. Stone asked for clarification whether the Revision to the Bylaws agenda item slated for the October 18 General meeting would be an action item and, if so, encouraged removal of the stipulation that BHAB Committees meet before 5:00 PM. She noted the revision may increase attendance and participation at meetings. Mr. Rodriguez will follow up on this suggestion.</p>		

	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS/ ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
<b>XV.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b> The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 PM.		

**Behavioral Health Advisory Board EXECUTIVE Meeting Attendance  
2021-2022**

Members 2021-2022	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Michael Rodriguez Chair	X	X	X	X								
Joe S. Ramirez 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chair	X	X	X	X								
Christopher Tejada 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair	X	X	X	X								
Janis Gardner Secretary	X	X	X	X								
Jerry Harris Member (Chair) Emeritus	X	X	X	e								
Nancy Borchard Member-At-Large	X	X	X									

Present = X

District 1: Supervisor LaVere

District 2: Supervisor Parks

District 3: Supervisor Long

District 4: Supervisor Huber

District 5: Supervisor Ramirez

To: Board of Supervisors  
County Executive Office  
Clerk of the Board

From: Dr. Robert Levin, Ventura County Health Officer

Date: September 21, 2021



Re: Recommendation regarding Social Distancing and Continued Remote Meetings of  
Legislative Bodies

I strongly recommend that physical/social distancing measures continue to be practiced throughout our Ventura County communities to minimize the spread of COVID-19, including at meetings of the Board of Supervisors and meetings of other legislative bodies of the County of Ventura.

California Department of Public Health (“CDPH”) and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) caution that the Delta variant of COVID-19, currently the dominant strain of COVID-19 in the country, is more transmissible than prior variants of the virus, may cause more severe illness, and that even fully vaccinated individuals can spread the virus to others resulting in rapid and alarming rates of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/delta-variant.html>). Additionally, the CDC has established a “Community Transmission” metric with 4 tiers designed to reflect a community’s COVID-19 case rate and percent positivity. Ventura County currently has a Community Transmission metric of “high” which is the most serious of the tiers.

Whether vaccinated or not, positive individuals are contracting the Delta variant and infecting others in our communities. Social distancing and masking are crucial mitigation measure to prevent the disease’s spread. Remote meetings of legislative bodies of the County, including but not limited to the Board of Supervisors, are a recommended form of social distancing that allows for the participation of the community, staff, presenters, and legislative body members in a safe environment, with no risk of contagion. It is recommended that legislative bodies of the County continue to implement 100% remote meetings.

If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me.



**DRAFT**

# Ventura County Behavioral Health Advisory Board

---

October \*\*, 2021

Members:

- Claudia Armann
- Soledad Barragán
- Ratan Bhavnani
- Nancy Borchard, Member At Large
- Gane Brooking
- Kevin Clerici
- Jose Estrada
- Jesse Finkbeiner
- Genevieve Flores-Haro
- Cmdr. James Fryhoff
- Janis Gardner, Secretary
- Jerry Harris, Chair Emeritus
- Cheryl Heitmann
- Carol J. Keavney
- Matt LaVere, Supervisor
- Jennifer Morrison
- Patricia Mowlavi
- Joe S. Ramirez, 1st Vice Chair
- Michael Rodriguez, Chair
- Christopher Tejada, 2nd Vice Chair
- Carol Thomas
- Marlen Torres

Dr. Sevet Johnson, Director  
Ventura County Behavioral Health

Board of Supervisors  
County of Ventura  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Re: Comprehensive Behavioral Health Needs Assessment**

Dear Ventura County Supervisors:

The Ventura County Behavioral Health Department has effectively and creatively utilized existing resources to provide behavioral health services to Ventura County residents. However, far too many people suffering from severe mental illness cycle through the revolving doors of rehospitalization and incarceration, thereby traumatizing them and their families. Accordingly, we respectfully request the County of Ventura engage a qualified independent entity to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the behavioral health services continuum of care without consuming resources allocated for mental health services. As you may know, the continuum of care includes treatment, programs, facility and staffing infrastructure to provide appropriate treatment, as well as long-term and transitional housing supports.

As you may also know, other California counties have hired independent contractors to conduct similar behavioral health needs assessments because of their global and outside third-party perspectives. Effective pre-crisis treatment significantly reduces the need for crisis care. Accordingly, our requested needs assessment should include every level of care required by people affected by mental illness, from the least to the most intensive to ensure early identification and appropriate treatment while supporting recovery and independence.

Address:

1911 Williams Drive, Suite 200  
Oxnard, CA 93036  
Phone: 805-981-1115

Areas assessed may include:

- Review of services offered by Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) and recommendations to enhance them, such as:
  - Using Peer Support Specialists embedded with VCBH or its contracted providers;
  - Implementing behavioral health urgent care centers;
  - STAR, RISE, Crisis Team and ASSIST Team;
  - Housing and supportive care;
  - Linguistically and culturally appropriate services; and
  - Other evidence-based programs used elsewhere.
- Recommended number of residential treatment beds, including Intensive Psychiatric Units (IPU), Crisis Residential Treatment (CRT), Board and Care and other step-down facilities.

As the cycle of rehospitalization and incarceration span several departments and systems, the evaluator(s) may require data and information from other departments/agencies, including:

- The Sheriff's Department;
- The District Attorney's Office;
- The Public Defender's Office;
- The Probation Agency;
- The Human Services Agency, including the Public Guardian; and
- The Health Care Agency.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The BHAB formally requests the Board of Supervisors to take the following actions:

- Approve and implement the recommendation for the County of Ventura to engage a qualified independent entity to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the behavioral health continuum of care pertaining to individuals experiencing mental illness and substance use disorders;
- Instruct the Health Care Agency to develop an RFP to hire a qualified independent entity to conduct the needs assessment; and
- The costs associated with this comprehensive needs assessment should not consume resources intended for existing and prospective mental health services but originate from grants, foundation or additional local, state or federal funding. Examples of potential funding sources are attached in Appendix "A".

**DRAFT**

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Michael Rodríguez, Chair  
Ventura County Behavioral Health Advisory Board

cc: Michael Powers, County Executive Officer

encl.