



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES

Behavioral Health Board Meeting

301 E. 13th Street

Merced, CA 95341

March 2, 2021

Minutes

Present: Sally Ragonut, Chair; Paula Mason, Vice-Chair; Bruce Metcalf, Secretary; Supervisor Pareira; Mary Ellis; Kim Carter; Keng Cha; Iris Mojica de Tatum; Vince Ramos; Vicki Humble

Absent: Micki Archuleta; Zachery Ramos

Others Present: Genevieve Valentine; Jeff Sabeau; Sgt. Dan Dabney; Dr. Soofi; Brian Sterkeson; Chris Kraushar; Charles Bruce; Priscilla Martin; Carol Hulsizer, Recorder

Call to Order / Roll Call

Due to COVID-19 today's meeting was held via conference call. Chair Sally Ragonut called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll call was taken. Sally welcomed everyone.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement was read by Mary Ellis.

Approval of Minutes from February 2, 2021 (BOARD ACTION)

Discussion/Conclusion: There was no discussion.

Recommendation/Action: M/S/C (Humble / Pareira) to approve the February 2, 2021 minutes. Due to this being a conference call, the names of all Board members were called and asked whether they themselves approved the minutes.

Pareira – yes
Ramos, V. – yes
Metcalf – absent
Carter – yes

Mojica de Tatum – yes
Cha – yes
Ramos, Z. – absent
Archuleta – absent

Ellis – yes
Ragonut – yes
Humble – yes
Mason – yes

Opportunity for public input. At this time any person may comment on any item which is not on the agenda.

Discussion/Conclusion: No comments

Recommendation/Action:

Director's Report

- a. COVID-19 Update
- b. Behavioral Health / Law Enforcement Collaboration Overview

Discussion/Conclusion: a. Genevieve reported that a majority of staff, who wanted the vaccine, were able to have both first and second dosage. There is a list of about 30 staff that is still interested in getting the vaccine. Because of the allotment changes of when the vaccine is coming, BHRS decided to not hold their own clinic to vaccinate staff. Instead they provided a list of current providers who are able to give the vaccine for the healthcare providers and told them to directly reach out to those providers. BHRS is not

This meeting was recorded



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certain that it will receive any additional vaccines. More than 50% of staff, who could get the vaccine, actually opted for it. This is good because BHRS is hoping this will give the Department a herd immunity internally. The Department is still status quo in terms of the way services are being provided. The lobbies still have social distancing, still doing screenings and temperature checks of those coming into Outpatient. Genevieve feels her team has done a phenomenal job in their efforts to mitigate the exposure of COVID to each other and to the clients. Housekeeping is doing an amazing job also. In terms of in-person meetings, BHRS has been given permission from Public Health to use the auditorium for this Board's retreat in May. If Board members would like to come to the retreat in-person, they will have that option; but, the meeting will also be hybrid. Genevieve announced that this is Carol's last Board meeting because she is retiring. Her position will be supported for the time being by Priscilla Martin who was also present for this meeting. Both Priscilla and Brian will continue to support this Board. Genevieve continued that the schools are trying to find ways to safely reopen. Because of that, BHRS has been in conversations with the Merced City School District and Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) on how the Children's Department can be readily available to them when schools do reopen to provide on-campus and telehealth programming. BHRS is working on creating a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with Merced City Schools and MCOE on how to provide those services in a safe manner in relationship to COVID-19 and continue this partnership when schools are fully open in the Fall of this year. Lastly, having an in-person Board meeting in April is still not a given because BHRS has been given two different percentage capacities for the room. Genevieve has been given a 10% and 25% capacity number. She is waiting for further direction from Public Health on which percentage is correct. At this time she is still hoping to have the May retreat in-person and hybrid. b. Genevieve introduced Jeff Sabean, Division Director over the Justice and Community Integration Division. She is very excited having Jeff because he is phenomenal, he comes with a rich amount of experience and he is a wonderful asset to BHRS. Jeff reported he came from Stanislaus County and has been here for about 60 days. This Division is designed to work on developing a strong collaborative relationship with local law enforcement. They want to look at reducing the recidivism rates both inside the juvenile and adult correctional facilities and shorten length of stays for those with mental health or substance use disorder (SUD) or co-occurring disorders. They want to do a better job connecting people to mental health and SUD services as they leave custody. Jail services are fully up and running. They have a Mental Health Clinician that works both in the main jail and at Sandy Mush; her main role is doing brief assessments as they are court ordered, look at what level of care may be needed as they exit one of the correctional settings and to complete Behavioral Health assessments while they are in custody so they are connected before they walk out the door. The Adult Behavioral Health Team has been up and operational – this is a strong collaborative relationship with the Superior Courts and working with the AB109 population. They are in the process of starting up a pre-trial program to look at clients who are awaiting their court date and instead of sitting in jail with mental health and SUD issues, they are engaging them on an out-patient basis while they wait. He hired a Mental Health Worker and is ready to start the program. He has made a job offer for the Mental Health Clinician that will be part of that program also. They just started their program in Los Banos which is called Breaking Barriers. This will be a one-stop shop for people on probation out in Los Banos. Their mental health team includes a Mental Health Clinician, Mental Health Worker and a Peer Support Specialist. Also on sight there is Probation, an employment program and a housing program. Jeff's team will not only serve those on probation, but also their family members and trying to connect them with whatever resources they might need. The Juvenile Justice Hall team is fully operational now; they have 3 full-time staff out at Juvenile Hall. Prior to this staff from the Children's side were going out a few hours a week just trying to hold the site together. They now have 2 Mental Health Clinicians and Mental Health Worker full time out there, Monday through Saturday, 10:00am to 7:00pm. They have seen a huge decrease, just the few weeks it has been operational, in the need for Juvenile Hall to call for after-hours support for a youth. They are still working on implementing the full curriculum which will use some evidenced based practice, anger management, social skills and some moral-reasoning training. There is also the Juvenile Behavioral Health Treatment Court which is currently operational but with COVID the numbers are very low in this program. They are looking at how to possibly re-design that program so it is more than just a juvenile behavioral health court and they are capturing youth that have more of a criminal-conduct behaviors and instead of serving them in the traditional Children's System of Care (CSOC) mental health team – serving them in the Juvenile Justice Program that has a strong collaborative relationship with Probation in an effort to keep the youth from continually going in and out of Juvenile Hall. Jeff then took questions. Sally stated that this has been long-time needed and she is grateful for these programs because there has been a lot of need for people with mental illness going into jail and it is not where they should be. She is very grateful for this. Genevieve continued that in October 2020 BHRS and the City of Merced launched a Mobile Crisis Response Team through DART (Disruptive Area Response Team). It is a wonderful collaboration where BHRS has a Mental Health Worker assigned to DART, four



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days of the week (Monday through Thursday), and they go out in the field with DART. The Mental Health Worker has an iPad and if an immediate crisis intervention is needed the worker has immediate access to a clinician to determine level of care and need as well as how to provide a variety of resources in real time from a collaborative approach. BHRS loves having the ability to work directly alongside the Merced Police Dept. Team (PD). They have learned a great deal on how the PD works and she thinks they have learned a great deal about how BHRS works. Genevieve then introduced Sgt. Dabney with Merced PD/DART Team. Sgt. Dabney stated it has been a pleasure collaborating with BHRS because this has been needed for so long. This is an issue that has been plaguing not only this County for a long time but also the State and nationwide on how law enforcement is interacting with the people who have behavioral health issues. Since October when this first started, day one was successful and it continues to be successful. They have been able to collaborate and overcome recognized obstacles for the betterment of the County. They have had many successes. They had created a top-ten list which became a top-twelve list as to who they were going to reach out to. The DART responds to a lot of situations in which a City Councilman or Mayor or City Manager has an issue that they want dealt with and it falls on the DART to fix the problem. When they deal with the homeless, it is their main focus in recognizing who they are and that they have specific issues. – whether it is a continuum of care issue or a behavioral health issue. They never stopped to think that there is a big difference between a person with an alcohol problem and a person with a true behavior health crisis. With the collaboration with the County, they now recognize that mental health plays a big part of this and they need to figure out how to make this better for the homeless. Sgt. Dabney gave a couple of different situations where the collaboration was a success for some of the homeless in Merced. Out of the top-ten list they have five into placement or some sort of care. Genevieve commented that BHRS and Merced PD have held two outreach events on the campus with a variety of community providers during COVID-19 with social distancing. The back parking lot as literally turned into a resource center where hot meals were passed out to clients, passed out blankets, socks and coats, and gave naircuts. For the community to be able to see BHRS working directly alongside law enforcement will change the way the community sees both law enforcement and Mental Health. BHRS has received multiple requests from other Police Departments wanting to know when she will have staff ready to replicate similar programs in other cities. Sally questioned if officers are being trained on how to work with those who have a mental illness or drug and alcohol problems when they first become officers. Sgt. Dabney stated that it is two-fold. As they go through the police academy and trying to glean as much information as possible, he is sure that whatever they are taught goes through one ear and out the other; their biggest goal is to get through it. Basically, the training they receive is in the field and in-house training as well because they do actively train them before going out in the field. The real training does come in the field when dealing with these issues. Genevieve stated that BHRS has been talking with the Sheriff's Dept. about potentially doing a joint application for a grant with the DOJ (Dept. of Justice) which will be launched in 2022 in order to joint trainings for all local law enforcement that is connected to Behavioral Health. If awarded this grant, the Police Departments in Merced, Hilmar, Livingston, Atwater and Los Banos would be offered this training. Supervisor Pareira commented that he is thankful for this collaboration. Bruce agreed with Supervisor Pareira and gave everyone high marks in the work they are doing. Kim commented that several years ago NAMI sponsored training for first responders and it went very well. The NAMI group has lived-experience and they worked with the officers and did some skits to introduce them to what mental health clients can be like. Genevieve stated she would reach out to NAMI to see what is currently available and she will share this with the Justice & Community Integration Team and Merced PD. Chris Kraushar stated that Behavioral Health used to have a very active Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) and had post-certification for the Sheriff's Dept. Genevieve believes that the Sheriff's Office still has all this; it was passed off to them from BHRS. But, she will confirm this.

Recommendation/Action: As noted above

Behavioral Health Board Website Overview

Discussion/Conclusion: Brian showed the Board members how to access the County Website and then gave everyone a tour of the information that can be found under the Behavioral Health site. Brian is still waiting for a description/summary of what the different committees do in order to add to the web page. Iris asked if the By-Laws could be added; Genevieve stated they would be added.

Recommendation/Action: As noted above

Chair's Report

- a. Binders
- b. What is Your Vision? Survey to Follow

Discussion/Conclusion: a. Sally stated that all the Board binders have been revised. Those who still need to pick up their binders are Keng, Vince and Micki. Zach's binder is in Los Banos waiting to be picked up. b. Sally stated that they would like to formulate a Board Vision taking into consideration each Board member's vision for the Board as a team and their own individual community involvement vision in support of the Board's objectives. The Board members will also be receiving a Board Evaluation Survey. Sally and Genevieve will be working on this next Monday discussing the survey questions they would like to use and how they will get this information to the Board. They will go over the results at the Retreat in May. When Sally attended the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Ongoing Planning Council meeting last week, she heard from Sharon Jones that there will be an update to the MHSA Plan which must be turned in by June 2021. The Board will be having a Public Hearing during the last hour of the Retreat in May. Genevieve commented that County Counsel has stated that they have to do a minimum of 30 minutes for public comments. There has to be a presentation and then an allotted amount of time for public comments. This will be further discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on how to lay this out.

Recommendation/Action: Information only

Committee Reports

- a. Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
- b. Board Orientation and Development
- c. Quality Improvement Committee (QIC)
- d. Executive Committee – Agenda Preparation / By-Laws Update
- e. Mental Health Services Act Ongoing Planning Council
- f. Other Board Member Reports

Discussion/Conclusion: a. Paula reported that they continue to provide services to the community. They have completed the Prevention Plan. They are having some issues with the schools moving back and forth between in-person and on-line. They are working on an on-line version that will be up and running hopefully by next school year. They have also been working on the Performance Improvement Projects (PIP). They completed the non-clinical PIP; it was presented to the EQRO (External Quality Review Organization) analyst and received good feedback with two corrections to make. The clinical PIP is in full swing and a key piece of the project involves case management. The Youth Residential contract is being developed by the County and provider and hope to have the contract to the Board of Supervisors sometime this year. RAFT (Recovery Assistance for Teens) is currently being remodeled; they are still providing services over the phone and virtually. Sally questioned the Youth Residential contract – she is not familiar with this. Genevieve stated that part of the level of care needs in the Substance Use Division (SUD) is required to provide a variety of outpatient, intensive outpatient and residential withdrawal management services for being part of the Drug Medi-Cal / Organized Delivery System (ODS) Waiver. One is to have a contract available that if a minor, between the ages of 12 and 17, needed a residential stay for intensive SUD treatment, that there is a contract ready to go to provide that service. At this time BHRS does not have any youth that need this service but they hope to have a rate-based contract with a contractor that provides substance abuse residential work. b. Bruce stated that what they do at the Executive Committee meeting is working on areas that they need education in. The reports that Genevieve has given and the guests she has brought in were very informative and educational. The emails that Carol has sent out with opportunities for further education in different areas have also been helpful. He is grateful that most everyone has their updated binder; they will be able to start utilizing them. c. Mary went over her Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) report from February 23, 2021. d. Sally reported that they have done some retreat agenda planning which will need some changing now that there will also be a MHSA Public Hearing that day. At 1:00pm there will be icebreaker (or something fun); at 1:15 a training on Cultural Humility with Sharon Jones; at about 2:20 they will go over the Vision Statements from the Board members as well as the Evaluation Survey which will help them plan their goals and objectives for the coming year; at 3:40 they will assign committees for the coming year

and then take a break before the Public Hearing at 4:00. Sally went over again the personal vision of why they are on the Board and the vision for the Board – two separate visions she would like everyone to do. e. Sally attended the last MHSA Ongoing Planning Council meeting. There were about 30 people present, done virtually. There was a presentation by the Resource Development Associates (RDA) on the Innovative Strategist Network (ISN); this Board had that presentation last month. They heard about the MHSA Annual Update due June 30, 2021. They are already scheduling focus groups specifically related to criminal justice and mental health. If someone would like to be involved in one of the focus groups, contact Sharon Jones. Also discussed was Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and toxic stress development implementation plan. There was discussion of how they are engaging the community at this time through the Community Outreach and Engagement Program which is part of MHSA. Success stories were told. Sierra Vista was present discussing outreach to the high schools and a virtual stigma event. There was talk about a van that had been purchased through MHSA and is a way to outreach to the underserved communities. Nancy Reding was present, she is an advocate for the LGBTQ group and talked about having a downtown event in June called Prima and present and train staff at schools. There is a new group of Hmong educators talking about Hmong successes in their community – this will take place on March 5th. The Planning Council will be moving their meetings from the 3rd Thursday of each month to the 4th Thursday of each month at 9:00. Sally encouraged everyone to try and attend this meeting. f. None

Recommendation/Action: Information only

Ad-Hoc Committee Reports

- a. Membership Committee
- b. Annual Report
- c. Nominating Committee

Discussion/Conclusion: a. Mary did not have a report this month. Mary mentioned that it was mentioned in the minutes that she and Paula will be reaching out to meet with the Board of Supervisors to discuss the districts that do not have representation at this Board. Mary needs helping setting this up. Genevieve commented that she would like to have a meeting with Mary and Paula on how to work around this. She was thinking of having a Zoom meeting with the Supervisors; she is hoping to have this after the Board figures out what their bigger vision is so they have a good way of presenting this to the Supervisors. Having a meeting after the Retreat in May would probably be helpful. Paula agreed that waiting until after the Retreat would be best. b. Sally stated that she, Kim and Iris will be getting together; they have already started talking about it. Sally is hoping to have the report done by June or July. c. This is coming up soon. June is when they will have the election of new officers – Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.

Recommendation/Action: Information only

Announcements

Discussion/Conclusion: None

Recommendation/Action:

Future Agenda Items / Possible Action Items

Discussion/Conclusion: Sally asked if Chris Kraushar can do another one of her reports in April; Chris stated she was planning on that.

Sally asked Genevieve if there could be an update on GLOM (God's Love Outreach Ministries) and how they are doing in Merced; Genevieve stated she would do. It will be an overview on GLOM – what they are, what they are doing in the longer term plan. They went into contract with BHRS in August 2020.



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-Bruce stated that the target date for the opening of the Navigation Center is March 29th. There will be virtual tours online about the 3rd week of March. They hope to actually open the facility to clients on or about March 29th.

Recommendation/Action: None

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 5:50 pm.

Submitted by: _____
Carol Hulsizer
Recording Secretary

Approved by: **Signed as Approved on 7/6/21**
Bruce Metcalf, Secretary ✓
Merced County Behavioral Health Board

Date: _____

Date: 7-6-21