

VENTURA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

**GENERAL MEETING**

MINUTES

**August 20, 2018**

**NEXT MEETING:**

Monday, September 17, 2018

1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Ventura County Behavioral Health Administration  
1911 Williams Drive, Training Room ♦ Oxnard, CA 93036

Note: The Behavioral Health Advisory Board has not yet approved these minutes. There may be additions/deletions or corrections before the minutes are accepted in final form.

**BHAB Members Present**

Jerry Harris, Chair  
Claudia Armann  
Jamie Banker  
Ratan Bhavnani, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair  
Nancy Borchard  
Gane Brooking, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair  
Kevin Clerici  
Margaret Cortese, Member-At-Large  
Janis Gardner, Member Emeritus  
Larry Hicks  
Patricia Mowlavi  
Cmdr. Ron Nelson  
Denise Nielsen  
Supervisor Linda Parks  
Gina Petrus  
Marlen Torres  
Sheri Valley  
Kay Wilson-Bolton, Secretary

**BHAB Members Absent**

Monique Garcia  
Mary Haffner  
Irene Pinkard

**Others Present**

Bob Wickham, NAMI  
David Deutsch, NAMI  
Brian Brennan, County Executive Office  
Sally Harrison, County Executive Office  
Rachel McDuffee, Aegis Treatment Centers  
Robbie Hidalgo, Simi At the Garden  
Sgt. Matthew Young, Ventura County Sheriff's Office

**VCBH Managers and Staff Present**

Sevet Johnson, VCBH Director  
Lisa Acosta, M.D., Youth & Family Division Medical Director  
Loretta Denering, Alcohol and Drug Programs Division Chief  
Leisa Donovan, Fiscal Manager  
Dan Hicks, ADP Prevention Manager  
Jason Jones, MHSA Fiscal  
Elaine Martinez, Contracts  
Pete Pringle, Youth & Family Division Chief  
Kiran Sahota, MHSA Manager  
Dr. John Schipper, Adult Division Chief  
Edith Pham, BHAB Assistant

	DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS/ ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
I.	<b>Call to Order</b> Chair Harris called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Jamie Banker lead the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.		
II.	<b>Approval of the Agenda</b> Mr. Harris asked the Board to review and approve today's agenda. Denise Nielsen moved to approve, Larry Hicks seconded. Janis Gardner requested to move item XIII.C., Future Recognitions, up as she needs to leave early. Mr. Harris noted that item XIV., Contracts, needs to be tabled and not discussed. Larry Hicks moved to table item XIV and move item XIII.C up to the top of the agenda. Supervisor Parks noted that item XIV is being removed from the agenda rather than tabled. Ms. Nielsen and Mr. Hicks agreed to amend the motion to reflect that item XIV is being removed. The motion passed unanimously as amended.	The agenda was approved as amended. <b>M/S/C</b>	
III.	<b>Approval of the Minutes</b> Mr. Harris asked the Board to review and approve the minutes of the July 16, 2018 meeting. Margaret Cortese moved to approve, Nancy Borchard seconded. The motion passed unanimously.	The minutes were approved as written. <b>M/S/C</b>	
IV.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> Mr. Harris welcomed everyone and asked BHAB members to introduce themselves.		
V.	<b>Public Comments</b> A. David Deutsch thanked those who attended the recent NAMI Walk kickoff event. He invited all to register for the NAMI Walk, which will take place on October 13, and to share the event flyers that he brought.  B. Bob Wickham, referring to an article in the Los Angeles Times regarding unspent funds from Proposition 63, noted that he hopes that Ventura County MHSA funds are used to help people. He spoke in support of AB 1810. He referenced an article that suggests the New York police fails the mentally ill.  C. Robbie Hidalgo noted that the Simi Valley farmers market will be held for another year thanks to sponsors. The Simi Valley Community Garden and Big Brothers Big Sisters are pairing with Probation to open an evening reporting center at a school in Simi Valley; this program will create resources for youth on or at risk of being placed on probation.		
VI.	<b>Chair Report – Jerry Harris</b> A. Mr. Harris participated in the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions (CALBHB/C) Governing Board meeting conference call on July 27, 2018 as he is board director. B. During the conference call, CALBHB/C voted to approve joining the Behavioral Health Action Coalition. This statewide organization provides information to the community regarding mental health issues. C. Ms. Gardner provided information regarding the following events: 1. Aegis Treatment Centers open house on August 23 at 4:00 p.m. in Oxnard; 2. Out of the Darkness Community Walk on September 15 in Camarillo; 3. Suicide Prevention conference on September 19 at Oxnard College; 4. NAMI Walk on October 13 in Ventura; 5. The Third Annual Haunted Housing Run on October 27 in Ventura; 6. Supervisor Parks' written update on the Growing Works nursery in Camarillo. Supervisor Parks noted that clients are enjoying their time at the nursery. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be scheduled at a later date. See attached for details.		
VII.	<b>Board Members Comments and Announcements</b> A. Ratan Bhavnani noted that he lead a visit to the Ventura County Medical Center Inpatient Psychiatric Unit (VCMC IPU). Kevin Clerici noted the visit was eye-opening. The way staff manage and treat clients is extraordinary, and clients feel respected. However, Mr. Clerici found it shocking that one of the building's wings is vacant due to Licensing requirements, and he would like for this situation to be discussed further. Gina Petrus and Gane Brooking concurred, citing the shortage of psychiatric beds. Mr. Bhavnani noted that Vista del Mar		

	<p>Psychiatric Hospital in Ventura, which closed in early December due to the Thomas Fire, is hoping to reopen in September. Supervisor Parks suggested inviting the State to speak locally and address this subject.</p> <p>B. Margaret Cortese noted that the site visit to Logrando Bienestar, which was followed by a field visit, went well. She will provide a report at the September General meeting.</p> <p>C. Claudia Armann noted that an Educational Workshop on Homelessness in Ventura will take place on September 6 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Poinsettia Pavilion in Ventura. The workshop is sponsored by the Faith Subcommittee of the Ventura Social Services Task Force. Speakers will discuss the issues related to homelessness in Ventura.</p> <p>D. Ms. Gardner noted that a managed care workgroup has been meeting and indicated that the Department is addressing the many state mandates related to the transition to managed care.</p> <p>E. Cmdr. Nelson noted that The Sheriff's Office (along with VCBH, Health Care Agency, County Executive Office, and Probation Agency) was successful in applying for a \$25,000 State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) grant to expand Medication Assisted Drug Treatment (MAT) for persons incarcerated in County jail. Part of the scope of the grant is to increase knowledge and awareness for the need for MAT, and to expand the use of MAT in County jails. Ventura County currently has a program to provide Vivitrol MAT for AB109 inmates. The grant will be used to expand MAT to other jail inmates, and to incorporate either Methadone and Suboxone and additional treatment modalities. The grant period runs until April 2019. Kay Wilson-Bolton, Mr. Harris, Ms. Gardner, Supervisor Parks and Dr. Johnson commented on how Cmdr. Nelson will be missed upon his retirement from County service in September.</p> <p>F. Ms. Brooking noted that at the NAMI California conference, information was given about using Ketamine to reduce suicidality, and therapy is being developed to be used in conjunction with the medication.</p>		
<p><b>VIII.</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation: Pharmaceutical Crimes Unit – Sgt. Matthew Young, Ventura County Sheriff's Office</b></p> <p>The task force has been operating since 2013, following an investigation into a doctor's prescribing habits. Early on, the unit was meeting with doctors, nurse practitioners and nurses to educate them on prescription medication abuse. The unit now focuses on drug overdoses. Since May 2013, it has made 523 arrests and has seized \$2.3 million and 400,000 pills. Investigations are triggered by calls from doctors and pharmacies. A team member investigates fatal overdoses and coaches investigators on what to look for in cases of non-fatal overdoses.</p> <p>Pharmacists use the Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES), a computer program that helps to identify patients who are doctor-shopping. Currently, 78% of doctors are signed into this program. Dr. Lisa Acosta, VCBH Youth &amp; Family Division Medical Director, noted that, all doctors will be required to check CURES at least every four months, starting October 1<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p>Veterinarian-shopping is now a reality. Supervisor Parks noted she has read an article that stated that many prescriptions are written by dentists as well.</p> <p>The unit supports the passage of several bills to make it harder for small pharmacies to be broken into, to get doctors to be able to run their own Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES) and monitor their own prescription writing, and to hold drug pushers accountable for overdoses from drugs they provide.</p>		
<p><b>IX.</b></p>	<p><b>Director's Report – Dr. Sevet Johnson</b></p> <p>A. Dr. Johnson, along with several County managers and officials, attended a Roundtable Discussion on Opioid Abuse and Human Trafficking, which was hosted by Congressman</p>		

	<p>Steve Knight and Congressman Michael McCaul, Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security. The meeting took place on July 30<sup>th</sup> in Simi Valley. Several concerns were discussed that present challenges at the local level in terms of policy and funding.</p> <p>B. As in the past, VCBH will participate in the NAMI Walk. Its team is the All Stars, and everyone is welcome to join that team.</p> <p>C. A State review team came earlier this month for a site review in preparation for the December implementation of the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS). The team had planned to spend two days on this, but it only stayed for three hours and 15 minutes as VCBH passed with flying colors.</p> <p>D. The Mental Health Needs Assessment survey kick-off meeting will take place on August 22 at 5:00 p.m. in the VCBH training room. Community leaders have been invited. Surveys will be distributed at that time, and further communication regarding the Needs Assessment process will be provided.</p> <p>E. Michael White, VCBH Facilities, Safety &amp; Disaster Manager, has been selected to receive the Trailblazer Award at the Fainer &amp; Tauber Awards on September 6 in recognition of his work related to the Thomas Fire.</p> <p>F. Dr. Johnson and some VCBH managers attended a cultural wellness training for Medi-Cal providers. This training was hosted by Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) at Gold Coast in Camarillo.</p> <p>G. The State is enacting across-the-board cuts in triage funding. As a result, VCBH will receive approximately \$1.7 million rather than approximately \$2.4 million, and it has had to scale back the triage program while preserving the essence of the partnership with law enforcement. VCBH had to postpone the hiring process. The program is anticipated to start in November 2018 rather than in July as previously planned.</p>		
<p><b>X.</b></p>	<p><b>Secretary’s Report – Kay Wilson-Bolton</b>  The BHAB Executive Team has been tracking BHAB members’ attendance at its four committees. Those who have a hard time attending may be able to participate in other ways.</p>		
<p><b>XI.</b></p>	<p><b>BHAB Committee Reports</b></p> <p>A. Adult Services Committee – Nancy Borchard, Gane Brooking, Co-Chairs  Ms. Borchard noted that at the last meeting a couple with three young children came, asking for help with housing. They have been asked to leave the Salvation Army’s transitional housing as it is being turned into long-term housing. Mr. Harris noted that this was discussed during the last BHAB Executive Committee meeting. At that time, it was agreed that it was appropriate to have taken the time to show compassion to the couple; in the future, members of the public could be taken out of the meeting by VCBH staff and provided with relevant information and assistance. Ms. Wilson-Bolton noted that people living in transitional housing in Santa Paula have been asked to leave to make room for people displaced by the Thomas Fire.  Ms. Brooking added that the Adult Committee meeting included a productive discussion on the annual report.</p> <p>B. Prevention Committee – Janis Gardner, Chair  The committee worked on the annual report, which is almost completed. David Tovar, VCBH Office of Traffic Safety Grant Coordinator, provided information on a new brochure called “What You Need to Know About Opioids.” Ms. Gardner also reported that VCBH will run a prevention program for Narcan, previously run by Project Safer.</p> <p>C. Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Committee – Cmdr. Ron Nelson, Chair  The committee is going dark in August. It will hold its next meeting on September 27 at the TAY Tunnel in downtown Oxnard.  Ms. Wilson-Bolton added that the committee completed its annual report. Members are in favor of reinstating a support group for parents of TAY, and the BHAB Executive team</p>		

	<p>will be given information on this. The October meeting will include a presentation on the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. Members are also updating the TAY Housing Options brochure.</p> <p>D. Youth &amp; Family Committee – Denise Nielsen, Chair The committee worked on its annual report. While discussing this, members raised the idea of designing an MHSA Innovation project to educate private preschool teachers on the signs of possible mental illness in toddlers that they should be aware of.</p> <p>E. Legislative Workgroup – Ratan Bhavnani</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AB 1971, which redefines “gravely disabled”, is going forward but has been amended to apply only in Los Angeles.</li> <li>• SB 1045, which establishes a new kind of conservatorship for clients whose Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) court-ordered petition is denied, or for whom AOT treatment is insufficient, will be a pilot project in San Francisco and Los Angeles.</li> </ul> <p>Sheri Valley provided information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AB 2983: acute care hospitals or acute psychiatric hospitals can no longer require patients who voluntarily seek care to be put on a 5150 involuntary hold before accepting their transfer from the emergency hospitals. The proposed law was amended in the Senate and is back in the Assembly.</li> <li>• AB 1810 is now law: Penal Code § 1001.36. It allows judges, at their discretion, to order a diversion for mental health treatment for people accused of committing a misdemeanor or felony offense (including those likely to be found incompetent to stand trial) if the person suffers from a mental disorder which played a significant role in committing the charged offense. If the person successfully completes the diversion program, the charges are dismissed. Prosecutors are trying to amend the bill to limit the type of charge allowed for diversion and to allow counties to either opt in or opt out. If they opt in, the counties would have discretion to establish their own diversion, including tougher restrictions. The legislature has until August 24<sup>th</sup> to make any amendments to the bill or the law stands as written.</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Valley moved that the BHAB request that the Board of Supervisors opt into the diversion program should the amendment pass. Cmdr. Nelson noted that with Laura’s Law, into which counties also have to opt, a BHAB workgroup was formed after the law was in place to research its impact. Ms. Valley amended her motion to encourage the Board of Supervisors to support the law in whatever final version. Mr. Harris proposed withdrawing the motion and waiting until the following month to see what actually happens with the bill. Ms. Valley agreed and withdrew her motion.</p> <p>Mr. Bhavnani cited three more pieces of legislation that are pending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SB 1004 would require the development of a statewide strategy for monitoring the implementation of prevention and early intervention services;</li> <li>• SB 192 would clarify that the value of a prudent reserve for Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds shall not exceed 33% of the revenue;</li> <li>• Proposition 2, No Place Like Home, will be on the November ballot.</li> </ul>	<p>Motion to support AB 1810 in its final version was withdrawn.</p>	
<p>XII. <b>New Business</b></p>	<p>A. Progress on the Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) – Dr. John Schipper A plan is under consideration to transform the former Assessment &amp; Referral (A&amp;R) into a CSU. The Inpatient Psychiatric Unit (IPU) is waiting for the results of a review by the state. St. John’s Hospital in Oxnard is looking into the feasibility of opening its own CSU, called Vitiuity emPath Units; the timeframe is uncertain. Two other counties in the state are discussing opening CSUs. Ms. Armann asked about enlisting the help of local Assembly Members. Supervisor Parks agreed to contact Kim Milstien, Chief Executive Officer at the Health Care Agency, and report what she finds out back to the BHAB.</p> <p>B. Request for Leave of Absence: Marlen Torres Mr. Harris noted that Marlen Torres will be on a work assignment in Washington, D.C. for the next three months and has requested a leave of absence. At its August 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Executive team recommended that the full board grant this request. Mr. Bhavnani moved to approve Marlen Torres’ request for a three-month leave of absence. The motion passed unanimously.</p>	<p>Contact Kim Milstien</p> <p>Grant request for a three-month leave of absence for Marlen Torres - <b>M/C</b></p>	<p>Supervisor Parks</p>

	<p>C. Appoint New Chair for the Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Committee Effective October 2018. Mr. Harris noted that Cmdr. Nelson will retire from County service in September and will not seek reappointment to the BHAB when his term expires in October. Mr. Harris proposed appointing Ms. Wilson-Bolton as the Chair of the TAY Committee effective in October. Mr. Hicks moved to approve the appointment, Ms. Nielsen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>D. New BHAB Procedure: Process for the BHAB to Make Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on Pending Legislation and Other Matters Mr. Harris developed a procedure that documents the process for communications with the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Bhavnani moved to approve the procedure, Ms. Wilson-Bolton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>E. Proposed New Process for the Ongoing Review of Contracts Mr. Harris has been working with VCBH on this. The Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) requires a review process but not a voting process. It is anticipated that the process will be finalized prior to the September meeting and will be placed on the agenda for that meeting.</p> <p>F. General Meetings in November and December Mr. Harris reminded all that traditionally the board has a potluck lunch immediately prior to the November General meeting and goes dark in December. Ms. Wilson-Bolton moved to have a potluck lunch in November and go dark in December. Mr. Hicks seconded. The motion passed unanimously.</p>	<p>Appoint Ms. Wilson-Bolton as Chair of the TAY Committee effective in October <b>M/S/C</b></p> <p>Approve procedure that outlines the process for communicating with the BOS. <b>M/S/C</b></p> <p>Potluck in November and go dark in December <b>M/S/C</b></p>	
<p><b>XIII. Old Business</b></p>	<p>A. Fiscal Year 2017-18 Annual Report Preparation Update Mr. Harris noted that the bulk of the Annual Report is completed thanks to the work of the committees and Edith Pham. Selecting committees' objectives for the full board to work on is a great way to get the committee work integrated into the work of the board. Ms. Borchard thanked Mr. Harris for developing this process.</p> <p>B. Future Presentations Mr. Harris noted that Judge Wright will be invited to present on mental illness and the criminal justice system. Ms. Nielsen proposed to have a presentation from United Parents, which has received a state grant and has conducted a survey on the needs of parents/caregivers. Ms. Armann proposed having a presentation on the reasons for the chronic shortage of psychiatric beds; Mr. Harris gave a brief review of the local reasons, noting that the opening of a CSU would mitigate the shortage.</p> <p>C. Future Recognitions Ms. Gardner suggested recognizing Ojai Chief of Police Capt. James Fryhoff for his support of VCBH and prevention efforts. Mr. Harris agreed. Supervisor Parks suggested asking Sheriff Dean for recommendations as well.</p>		
<p><b>XIV. Contracts</b></p>	<p>This item was removed from the agenda. See item II, Approval of the Agenda.</p>		
<p><b>XV. Public Comments</b></p>	<p>No public comments were made.</p>		
<p><b>XVI. Adjourn</b></p>	<p>The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.</p>		

## Behavioral Health Advisory Board GENERAL Meeting Attendance

2018-19	Terms	Members	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
District 1	3/11/18 – 3/10/21	Claudia Armann		X										
District 2	4/17/18 – 1/7/19	Jamie Banker		X										
District 2	2/23/16 – 2/23/19	Ratan Bhavnani	X	X										
District 3	1/27/18 – 1/26/21	Nancy Borchard	X	X										
District 3	1/12/16 – 1/12/19	Gane Brooking	X	X										
District 1	6/12/18 – 10/6/18	Kevin Clerici	X	X										
District 5	1/11/18 – 1/10/21	Margaret Cortese	X	X										
District 5	10/17/17 – 9/23/20	Monique Garcia												
District 2	9/13/16 – 9/13/19	Janis Gardner	X	X										
District 1	4/8/18 – 4/7/21	Mary Haffner	X											
District 4	9/17/16 – 9/17/19	Jerry Harris	X	X										
District 3	12/2/17 – 12/1/20	Larry Hicks		X										
District 2	3/14/17 – 3/14/20	Patricia Mowlavi		X										
District 4	10/13/15 – 10/13/18	Cmdr. Ron Nelson	X	X										
District 4	9/17/15 – 9/17/18	Denise Nielsen		X										
District 2	1/1/17 – 12/31/18	Supervisor Linda Parks	X	X										
District 1	5/8/18 – 5/7/21	Gina Petrus	X	X										
District 5	1/24/17 – 1/24/20	Dr. Irene Pinkard												
District 5	1/10/17 – 1/10/20	Marlen Torres	X	X										
District 4	2/6/18 – 2/6/21	Sheri Valley	X	X										
District 3	4/15/18 – 4/14/21	Kay Wilson-Bolton	X	X										

Present = X

- District 1     Supervisor Bennett
- District 2     Supervisor Parks
- District 3     Supervisor Long
- District 4     Supervisor Foy
- District 5     Supervisor Zaragoza



# Open House

Come see our new  
expanded office suites



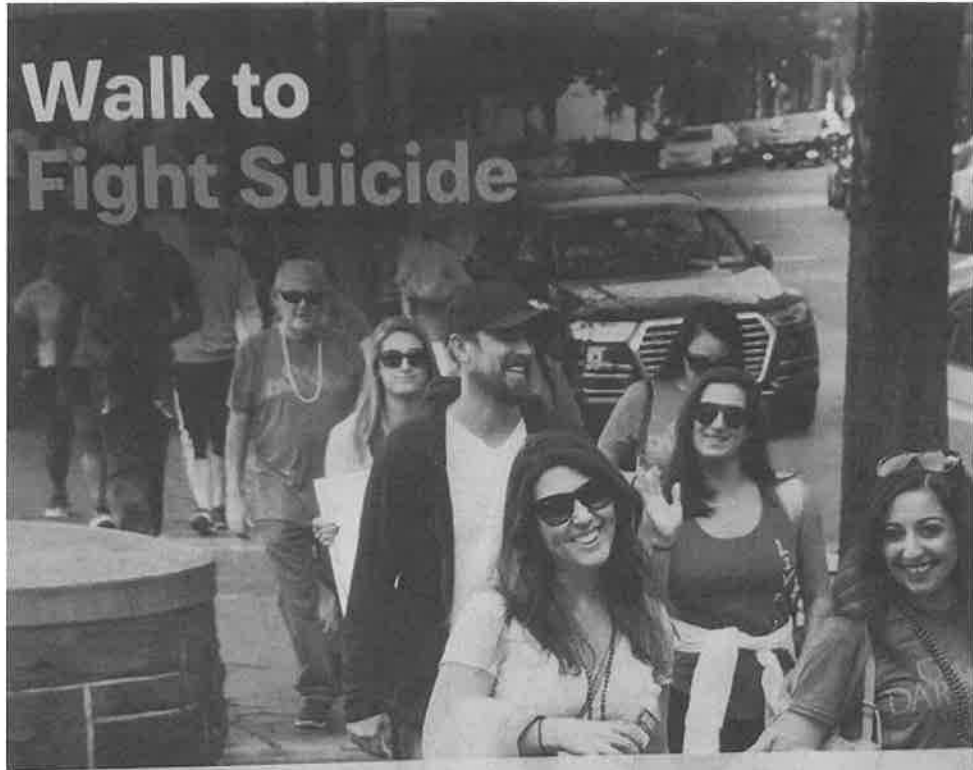
**Thursday,  
August 23, 2018  
4:00pm - 6:30pm**

**2045 Saviers Road  
Oxnard, CA 93033**

Attendees are welcome to join us, have a tour of our facility, meet some of our staff, and learn more about our treatment program. Refreshments provided.

*Please contact Clinic Manager Maria Meza at (805) 483-2253  
or email [mmeza@aegistreatmentcenters.com](mailto:mmeza@aegistreatmentcenters.com)*

# Walk to Fight Suicide



Ventura County  
September 15th, 2018  
Constitution Park, Camarillo

**Register Today!**  
[afsp.org/VC](http://afsp.org/VC)

Presenting Sponsor:



American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention





# nAMIWalks

National Alliance on Mental Illness

## Ventura County



#IAmStigmaFree

Join the NAMI Ventura County mental health walk to raise funds and awareness to help change perceptions about mental illness.

## JOIN THE MOVEMENT

### Saturday, Oct. 13, 2018

**San Buenaventura State Beach Parking Lot (pier lot)**

**Register and Donate Today!**

[Namiwalks.org/venturacounty](http://Namiwalks.org/venturacounty)

For more information contact: Roberta Griego, [roberta@namiventura.org](mailto:roberta@namiventura.org) (805) 641-2426

## #NAMIWalksVENTURA COUNTY



La Alianza Nacional de Enfermedades Mentales



2018

**¡Únete al Movimiento!**

**Sábado 13 de Octubre, 2018**

**Playa de San Buenaventura** (estacionamiento del muelle)

**¡Regístrese y done hoy!**

[Namiwalks.org/venturacounty](http://Namiwalks.org/venturacounty)

Para más información contacte: Roberta Griego  
[roberta@namiventura.org](mailto:roberta@namiventura.org) (805) 641-2426

**#NAMIWalksVENTURACOUNTY**

# THIRD ANNUAL HAUNTED HOUSING RUN

Saturday, October 27, 2018

5k—8:00 a.m.  
10k—8:00 a.m.  
Kid's Dash—9:00 a.m.

San Buenaventura State  
Beach

901 San Pedro St., Ventura, CA

*Flat, fast, stroller-friendly course along the  
beach!*

All race proceeds benefit the Scholarship Program of the Housing Authority  
of the City of San Buenaventura

For registration and event info, visit: [www.hauntedhousingrun.com](http://www.hauntedhousingrun.com)



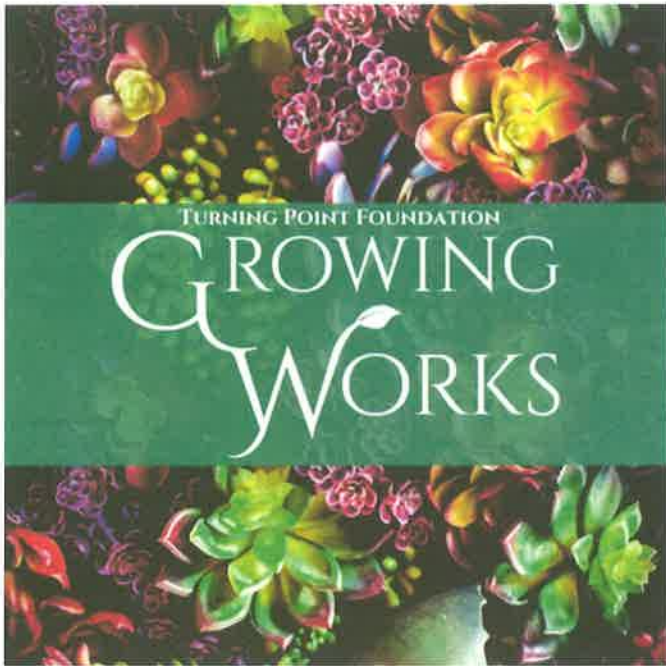
Wear a costume and join  
us for a family-friendly  
run along the beautiful  
Ventura Beach!

Find us on



# Growing Works blooms!

Email from Supervisor Parks – 8/2/18



## Planting the Seed

Like Johnny Appleseed spreading the seeds of bounty to places near and far, the successful Growing Grounds Farm in San Luis Obispo planted the seed for our Growing Works nursery in Camarillo.

Their successful model of job training and horticultural therapy for people with mental illness is based on decades of experience. We are so appreciative of how generously they've shared their knowledge with us, we thought it most appropriate that our first large purchase of plants for our Growing Works nursery should come from their nursery!

## Providing an Environment for Growth

With these initial plants (giant coreopsis, ceanothus, salvias, buckwheat, lavender, etc.), our program has begun! Its popularity is already evident in the dozens of clients of the County's Behavioral Health Department who signed up for the program in these first two weeks. For many, this is the first chance in years to do productive work. Their participation and pride in the outcome of the nursery has added more positive energy to the project.



Turning Point Foundation, the non-profit overseeing the Growing Works program has Mark Schumacher directing the program. He has selected team leaders who are peer coaches for the employees. Along with our nursery developer extraordinaire Dennis Perry, who has dedicated all of his spare hours volunteering to get Growing Works up and going, we have amassed an incredible leadership team! The result is a work environment where employees can gain skills that will not only help them be successful in the workforce, but in other facets of their life too.

## Water, Good Soil and Sunshine

Still in its infancy, the nursery continues to need lots of loving care, now and into the future. To make it environmentally sustainable we'll use recycled water, though it requires significant investment in setting up a reverse osmosis filtering system. Agromin, a major regional greenwaste recycling company, donated its premium soil so we can grow healthy plants. We also have dreams for solar panels, and a rainwater-capture system that will make Growing Works a truly "green" nursery.





## Tending the Garden

We're adding two acres of Demonstration Gardens for the nursery employees to tend too, which will further their job skills. We'll use cuttings from the Gardens to supplement the nursery stock, and landscapers will see in the Gardens how big the nursery plants grow. The Gardens will also include a 70'-wide labyrinth with paths lined with rocks and plants for our neighbors at the homeless shelter (RAIN Project), foster youth home (Casa Pacifica) and for the public to enjoy.

## Seed Money

Growing Works could not happen without your donations. You can click [here](#) to schedule a tour, order plants, volunteer, donate, or contribute to Growing Works. You can also check out the [Growing Works Wish List](#) that includes everything from rakes and pruning shears, to a pick-up truck! There are also sponsorship opportunities to help us reach our dreams. Perhaps never before have you been asked for seed money... that will actually go to seeds!

Look to upcoming emails about our community planting day, ribbon cutting, and once planted, our Garden Party!



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***“The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.”***

— Alfred Austin



## **Behavioral Health Advisory Board**

### **Legislative Workgroup**

**August 2018**

#### **Report on California Assembly Bill 1810**

#### **Diversion of Individuals with Mental Disorders**

AB 1810 was passed by both houses and signed into law by Gov. Brown on June 27, 2018.

This law establishes a procedure of diversion for defendants with mental disorders through which the court would be authorized to grant pretrial diversion, for up to 2 years, to a defendant who may have committed a misdemeanor or felony offense, in order to allow the defendant to undergo mental health treatment. A court must find that the defendant's mental disorder played a significant role in the commission of the charged offense. The law authorizes a referral for mental health treatment to be made to a county mental health agency, existing collaborative courts, or assisted outpatient treatment only if that entity has agreed to accept responsibility for the treatment of the defendant.

Though AB 1810 has been signed into law, an amendment is being considered which would clarify two items:

- Specifically bans defendants who have been charged with murder, rape and other sex crimes from participating, and allows judges to bar a much broader range of dangerous suspects.
- Counties must opt in to the program after consulting with prosecutors, defense attorneys, mental health workers and local judges.

The new law provides the capability of a pre-trial/pre-pleading diversion program. If the defendant completes the mental health program, no charges are ever filed and there is no conviction. If the defendant does not complete the program, then he/she must plead, and the criminal proceedings resume.

## California may redo law to treat, free suspects

Don Thompson, The Associated Press - Published in The VC Star on 8/15/18

SACRAMENTO - California Gov. Jerry Brown wants to tighten a law he signed weeks ago that critics say could have freed rapists and murderers who completed two years of mental health treatment.

The proposal obtained by The Associated Press on Tuesday specifically bans those charged with murder, rape and other sex crimes from participating and allows judges to bar a much broader range of dangerous suspects.

It also makes clear that counties must opt in to the program after consulting with prosecutors, defense attorneys, mental health workers and local judges.

The law signed by the Democratic governor in June vastly expands the number of suspects who can be diverted to mental health treatment programs and have their charges dismissed. Prosecutors complained that the measure was far too broad and have been negotiating with Brown's administration for weeks.

The administration wants lawmakers to approve the narrower program before they adjourn for the year at month's end. It posted the new proposal Monday night.

"While nothing's perfect, this version right now solves a majority of the issues," said Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager, the new president of the California District Attorneys Association.

El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson, who led prosecutors' negotiations with Brown's administration, called the proposal "a significant improvement" over the new law.

Defense attorneys said they don't object to excluding those charged with the most extreme crimes but that the revision goes too far.

The proposed rollback "guts mental health diversion and goes far beyond a reasonable compromise," said Nick Stewart-Oaten, a member of the California Public Defenders Association's legislative committee and a Los Angeles County deputy public defender. He expects more revisions as lawmakers consider the proposal.

While defense attorneys appreciate the administration's desire for a workable program, he said its latest proposal "allows counties to continue to do what they have done for years — send sick people to prison instead of treatment. The end result is higher incarceration rates for ill Californians, lawsuits for ill Californians, lawsuits against counties for mistreatment of the mentally ill and higher recidivism rates for untreated offenders."

The proposal also makes it clear that suspects can be barred from owning firearms while they are in the program and that they can be required to pay restitution, both of which prosecutors said had been unclear.

The law signed in June limits the treatment period to two years, but the administration's proposal would allow judges to extend the program for a third year.

California already allowed counties to offer such programs for offenders with developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder or who have mental health problems resulting from their military service.

The new law allows treatment instead of charges for any suspect with mental illnesses, including bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, though it excludes anti-social personality disorders and pedophilia.

It aims to get treatment for mentally ill suspects before they reach the criminal process, are deemed incompetent to stand trial and sent to mental hospitals, which already have large waiting lists. The current budget also includes \$115 million over three years for 850 new placements in community mental health programs.

Prosecutors complained that lawmakers approved the law in one day as part of an 88-page omnibus budget bill instead of going through the usual legislative process.

# VENTURA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

## Advisory Board Procedure

**Title:** Process for the Behavior Health Advisory Board (BHAB) to Make Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on Pending Legislation and Other Matters

**Purpose:** To provide a mechanism that is in compliance with Ventura County Policy for the BHAB to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on pending state legislation and other matters relating to community behavioral health issues that are within the duties and responsibilities of the advisory board as defined in Section 5604.1 and 5604.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code as amended by SB43 and the BHAB Bylaws.

A thorough review of applicable pending legislation or other matters affecting community behavior health issues will be conducted prior to placing these matters on the agenda of the general board meetings as action items. Formal recommendations to the Board of Supervisors require a majority affirmative vote by the BHAB members. All BHAB recommendations to the Board of Supervisors will be channeled through the Director of Ventura County Behavioral Health.

### Procedure:

1. The BHAB Legislation Workgroup will conduct a thorough review of all pending legislation of interest to the BHAB and report its findings and recommendations to the full board.
2. Other matters of BHAB concern will be assigned to the appropriate standing committee for review and recommendation to the full board as needed.
3. When a recommendation is made that the full board take action on a specific piece of legislation or other matter involving a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, the matter will be placed on the agenda of the general board meeting as an action item.
4. If an affirmative majority vote of the full board has been made, a Board Letter, signed by the BHAB Chair, to the Board of Supervisors containing the recommendation(s) of the BHAB will be prepared and submitted to the Director of Ventura County Behavioral Health.