

# RIVERSIDE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 4, 2020 | 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

**CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND INTRODUCTIONS** – Chairperson, Richard Divine called the Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

Commissioner attendance was taken by roll-call.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS** – Mr. Divine greeted and thanked everyone for attending the final meeting of the year. Mr. Divine went over the rules for the Zoom conference meeting: 1.) To avoid any confusion, all callers are asked to save all comments and questions until after the presentations/reports are completed; 2) For the purposes of the minutes, callers are requested to state their name before making comments or asking questions; and 3) To reduce background noise, callers are asked to mute their phones unless they are asking a question or making a comment.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS REMARKS** – Brenda Scott reported that the virtual Annual NAMI Walk was a successful event. Ms. Scott thanked all those who participated and assisted in coordinating the event.

**PUBLIC REMARKS** – None

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** – April Jones noted an error on page 3; the name “Carlos” is misspelled. Correction was made and minutes were accepted as written

## NEW BUSINESS

1. CRISIS SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF CARE – PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND UPDATE: Rod Verbeck, Mental Health Services Administrator, provided an overview and update of the Crisis Support Systems of Care. The Crisis Support Systems of Care include the following programs: Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT, formerly known as CREST, REACH, and ROCKY), Community Behavioral Assessment Team (CBAT), Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), Mental Health Urgent Care (MHUC), and Crisis Residential Treatment (CRT). These programs are funded by the Mental Health Wellness Act of 2013, SB82, which provides millions in grants to support mental health crisis programs at shelters, jails, hospitals, clinics, and mobile crisis support teams. The funding and availability of crisis intervention services helps divert people from incarceration and lessen the use of hospital emergency rooms and psychiatric beds.

The Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) operate seven days a week, excluding County holidays. Operating hours are from Monday-Friday 9:00 am – 8:00 pm and Saturday-Sunday 12:00 pm – 8:00 pm. The Team serves anyone that law enforcement, emergency departments, Department of Public Social Services, group homes, foster homes, schools, or clinic personnel requests to evaluate and support during a mental health crisis. Mr. Verbeck noted that MCRT serves all age groups – children, adolescents, transitional age youth (TAY/ young adults), adults, and older adults.

The Teams are dispatched by the Crisis Call Center. The Crisis Call Center triages incoming calls and communicates directly with the requestor (law enforcement, emergency department personnel, schools, and clinics) regarding anticipated wait times or delays. The goal of MCRT is to be on location in less than 30 minutes. Mr. Verbeck noted that while the Teams make every effort to make it within this range of time, it is not always possible due to the sheer size of Riverside

County. Currently, they are averaging over a 90-minute wait time.

The program goals of MCRT is to reduce the burden on law enforcement and hospital emergency rooms as well as reduce the number of unnecessary 5150's and 5585.5's by supporting individuals in a behavioral health crisis. In an effort to break the cycle of recidivism, the Teams try to utilize the least restrictive level of care possible and link consumers and family members to outpatient treatment services.

Since December 2014, the MCRT's have responded to approximately 10,000 calls for service from law enforcement, hospital emergency rooms, schools, and the community. Approximately 76% of law enforcement/community calls were supported without the need for hospitalization or psychiatric intervention and 40% of hospital emergency department calls were supported without the need for psychiatric hospitalization.

The Community Behavioral Assessment Team, commonly known as CBAT, is a specialized unit of clinical therapists that work alongside sheriffs and police officers. The Team consist of a specially trained sheriff or police officer and an RUHS-BH clinical therapist that respond to calls for law enforcement that involve individual(s) experiencing a mental health crisis. CBAT seeks to avoid adverse outcomes by diverting individuals with mental health issues to appropriate community services and behavioral health resources. Currently, the participating law enforcement offices include Riverside, Murrieta, Indio, and Hemet Police Department as well as Moreno Valley and Temecula Sheriff Department.

The Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) is a specialized curriculum taught and led by Behavioral Health and Law Enforcement instructors. Crisis Intervention Training aims to de-escalate and reduce the risk of harm or unnecessary arrests during an emergency interaction between an individual experiencing a mental health crisis and law enforcement officers. The Training is designed to increase awareness and support law enforcement's ability to manage potential behavioral health related crises.

The CIT Curriculum covers a variety of topics to help law enforcement understand behavioral health in a much more meaningful way. Topics include stigma, suicide ideation, suicide prevention, crisis intervention and de-escalation. The curriculum discusses a wide range of common diagnoses, such as major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar, and autism spectrum disorder. Speakers with lived experience provide further insight by sharing their stories and testimonies. The culture of law enforcement is also discussed and they examine the emotional health of officers and the importance of self-care. Mr. Verbeck noted that officers that come to the training find the material incredibly valuable and helpful.

The Mental Health Urgent Care (MHUC) is a voluntary program that does not require an individual to be on a hold to be admitted. The program is designed for individuals experiencing a mental health crises. Mr. Verbeck noted that the individual must be medically stable and that the crises does not involve or require medical attention. Additionally, all individuals experiencing a mental health crises under these circumstance can and will be served, regardless of their ability to pay or the type of insurance they possess.

The age groups served by MHUC somewhat vary in each region. In the MHUC facilities in Perris and Palm Springs serve youths and adults; the Riverside location is currently only able to serve

adults. Mr. Verbeck noted that the physical space in the Riverside location currently cannot accommodate the youth, which they hope to remedy in the near future.

The MHUC services are provided by a contractor and they perform screenings, assessments, crisis counseling, peer navigation, family support, wellness planning, and provide linkages to ongoing services. They also offer assistance in administering psychiatric medications in a safe, comfortable, trauma-informed, and least restrictive environment. Staff at MHUC consist of 50% peer staffing. Mr. Verbeck noted that peer staffing help consumers feel at ease, which helps them better navigate through their treatment and services.

In 2019, MHUC's had the following admissions in each location – Riverside: 4,687; Palm Springs: 3,383; and Perris: 3,858. The average stay at each location are as follows – Riverside: 12-14 hours; Palm Springs: 11-14 hours; and Perris: 8-9 hours. The combined recidivism rate within 30-days for all three locations is approximately 18%. Mr. Verbeck noted that when the program initially started, the recidivism rate was at 7.5%. Mr. Verbeck stated that he and staff are monitoring the situation more closely to determine the cause of the increase. Less than 2% of those admitted were transferred to the hospital for further assistance and the overall consumer satisfaction scores for each location is over 90%.

The Crisis Residential Treatment (CRT) Center is a level of treatment that most are not aware of. The reason for this is that incoming individuals have a planned admission or a referral. Referrals for CRT typically come from emergency rooms, Emergency Treatment Service (ETS), Inpatient Treatment Facility (ITF), Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU), or a Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF). Consumers admitted to the program are usually experiencing longer term mental health crises, but are medically stable. Consumers can stay between 14-30 days to help them resolve their crisis and help them get linked to additional services, if necessary. The average number of days consumers stay at CRT is 14 days. Those referred and admitted to the program must be 18 or older and possess Riverside County Medi-Cal coverage.

Services offered at CRT are similar to MHUC, but much more extensive. Services offered include screenings, assessment, crisis counseling, and trauma-informed care. Mr. Verbeck noted that the CRT does a great deal of work with consumers that have co-occurring disorders. The facility is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are open on holidays. CRT staff consist of 25% peer staffing and similar to MHUC, peer staff help consumers feel more at ease during their stay.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Dr. Chang referred to a few points on Mr. Verbeck's presentation and provided additional information on the Crisis Support Systems of Care. Currently, there is rising interest from various cities to implement CBAT in their police departments. The Department is working with the Executive Office and Riverside Sheriff's Office to expand the CBAT teams along with some of their more traditional crisis teams in other cities. They are also considering implementing these systems in the unincorporated areas of Riverside County, which currently does not have any crisis support systems available.

Fiscally, the Crisis Support Systems of Care is beneficial as the savings are estimated in the millions. Dr. Chang reported that the crisis teams are estimated to save the County \$40 million annually and the urgent care systems are estimated to save roughly \$110 million annually.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- 1.) MHSA UPDATE: Sheree Summers, Workforce Education and Training Manager, presented the Employee Recognition Award for Outstanding Service to Rod Verbeck. Heather Sylvester, Adult Full Service Partnership Supervisor, nominated Rod Verbeck for his leadership and work at the March Air Force Base (AFB) where he lead a team of behavioral health staff to serve the group of Americans that came home from Wuhan, China when the COVID-19 crisis first began. Mr. Verbeck was onsite an estimated 100 hours a week since the group of Americans arrived from Wuhan. Mr. Verbeck worked alongside and maneuvered between the Public Health entities, the military, the passengers, and all other agencies at March AFB. Ms. Summers noted that Mr. Verbeck lead the Department's teams through one of the most unprecedented events in recent history and modeled tremendous strength on behalf of our community through his collaborative leadership style. Mr. Verbeck was presented a plaque for his incredible efforts and he expressed his deep appreciation and gratitude for the recognition.
- 2.) SAPT UPDATE: Will Harris, SAPT Assistant Regional Manager, reported that they have completed their RFP process and have selected two new contractors that will be providing individual prevention services for youths that have had some use of alcohol or other drugs, but haven't reached the level of diagnosis. The two contractors are MFI Recovery Center and the Latino Commission in the Desert. They are also hiring a provider that will be doing community based prevention work, primarily in the desert area, and will be focusing on the LGBTQ population and additional works in cities with higher poverty level. The organization working on this is called Reach Out. Mr. Harris noted that Reach Out has offices in Upland and Morongo Valley.

Red Ribbon Week was recently held and the Friday Night Live (FNL) Chapter did things virtually and had four motivational speakers do virtual presentations at various schools. Throughout the week, each day had a theme for students to participate in. Monday was "crazy hair day," Tuesday was "pajama day," Wednesday was "neon day," Thursday was "wear red day," and Friday was "costume day." Mr. Harris added that FNL will soon have a social media presence, which they have been working on for quite awhile. Soon, the students will be able to get information from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube from the FNL Program.

Rhyan Miller, Deputy Director of Forensics, provided an update on the current number of SAPT consumers served in the County clinics and contract providers, combined. Mr. Miller compared these numbers from February, when the initial drop of clients began to occur due to COVID-19. For intensive outpatient services, they are 4.2% below baseline numbers from February. For Recovery Services, they were able to increase the number of consumers by 17.9%. Prevention experienced the sharpest decrease and they are still 34% below February's baseline. Mr. Miller noted that those numbers are slowly climbing and with the implementation of their new contracts, they are hoping Prevention will experience an increase over the next several months. Sober living or recovery residences, increased by 51.4% and outpatient services increased by 6.6%. Mr. Miller thanked all the sober living contractors that are managing the increase in consumers and also management for approving the additional funds for the program. Residential levels of care is 7% below the February baseline, but is slowly but steadily increasing in the last several weeks. The narcotic treatment programs have experienced a 6.6% increase above baseline and the HHOPE Program is 6% above baseline. The juvenile justice programs have increased by 21.5% above baseline and the mental health court have increased by 14%.

- a) FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE YOUTH AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Gentre Adkins, Behavioral Health

Specialist IV, introduced Friday Night Live's Youth Ambassador Spotlight speaker, Tiahna Thomas. Ms. Thomas shared her experience and success in the Friday Night Live Program.

Ms. Thomas began her participation in FNL when she was in the 4th grade along with her friends. They entered into general group where they participated in various activities and field trips. Later, Ms. Thomas discovered there is a leadership portion in FNL and decided to join the group in 5th grade. In the leadership group, Ms. Thomas had the opportunity to attend a few different events, such as the Active Youth Conference, which was hosted by Riverside County Youth Council. Ms. Thomas noted that all the students in attendance were there for the same reason, which is wanting to better themselves, improve their leadership skills and live the healthy, safe, good lifestyles they strived to promote.

In the 6th grade, Ms. Thomas was immediately part of the leadership group, which was restructured to a small cabinet of six students. Ms. Thomas served as the vice president for the 6th grade representatives and attended the Leaders Energized and Prepared Summit hosted by FNL and the Youth Council. In 7th grade, they removed the small cabinet of six students, which made the leadership group move inclusive. They continued their efforts in coordinating canned food drives, planning of their Red Ribbon Week, hosted dance events, and several other efforts that helped serve their community. This continued on to her 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, where she attended her fourth Active Youth Council and was approached by Riverside Youth Council.

The Riverside Youth Council asked if she would be interested in joining the Council, which Ms. Thomas was very excited about. Moving on to her freshman year in high school, she knew that the FNL chapter was not available in Beaumont High, so she was very much interested in Riverside Youth Council's invitation to apply for a position. After undergoing the application and interview process, Ms. Thomas became part of the Riverside Youth Council in her freshman year. Ms. Thomas noted that joining Riverside Youth Council was a big change of pace for her, but she was open and grateful for the opportunity. Ms. Thomas continued her participation and involvement in the Council all throughout her high school years and is now in her senior year of high school.

As Ms. Thomas finishes her final year, the California Youth Council approached her and invited her to apply for a position in the Council. Now, Ms. Thomas is one of the 20 people representing the state in the California Youth Council, and the only one from Riverside County. Ms. Thomas will be representing Riverside County and will have the opportunity to share all the work being done in FNL and the County, as well as share ideas and other contributions to the Council. Ms. Thomas expressed her deep gratitude and appreciation for all opportunities that FNL has given her and look forward to continuing her work with the youth and the Council.

#### **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

DESERT REGIONAL BOARD: None

MID-COUNTY REGIONAL BOARD: Kim McElroy reported that the African American Health Coalition, Workforce Education and Training, Consumer Affairs, and Cultural Competency provided presentations regarding their programs.

WESTERN REGIONAL BOARD: Greg Damewood reported they had their meeting over Zoom and Lisa Morris attended. Minutes will be available for review and their next meeting will be at 3pm by Zoom later in the afternoon.

ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE: None

CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE: Tori St. Johns reported that Suzanna Juarez-Williamson did a presentation on trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy. Their next meeting will be December 15 and all are invited to attend.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE: Greg Damewood reported they are having a meeting the following week by Zoom.

HOUSING COMMITTEE: None

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Per April Jones' notes from Zoom chat: *"Discussed legislation related to COVID, Supervisor Perez suspend evictions in unincorporated areas during pandemic. Group will monitor implementation and impact of laws that were passed on County and provide updates. In regards to peer support certification law passed in September. County has 2 years to develop a plan of implementation."*

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: Richard Divine reported that there are currently two vacancies under District 1. There is an applicant seeking to occupy one of the vacancies and will be processed for membership once they've completed their final meeting requirement.

OLDER ADULT SYSTEM OF CARE COMMITTEE:

PUBLIC ADVOCACY COMMITTEE: Per April Jones' notes from Zoom chat: *"Reviewed Public comments made during our Public Hearing and discussed concerns the Commission needs to follow up on. Toni Robbins provided an update and overview of the Cultural Competence Program and their efforts to address disparities, service deliver and plan for new infrastructure. Report available as requested. She also will be providing the Commission additional updates as changes emerge."*

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE: Daryl Terrell reported that on July 17, the Substance Use (SU) CARES and CARES merged and are now located at the Rustin Campus on the second floor. There is also a new app called "Take My Hand," where peer support staff serve as chat operators. A test phase was held from April 17 to June 30 and the app was available to Riverside County residents. The test phase showed that the average chat times were 25 minutes; 37% were ten minutes or less; and 49% were 20 minutes or less. The average wait time for a peer to respond was 31 seconds and the average time for a consumer to reply during the chat was 67 seconds.

VETERANS COMMITTEE: Rick Gentillalli reported that members of the Veteran's Administration, CalVet, and San Bernardino Veterans were in attendance at their meeting earlier in the day. BHC Commissioner, Paul Vallandigham was also in attendance and Mr. Gentillalli remarked he looks forward working with him.

(Continued)

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:** Tori St. Johns requested to have Suzanna Juarez-Williamson provide a presentation on the trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy that she did at the Children’s Committee meeting. Ms. St. Johns noted that it was a very informative presentation and may benefit the Commission to learn more about it.

**ADJOURN:** The Behavioral Health Commission meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm.

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Tori St. Johns, BHC Secretary  
Maria Roman, Recording Secretary

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**FY 2020/21 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION ATTENDANCE ROSTER**

MEMBERS	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Anindita Ganguly, District 2	✓	✓	A	✓	✓						
April Jones, District 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Beatriz Gonzalez, District 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Brenda Scott, District 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Carole Schaudt, District 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Daryl Terrell, District 5	✓	✓	A	✓	✓						
Debbie Rose, BOS Rep. Dist. 2	✓	A	✓	A	✓						
Greg Damewood, District 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Jose Campos, District 2	A	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Paul Vallandigham, District 5	A	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Richard Divine, District 2 (Redist. 4)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Rick Gentillalli, District 3	✓	A	✓	✓	✓						
Victoria St. Johns, District 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Dr. Walter Haessler, District 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						

Present = ✓ | Absent = A | Medical Leave = ML

Minutes and agendas of meetings are available upon request and online at [www.rcdmh.org](http://www.rcdmh.org). To request copies, please contact the BHC Liaison at (951) 955-7141 or email at [MYRoman@rcmhd.org](mailto:MYRoman@rcmhd.org).

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