

Behavioral Health Commission

Unapproved Minutes

Wednesday, November 5, 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, Poleridge, MT; and Online

BHC Members:	☒ Jean Perry – Chair (online) ☒ Leticia Bido – Vice Chair ☒ Yoko Ng – Vice Chair ☒ Bill Silverfarb – BOS Rep (online) ☒ Dan Keohane	☒ David Rice ☒ Frieda Edgette ☒ Jason Sutherland ☒ 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 (online) ☒ Chantae Rochester (online)	☒ Kristie Lui ☐ Doris Estremera	
Others Present (in-person)	Dr. Maria Lorente Foresti, Carolyn Shepard		
Others Present (online)	Chip Huggins, Jennie Liebermann, Jonathan, Scott Gruendl, Susan Cortopassi, Sylvia Tang		

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. ► M/S/C Keohane/Bido
Approval of Minutes	The meeting minutes were unanimously approved. ► M/S/C Edgette/Nichols
Correspondence, Announcements & Public Comment	- Frieda Edgette – On Thursday, November 20, LGBTQIA+ Commission is hosting a Transgender Day of Remembrance from 5:30-7:30PM in South San Francisco at 901 Civic Campus Way. - Paul Nichols – I wanted to emphasize that the Naloxone Box Stand program has launched and if you are involved in an organization with a public location you can apply for one of these stands. Application is online. - Yoko Ng – Kingdom Love is hosting a Youth Mental Health First Aid training, and I'm going to teach as a national instructor with Lisa at allcove on Friday, Nov 14th. There are still spaces available so if anyone is interested to be trained, please contact Kingdom Love. - Leti Bido – Overdose Prevention Coalition met yesterday, and there is a meeting calendar now available, and all meetings are open to the public. There are different task forces for the unhouse community and the youth based. Next meeting is Dec 9th from 1:30-2:30PM as is a virtual meeting. Help Create a Safer San Mateo and Reduce Drug Overdoses in Our Community. Become an Overdose Prevention Coalition Member: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RMNM78 - Leti Bido – There is a senior showcase sponsored by the San Mateo Daily Journal on Thurs, Nov 20th from 10AM- 2PM at Vibe Teen Center in Redwood City. There will be health screenings and resources. - Leti Bido – There is a BHSA webinar taking place 10:30AM and all members of the public are encouraged to attend. Open virtual meeting. - Kristina Bell – The sheriff's office has opened up an appointment for a new sheriff. There are six candidates online and there are community forums for folks to be engaged. - Carolyn Shepard – I am the President of Solutions for Supportive Homes, and we represent families with adult mental health challenges. We go to

	city council meetings to advocate for permanent supportive homes. One year ago our student, Dr. Kristen Moser presented this commission with a tool called Z-codes which can be used to collect information on where clients lives. This would of course be an estimate, but my question today is whether the commission has begun collecting this data.
Databook Presented by Scott Gruendl, Assistant Director, Behavioral Health & Recovery Services	• The 2025 Data notebook focuses on wellness and recovery centers in California's public Behavioral Health system. • The Data Notebook is a required document by the California Behavioral Health Planning Council. • The Data Notebook collects data from local commissioners and is designed to assist local commissions with meeting the program review mandate, serve as an educational resource for local commissions, collect opinions and thoughts from local commissions, and identify unmet needs and make recommendations. • Last year the Planning Council changed the process with a focus on special topics instead of the standard questions they've asked in the past. • San Mateo County wellness and recovery centers include California Clubhouse (now Aspire House), Mouton Center with One East Palo Alto (EPA), Voices of Recovery San Mateo County / Recovery Connection, the SMC Pride Center (temporarily without a facility), and ALAS/The Cariño Project. • The Recovery Center opened on September 12, 2024 in Redwood City on 650 Main Street. This is a non-County operated, non-profit operated program that is peer managed and peer run. • Funding sources for these program operations include County, BHSA, Grants and MHSA. The Recovery Center operates as a larger organization not under county behavioral health department and that is Voices of Recovery of San Mateo County. • They do not currently bill Medi-Cal, but this will be important as we transition to BHSA. • The Recovery Center offers in-person weekly support groups every Monday and Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP). They offer these programs in English and Spanish. • Personal supports include meals, snacks, toiletries and 1:1 mentoring. • Transportation is not provided by Voices of Recovery and there is currently no licensed clinician at the center, but this may change if it supports Medi-Cal billing. • The program received referrals from other organizations including Navigation Center, WeHOPE Shelter, One EPA, Heart and Soul, Pathways/ BHRS, DUI/ Criminal Justice.
Behavioral Health Transformation Journey Presentation Questions and Responses	• Jean Perry- What would qualify as a wellness recovery center? What makes others not on your list like One New Heartbeat and others not on your list. ○ Scott- When I read the list, it was a partial list, not meant to be exhaustive. The definition of a wellness and recovery center is somewhat loose. There is a specific criterion. I got these from the MHSA funding list. The one clear criterion is that they are peer run and peer managed which this one definitely was. • Jean Perry- What are the things an organization needs to be able to bill for Medi-Cal? ○ Scott- This is a great opportunity to answer what BHRS is doing. We currently have an innovation project called PIVOT which is modeled off of an innovation project from Orange County. There are five specifics to the PIVOT program, and we just selected one related to establishing the billing for Medi-Cal. We are engaging our CBOs right now as early implementers who are interested in Medi-Cal billing. We are also looking at dual billing for Medi-Cal

	and DMC-ODS which is related to substance use. Voices of Recovery is one of the ones we are engaging to see if they would be interested in being part of PIVOT. What PIVOT does is go through an analysis of their operations and go through their abilities to bill and their gaps. The goal is to be able to bill by July 2027. • Frieda Edgette- Why did the California Behavioral Health Planning Council decide to drop the first section and focus on case studies and why do we only see one case study? I'm also curious about any indicators of changes of the Data Notebook itself in response to the BHSA implementation. ○ Scott- To the second question, nothing I have seen around the Planning Council's changes to the Data Notebook in light of Prop 1. Regarding the one case study, I don't have an answer to that either. I'll have to look into it a little more and follow up at a future meeting. ○ Jei- I think maybe Commissioner Keohane can bring that up as our representative to the statewide committee. • Michael Lim- On slide 9, you mentioned the recovery centers have guidelines and code of conducts they must agree to. When they are excluded from the particular program offerings of the recovery centers, do the peer workers have the follow up program with clients who are excluded on how to modify their behaviors so they can be included. ○ Scott- I know Voices of Recovery does address this. I will have to follow up to let you know about specifics on how they do this. • Jean Perry- What offerings are available for youth under the age of 18? ○ Scott- Pride Center and allcove would be options. • Jean Perry- What happens to the feedback we give on the Data Notebook? ○ Scott- The reason for presenting today is to gather questions and feedback about this process. After today, I'll tie up the questions I gathered from everyone, and then I enter these responses into their Survey Monkey. They take the information, and they look at trends across the wellness recovery centers and use this for advocacy on the statewide level. • Kristen Kurczak- I've been curious about the Pride Center. What is it doing without a facility? I'm having difficulty engaging with them without an open center. ○ Scott- The Pride Center was originally under StarVista, and they were the financial agent. Since StarVista closed, they lost the Pride Center facility. Part of their approach is to have a virtual presence as they are regrouping with their new fiscal agent which is the San Francisco Public Health Institute. • Paul Nichols- I understand it's the Planning Council that decided the questions, but the kinds of questions they propose asking, I feel I can get almost all the info off the programs' websites. I don't find this info that helpful in understanding the success of the program. That's the kind of stuff we need in order to assess programs. We are getting data back theoretically from five programs. I don't see the reason why every program in the county wouldn't be required to provide that information. ○ Scott- I appreciate that on several levels. You're right. When we look at contracted providers, we look at things a lot more seriously than the Data Notebook. There are varying levels of participation across the state, so I think the Planning Council recognizes that, but there is absolutely no reason why next year we can't start with the topic we are given and do a preview when we first get the request so that you can ask additional questions so that it is more meaningful for this commission.
--	---

	- Michael Lim- I wanted to put my support for what Commissioner Nichols just mentioned. With the Planning Council operating at a state level, that's one thing, but there is a lot we can do locally. So, we don't have to wait for the state level to tell us what we need to do. For instance, some of the questions that Commissioner Nichols put forth are things that we really shouldn't be part of the evaluation and control for the contract monitoring when we liaise with the nonprofit organization. If we are doing that as part of the standard operating procedure, it could push our agenda forward. - Scott- Thank you, Michael. And in the new calendar year, we will be introducing a new audit tool for all our contracted mental health services. We currently, on the DMC ODS side already do this, because the state requires it to occur on a monthly basis. On the mental health side, we don't have the requirement, but we're going to do it anyway, which is an audit tool that actually audits the providers to the requirements of the contract to make sure that they're meeting the requirements of the contract. So if there's specified service levels in the contract, we'll be checking to see if the service levels are being met. We're going to become more performance-driven and rules-driven. In our focus as an organization, more like a health plan, and so compliance becomes a critically important piece of it.
Standing Committee Reports	Committee for Children & Youth Service Reported by Freida Edgette - Thank you, commissioners Palani, Kurczak and Lim who are participants and advisors to our Youth Action Board. Over the last couple of months, we have been refining our strategic priorities which fall under four categories and have corresponding deliverables. - First, is around improving mental health outcomes through intergenerational dialogues. - Second, supporting and shaping long-term planning and programming, both in terms of preventative and crisis mental health interventions. - We're also preparing to launch a media campaign. We want to thank Dr. Africa for a lot of discovery on the best avenue. Thank you, Commissioner Saywell who is part of that committee, and for her strategic prowess. - Finally, our ongoing pathways digital tool to connect youth people and their families to resources. - In addition to what I mentioned, we also are partnering with the County Office of Education (COE) to pilot an internship program with community-based organizations in the COE, really helping try to nudge and plant early seeds to address the workforce and build a workforce pipeline. Next meeting is Wednesday, November 19, 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 had a presentation from Brenda from Heart & Soul. She explained their programs like WRAP and helping folks with referrals. It is 1 on 1 peer support with Spanish available. There are 6 peer support mentors and current director is Rosalyn Reed. - We will have One New Heartbeat presenting a weekly evidence-based parenting meeting. Next meeting is Wednesday, November 19, 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 had a conversation about the path to reentry to employment and volunteering. - We are working to get more future speakers on this topic. Next meeting is Wednesday, November 19, 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 Paul Nichols - We had two meetings in October. First was on AOD strategic planning. Under Prop 1 things have changed quite a bit so we had two people talk about what the strategic prevention plan will be moving forward. We are relieved those prevention programs will still exist. - On 10/9 we also had two different tours of Cordilleras. Highly recommend that those who couldn't join to find time to tour the facility. Total of 18 people joined the tour. Next meeting is Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 4PM-5PM. Virtual: Teams
Director's Report presented by Dr. Jei Africa	See attached slides. - Our Chief of Health and I joined the Contractor's Association Retreat in late October. We discussed what is happening statewide and locally, there were good conversations and questions. It's important on a regular basis that we talk about some of the things that are challenging and how we can address them and their impact. - Last week we launched our Workforce Development Survey; intending to get a sense, both from staff and contractors, some of the needs such as what kinds of skills that they need for their staff, and also training needs, so we're more focused on retention and recruitment. - We're hoping this data will help us develop the three-year plan that is part of the integrated plan that we will submit to the state. - We are gearing up for the implementation of SB43 by January 1st. We've engaged many of our partners finalizing workflows that when somebody we feel is appropriate for SB43, we will know the pathway that gets them to the appropriate level of care. - Governor Newsom signed several bills including AB137: SUD Modernization Act, SB 27: CARE Court Expansion, and AB348: Full Service Partnership.
Public Comments on Director's Report	- During the tour of Cordilleras, we were told there were currently 8 individuals receiving treatment who got there from CARE Court which is a good destination to launch them toward recovery. - Who is the contractor to perform the auditing of the behavioral health contracts in 2026? If the contractor is not in compliance, who will help them get into compliance? - Jei- We have our QM staff and also a compliance team in BHRS. This is a requirement by the Department of Healthcare Services, We work with our providers to be in compliance. So if they're not in compliance, we put them in a corrective action plan, and we work with them on a regular basis. - Kristen Kurczak- When they are in compliance, what does that mean? - Jei- The state requires that we meet certain requirements because we are a behavioral health plan, certain compliance categories like timely access, network adequacy, do you have policies that reflect the practice that the state's requiring, do you have mechanisms to

	avoid fraud, waste, abuse. So our analysts go and audit documentation. • Jean Perry- A lot of these legislative changes have resulted in potentially more people being available to receive treatment so in some ways you have needed more capacity. Are we doing any kind of backtracking to determine what the source of these individuals not receiving care before CARE Court was and has the solution been effective for them? ○ Jei- The state is going to come out with a study that looks at the data now after CARE Court has been implemented for a year. Locally we see there are many reasons people are disconnected from the system. I believe from the data I saw a month ago, many of them we somewhat engaged with BHRS/contractors or that we try to engage with them before but were never interested at all. Many referrals are coming from correctional health. The piece of getting connected through jails seems to be a door that may be an entry to the system.
Liaison, Task Force and Ad Hoc Committees	Suicide Prevention Committee Reported by Yoko Ng • President Canepa sponsored a resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors and declared suicide among men and boys a public health crisis in San Mateo County and expressed support for executive order N3125 issued by Governor Newsom. • Suicide Prevention Committee meeting featured a presentation by the San Mateo County's Coroner's Office which included the process of death investigation for suicide and other types of deaths and also covered death review teams in the county. Next meeting will be on Tues, December 2nd, 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. via Zoom. New Member Committee • No report given. QIC Committee Reported by Michael Lim • There were some reports on clients having a challenge getting services when they don't have a phone. Some clients especially unhoused communities, have an aversion of using cellphones with ideation that they are being tracked through the cell phones. We are in discussion with a member of the QIC to see how we can resolve that. Site Visits Committee • No report given Cal BHB/C Reported by Dan Keohane and Leticia Bido • Commission met on October 17 and 18th in Burlingame. Commissioner Bido and Perry attended as well. • We were able to gather with other colleagues from the state. We learned of potential changes to the Brown Act in terms of hybrid meetings. We'll learn more by the January retreat. • All are welcome to join their quarterly meetings. A lot of webinars are recorded. I encourage everyone to bookmark the website as we carry out our commitments as commissioners.

Old Business	• Action Item: Vote for Slate of Officers ○ Unopposed ▪ Jean Perry for Chair ▪ Paul Nichols for Member at Large ▪ Dan Keohane for CALBHB/C Liaison ▪ Yoko Ng and Leticia Bido for Co-Vice Chairs ► M/S/C Rice; passed unanimously
New Business	• Retreat committee ○ Retreat committee met on Mon, October 27th from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. ○ Date will be Saturday, January 24th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. ○ Location TBD ○ We will meet again on Mon, November 10th from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Adjournment	This meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Jean Perry.

Next BHC Meeting:	Wednesday, December 3, 2025, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. 2000 Alameda de las Pulgas, Room 201, San Mateo, CA 94403 840 Deep Woods Trl, Polebridge, MT 59928 2 Dinkelspiel Station Ln, Atherton, CA 94027 3801 Miranda Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94304, and Online Information will be posted on www.smchealth.org/BHC.
Next Executive Committee Meeting:	Wednesday, January 7, 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.