County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
Behavioral Health Division
Behavioral Health Advisory Board
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Salud Mental y Tratamiento del Uso de Sustancias

Draft Minutes
Approved date: November 19, 2026

OCTOBER 15, 2026, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY, 1400 EMELINE, CONFERENCE ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ
MICROSOFT TEAMS (831) 454-2222, CONFERENCE 982 648 365#

Present: Dean Kashino, Hugh McCormick (virtual), Jeffrey Arlt, Michael Neidig, Rachel Montoya, Valerie Webb, Xaloc Cabanes, Supervisor De Serpa
Absent: Antonio Rivas, Kaelin Wagnermarsh, Natalie Stott
Staff: Dr. Marni Sandoval, Jane Batoon-Kurovski

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1. Roll Call – Quorum present. Meeting called to order at 3:07 p.m. by Chair Xaloc Cabanes.
   Hugh McCormick participated remotely due to Just Cause.

2. Public Comment – 2 individuals addressed the BHAB in the conference room
   1 individual addressed the BHAB on MS Teams.

3. Board Member Announcements
   - Bullying Awareness Month – provide support to young people who have been impacted by bullying, as well as those who engage in bullying behaviors.
   - November meeting scheduled at the South County Government Center in Watsonville; no meeting in December.

4. Approve September 17, 2026 Minutes
   Motion / Second: Mike Neidig / Dean Kashino
   Ayes: Kashino, McCormick, Arlt, Neidig, Cabanes, De Serpa
   Abstain: Montoya, Webb
   Nayes: None
   Passed.

5. Secretary's Report – Jeffrey Arlt
   - No training or attendance issues reported.
   - CalBHBC virtual meeting scheduled for Oct 23-24, 2026 which satisfies the training requirement.
   - Crisis Now webinar trainings are held weekly on Wednesday mornings.

6. Patient's Rights Report – George Carvalho, Advocate for Advocacy, Inc.
   September report was provided. George was not present at this meeting.

7. Board of Supervisors Report – Supervisor Kim De Serpa
   - Measures on ballot:

- Measure D – discussed efforts to strengthen existing regulations to prevent offshore oil drilling and seabed mining along the California coast. The measure is scheduled to go before voters in November.
- Measure E – discussed anticipated Medi-Cal coverage losses due to new eligibility and renewal requirements, potentially affecting approximately 27,000 Santa Cruz County residents and access to medications, mental health services, food assistance, and IHSS. The proposed ½-cent sales tax is expected to generate approximately $27M locally to help support food security, behavioral health, and healthcare services.

- State of the County – BOS Chair Mónica Martinez and CEO Nicole Coburn

  Accomplishments:
  - Opened Hope Forward, a behavioral health unit serving children and youth.
  - Opened Bridge House, providing 32 beds and a navigation center.
  - Freedom House is under construction and will provide 12 bedrooms (24 beds) for transition age youth aging out of foster care or behavioral health services, with stays of up to three years.
  - Janus is expanding services with new beds for women, infants, and young children.

  Challenges:
  - Ongoing financial and operational impacts related to HR1.
  - Delayed FEMA reimbursements for 2017 and 2023 storm damage, and the need to take out loans to cover repairs and improvements.

  The County is maintaining a focus on fiscal discipline.

8. Behavioral Health Director's Report – Dr. Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director

A. Adult System of Care (ASOC) Update
- Bridge House reached full occupancy; ongoing collaboration with Housing Matters.
- Successfully transitioned to SmartCare EHR on October 1; staff adapting well post-implementation.
- Began BQuIP training to support rollout of the new SUD screening tool in SmartCare.
- Continued partnership with the County SUDS team to enhance client service coordination.
- Provide ongoing training and facilitation support for the MSW intern cohort.
- Advanced BHSA compliance efforts strengthened partner processes, and improved HMIS data accuracy.
- Created a new FSP client on-call support video; updated on-call policies and procedures nearing completion.

B. Children's System of Care (CSOC) Update
- Secured $450K in new funding with the County Office of Education to sustain and expand The Companion Project (TCP).
- TCP provides Behavioral Health Navigators who connect students and families to behavioral health and SUD services countywide.
- Navigators support end-to-end referrals, ensuring warm handoffs across all insurance and coverage types.
- Funding extends TCP operations through FY2026-27 and FY2027-28, including Navigator staffing and cross-system training.
- Sustains the SUD Navigator position in partnership with Janus of Santa Cruz to strengthen substance use support for students and families.
- Continued leveraging BHSSA infrastructure with County and COE partners to improve access to behavioral health and SUD services.

C. Substance Use Disorder Services Update
- Completed and submitted the Opioid Settlement Expenditure Report to ensure compliance and transparency.

- Advanced implementation of the BQuIP SUD Screening Tool in SmartCare to support a countywide transition from Brief ASAM.
- Continue supporting client engagement through the Recovery Incentives program.
- Expanded recovery residence capacity using Prop 47 funding to strengthen long-term recovery housing options.
- Integrated SUD clinicians into Access and Adult Outpatient teams to improve coordinated care.
- Strengthened referral pathways for justice-involved clients through enhanced criminal justice partnerships.
- Improved internal workflows to streamline assessments, service authorizations, and follow-up care.

9. Site Visit Committee – Rountree
   - Houses lower-level offenders, while main jail serves higher-acuity individuals with more serious offenses and mental health or medical needs. The facility is below capacity, while approximately 1/3 of main jail inmates have been booked more than 21 times.
   - Reported that 90 individuals were booked for low-level offenses, averaging 46 arrests each, most likely housed at Rountree.
   - Reviewed the facility's extensive programming, including 24 programs, 7 activities, and 23 services. Classes support skill development and education, including high school diploma completion; however, short stays limit participation and program completion.
   - Facility occupancy is approximately 70%, with low participation in voluntary programs. Incentive structures and limited coordination with the court system may contribute to delays in case processing and program engagement.
   - Chief Deputy Cleveland raised concerns about inadequate funding, staffing, and the lack of a needs assessment to identify the population being served. He also highlighted funding challenges, reentry support needs, and the need for clearer recidivism metrics to accurately track repeat offenders and high-utilization individuals.
   - Clarification that when an individual is arrested and released, it is not counted as recidivism. When an individual goes through a trial or has a conviction, multiple times is considered recidivism. They can have high utilization individuals, but that doesn't count in their number of reported incidences.

10. Revised Mission Statement, Vision and Goals
    Identified potential 2027 priorities:
    - Strengthening board advocacy and public awareness efforts.
    - Support development and sustainability of the clubhouse model (MHCAN).
    - Expand peer support opportunities across systems of care.
    - Promote prevention and early-intervention strategies through collaboration with managed health care plans and community partners.
    - Explore ways to amplify the board's voice and effectiveness in behavioral health advocacy.
    - ➔ Future Agenda Item: Create Ad Hoc committee to confirm these goals are accurate.

11. Adjournment
    Meeting adjourned at 5:02pm.