



Behavioral Health Commission

Approved Minutes

Wednesday, September 3, 2025 | 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM



Hybrid Meeting – College of San Mateo, 1700 Hillsdale Blvd, Bldg 10,
Room 468, San Mateo; 840 Deep Woods Trl, Pleridge, MT; and Online

BHC Members:	☒ Jean Perry – Chair ☒ Leticia Bido – Vice Chair ☒ Yoko Ng – Vice Chair ☒ Bill Silverfarb – BOS Rep ☒ Dan Keohane	☒ David Rice (online) ☒ Frieda Edgette ☒ Jason Sutherland (online) ☒ Kate Saywell ☒ Kristin Kurczak ☐ P.D. Kristina Bell	☐ Laura Gomez ☒ Michael Lim ☐ Paul Nichols ☒ Sid Palani ☒ Veer Chowdhary ☐ Victoria Yu
SMC BHRS Staff:	☒ Dr. Jei Africa ☒ Chantae Rochester (online)	☒ Kristie Lui ☐ Doris Estremera	
Others Present (in-person)	Dr. Maria Lorente Foresti, Jon Hanlon, Yvonne Handlon, Keri Kirby, Bill Zolan, Oliver Zolan, Susan Naify, Sylvia Tang, Sheryl Uyan, Victor Barfield, Clara Boyden, Laura Palmer-Lohan		
Others Present (online)	Debbie, Desir, Jason Sutherland, Jonathon, Pat Willard, Susan Cortopassi, Walter Ng, William E, Yolanda Ramirez, Jonathan, Cyndy Sweet, Jaime Hernandez, Jenny Keffer, Joanie, Justin Murano, Kristin, Nicole, Martha		

Meeting called to order at 3:35 by Chair Jean Perry.

ITEM	DISCUSSION/ACTION
Roll Call/ Introductions	Roll call was completed.
Approval of Agenda	The meeting agenda was unanimously approved after revisions. ► M/S/C Keohane/ Bido
Approval of Minutes	The meeting minutes were unanimously approved after revisions. ► M/S/C Bido/ Edgette
Correspondence, Announcements & Public Comment	- Leti Bido - NAMI Walk on Sat, Oct 4th at Seal Point Park, 9AM-12:30PM. Fundraising is encouraged. Visit NAMIwalks.org for more info. There are opportunities for volunteering. BHRS will be participating again this year. - David Rice - 9/25 is the San Mateo County Stand Down from 10AM-3PM at the event center. It is a one stop resource for veterans including benefits, mental health and substance use support, health care, housing resource, employment, etc. - Bill Silverfarb - Supervisors Canepa and Speier are co-sponsoring a session 9/9 on the topic of BHRS and the landscape of the county right now. You can participate either via zoom or at 500 County Center at 1PM. Get an understanding of what's going on in the county and reflect your own thoughts. - Leti Bido - Overdose Coalition is hosting a few meet and greets throughout September and October to get to meet the coalition members. - Dr. Maria Lorente Foresti – There is a Public Service Career Fair 9/12 from 10AM-1PM at County Center in Redwood City. There is also a fitness festival supported by Pacific Islander partners on 9/15 at Gellert Park in Daly City. Tonga Day 2025 is also hosted by our Pacific Islander partners on 9/13 from 10AM-6PM at San Mateo Central Park. Lastly Recovery Happens Picnic on 9/18 at Coyote Point.
Suicide Prevention Month & Recovery Month Presented by Sylvia Tang (BHRS Office of Diversity & Inclusion)	- Our goals today are to reduce stigma around both recovery and suicide, instill hope in our community, and share and uplift resources related to these causes. - September is National Recovery Month and in San Mateo County we celebrate it as Recovery Happens Month. It is a local tradition highlighting recovery, resilience and wellness across our community.

Equity), Sheryl Uyan (BHRS Alcohol & Other Drugs), and Victor Barfield (San Mateo County Voices of Recovery)	• It also celebrates people in recovery from substance use and mental health challenges along with families, peers, and providers. • Recovery Month matters because it reduces stigma, provides hope, honors individuals in recovery, creates opportunity, and builds community. • In San Mateo County we celebrate through a candlelight vigil. This is an annual tradition honoring those we lost and affirming hope. This year it will be held on September 5 from 5PM-8PM at County Center in Redwood city. • Other community events include the Breakfast and Walk of Hope on September 9, Board of Supervisor Proclamation on September 9, Recovery Picnic on September 8, and a recovery dance on September 27. • In BHRS we have a year-round commitment to recovery. It doesn't end with treatment or happen alone. We have continued peer-led supports, integrated behavioral health care and inclusive community events. • September is Suicide Prevention Month, and the National Suicide Prevention Week lands on the second week of September. This year it is September 7 to 13 with the World Suicide Prevention Day being September 10. • This year's theme is "Support Your Way." This means support can be different for different people, and we really want to focus on individual agency and power. Looking for support does not mean losing control. It means taking control of your life. • Suicide Prevention Month matters because suicide can be prevented. This is not to say that it is 100% preventable, but we really believe with collective effort, we can collectively prevent it. • Suicide also impacts us all, and lastly talking about suicide does not plant the idea in anyone's heads. It can actually save lives. • I've personally had conversations with a family member about suicide and as scary as it is, I'm glad they know that I'm a person they could talk to if they are thinking about suicide or looking for resources for a loved one. • We honor Suicide Prevention Month through events, virtual and in-person including events hosted by the Youth Action Board, Voices of Recovery, Heart & Soul, California Clubhouse, NAMI, and trainings. • Thank you to Supervisor Canepa who sponsored our countywide proclamation. We also reach out to all 20 cities in San Mateo County to proclaim Suicide Prevention Month and this year we got 10 cities to participate. • Special shoutout to Commissioner Frieda Edgette and Commissioner Michael Lim for connecting us with the Youth Action Board. A lot of them are accepting proclamations from different cities. • Similar to Recovery Month, we do not just honor these observances in September. We have a suicide prevention committee. If you are interested, you may join our mailing list. We have our suicide prevention roadmap which highlights our strategic plan from 2021-2026. We have trainings year-round and also special projects throughout the year. • There are also a couple suicide loss support groups in San Mateo County hosted by Heart & Soul and Mission Hospice. • As mentioned, next Tuesday, 9/9 we will be presenting to the Board of Supervisors to proclaim September as Suicide Prevention Month and Recovery Month. Dr. Jei Africa and Victor Barfield of Voices of Recovery will be presenting. • We are very honored to have Victor Barfield who is a recovery coach, WRAP facilitator, and peer mentor who is willing to share their story of recovery and suicide prevention today. • We encourage everyone to take action to promote recovery and suicide prevention in San Mateo County by attending an event, spreading the word about events and resources, and taking a free community training.
--	--

Suicide Prevention Month & Recovery Month Presentation Questions and Responses	• Yoko Ng – I'm the chair of the Adult Recovery Committee, and we did a site visit of Voices of Recovery back in June and we were able to learn about the WRAP program, and how it is going strong. We appreciate all your work. • Dan Keohane – I've worked with the Mills Recovery Alliance and unfortunately the in-patient program was closed. With the increase of shut down facilities, is there anything we can do to help? ○ A: There can always be increased visibility. We try not to preach to the choir and find new communities to share our message to. We also sometimes don't say suicide prevention depending on the community. There is also the mobile crisis team that is 24hr peer support specialists to help people who are in crisis. At Voices, we are trying to get as many different forms of recovery because what works for one person might not work for another. I'm actually the chairperson for bringing in new groups, and we are working to get Smart recovery groups, possibly Al-Anon, Recovery Action Plan for families. Of course funding is a big hardship. • Veer Chowdhary – It is inspiring to see how much effort is being put into supporting recovery and suicide prevention in our community. For suicide prevention specifically, what plans are in place to reach communities that might face barriers to accessing services or facing higher stigma. E.g. immigrant communities, LGBTQ+, older adults, youth? ○ A: We try to work with the different communities. For example older adults, San Mateo County we see a higher rate of suicide in this community, so we want to work with different partners. We appreciate Commissioner Perry for chairing the older adult committee and bringing in different partners. Supervisor Canepa has also been a huge ally in declaring loneliness a public health crisis, and that brought a lot of partners like Peninsula Family Services. There is an elder death review team that tries to look at what is happening for each individual older adult. One concrete thing we do is trainings which is a great starting point for a lot of people, and we have different trainings specifically for different marginalized communities including Pacific Islander, Tongan Speaking community, Chinese Speaking Community, Filipinx Community. We are working on the Black/African American adaptation and middle school adaptation. • Jean Perry - With transition in BHSA, some partners will be working with public health. I haven't heard any game plan. From your perspective can you tell us how the union of those two worlds are happening. ○ A: One of the impacts of Prop 1 is that the prevention funds will go back to the State. There is a lot of uncertainty about what that means. One division we are trying to partner with is Public Health, Policy, and Planning (PHPP). Currently, we don't know how or if the State is going to bring back the funds down locally. Doris and her team are still trying to gather community input this month. I don't imagine this work going away completely but I don't know what it will look like. ○ A: There is some discussion about whether any of those funds will go to the local health jurisdiction, so that would be in San Mateo County, the public health under Dr. Tamara Jones. Public health also has a mandate to do community health or what they call the CHIP process like a community health assessment, so we have been uplifting behavioral health in that process and continue to raise much of the prevention work that we're doing and the needs. • Frieda Edgette - One thing I wanted to add to the call to action is 988. Don't wait, call and text 988. The other thing I was curious about is of those organizations coordinating events, what you might be noticing that is
--	---

	different this year around suicide prevention organizing, conversations? Or all systems as usual. ○ A: Thank you for acknowledging Taylor and Walter. They do so much and everything I've mentioned they've touched on. Otherwise, I feel a lot is similar but one thing that is different is 988. I forgot to mention Alameda County is hosting their annual 988 conference. There has been a lot of shifts in our communities such as closures for our recovery centers and a lot of our communities being resilient despite it. Communication is key. With shifts there can be a lot of confusion. Helping community know where to start and what few numbers to remember. Simplicity in communications is very helpful. • Kristen Kurczak - I'm curious about what is the communication like with BHRS and schools? ○ A: Yes, anytime I'm invited by a school, I will move my whole schedule to present. The hard part is getting on their calendars. We've had a majority of conversations with health professionals at schools. • Kate Saywell – I assume you've tried specific to superintendents and the school boards, so I was wondering what districts used a little bit more of a nudge, what districts are doing well. Thank you for filling the gaps and sharing how can we help you.
Standing Committee Reports	Committee for Children & Youth Service Reported by Frieda Edgette • Last month we welcomed our new action board members. There are 14 in total, and we will be bringing them in over the course of the year for them to give updates themselves, as well as for you to get to know each other. • For outputs, we have four subcommittees which continue our dyad approach of a youth and adult co-leading. Thank you, Commissioner Kurczak and Palani, who are advisors on the Community and Pathways Project, Edith Cabuslay, who is the adult advisor for our media subcommittee and Commissioner Lim for continuing with policy and all things. • They have been presenting at city proclamations, sharing their lived experiences, personal stories and accepting proclamations for Suicide Prevention Month. • The group also submitted a mini-grant to participate in the Be the Change Coalition podcast hosted by Oceana High School. We will share widely once it is available. • Our media team is in the process of preparing a social media and social media presence campaign. There was a desire to do an intergenerational dialogue. • We have our first meeting for the youth commission on September 11, next Thursdays. We will share updates next meeting. Next meeting is Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. In-person at allCove (2600 S El Camino Real Suite 300, San Mateo) and Virtual: Zoom or dial 669-444-9171 Meeting ID: 990 0971 9684 Committee for Adult Services Reported by Yoko Ng • We did not meet in August. • Next meeting will focus on Prop 1 BHSA input session. • BHSA staff will share data and information on the topic of justice involvement, and facilitate a discussion to get input on services, priorities, and strategies. Next meeting is Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. Virtual: Zoom or dial 669- 900- 6833 Meeting ID: 983 9161 3998

	Committee for Older Adult Services Reported by Jean Perry • We did not meet in August. • We are having our last two community input sessions. Next meeting is Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 1 p.m. In-person at 2000 Alameda de Las Pulgas, Suite 200, San Mateo, CA 94403 Virtual: Zoom or dial 669-900-6833 Meeting ID: 944 8158 6160 Committee for Alcohol and Other Drug Services Reported by Leti Bido • We heard a presentation on treatment perception survey led by Alberto Ramos from BHRS AOD. There is a slide deck available to those who missed the presentation. • Next meeting will focus on community input session. Next meeting is Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Virtual: Teams Mental Health Services Act Steering Committee Reported by Jean Perry • MHSA Steering Committee has stopped meeting and has changed into taskforce meetings. • Last one will be on October 2nd. 3PM-4:30PM
Director's Report presented by Dr. Jei Africa	See attached slides. • Narcan dispenser has piloted at Daly City Bart by non-ticketed area. Our research has shown about 60% of all Narcan administration by Bart EMS has been by Bart in Daly City. Piloting on October 1st. • Please attend the Suicide Prevention and Recovery Month proclamation. It is so great when a commissioner makes a public comment to say what city you're from and why you think this is important. • BOS Study Session on BHRS at Manzanita Hall on 9/9 1PM-3PM. We invite you to support us and provide public comment. • We had a successful BHRS Staff Appreciation event last week at Beresford Park; over 250 staff came. • Thank you to the Workforce Education and Training team for 15 new interns with a wide variety of internships. • 10/16/25 we celebrate Global Peer Supporter Day. For anyone really interested in learning more, please contact Jana Spalding. • Answering a question from last month about how many peer support workers are bilingual: we have 7 bilingual peer support workers. Total we have 36 peers in the county.
Public Comments on Director's Report	• Dan Keohane - Do we need any announcement we'll be at the BOS study session? ○ A: No, after their presentation they'll open up for public comments. • Sid Palani - Are there particular points that you would like particularly raised? ○ A: Shift in financial landscape could mean uncertainty, maybe looking at where there can be cuts. Continue advocating for the importance of services and programs. • Sid Palani - Is the Narcan a BART specific pilot? How does success get measured? ○ A: It is a partnership with BART and the idea is to increase access to naloxone. We are working with BART to get this in public places. Somethings we did with our opioid settlement funds is to have naloxone in ambulances to respond to incidences right then and there. • Michael Lim - How long is the study session?

	○ 2 hrs. 1PM-3PM. It might go longer.
Liaison, Task Force and Ad Hoc Committees	Suicide Prevention Committee • No report given. New Member Committee • No report given. QIC Committee Reported by Jean Perry • We did not meet in August. We will meet in October. Site Visits Committee • No report given. Cal BHB/C Reported by Dan Keohane • Quarterly meeting scheduled for 17th and 18th of October and it will be in Burlingame and Zoom. Go to their website calbhbc.org for address and link. • Most of agenda is about where they will go in the next few years.
Old Business	• Nominating Committee ○ Moved to next meeting. • Select chair and co-chairs for standing committees ○ Moved to next meeting
New Business	
Adjournment	This meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m. by Chair Jean Perry.
David Lewis Award	Congratulations to Susan Naify for receiving the 2025 David Lewis Award! Susan Naify's professional, empathetic, and deeply human approach to client care makes her stand out at Sitike Counseling Center. She teaches her colleagues that in this field of service, the language of the heart is the most powerful tool when helping clients navigate recovery. Susan helps clients through the stages of change and creates a safe space for them to explore the underlying issues that may be driving their substance use disorder. In an age of intense physical and electronic record keeping, Susan remains client focused, meeting each person right where they are on their journey and extending a loving, compassionate hand of guidance.

Next BHC Meeting:	Wednesday, October 1, 2025, from 3:30-5:30 p.m. College of San Mateo - College Center, Building 10, Room 468 840 Deep Woods Trl, Polebridge, MT 59928, and Online Information will be posted on www.smchealth.org/BHC.
Next Executive Committee Meeting:	Wednesday, October 1, 2025, at 5:30p.m. College of San Mateo - College Center, Building 10, Room 468 840 Deep Woods Trl, Polebridge, MT 59928, and Online
Note:	PLEASE BE SURE TO CONTACT KRISTIE LUI AT KFLUI@SMCGOV.ORG. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND EITHER THE BHC OR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. In compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), auxiliary aids and services for this meeting will be provided upon request when given three-day notice. Please call 650.573.2544.