



Behavioral Health Commission
Unapproved Minutes
Wednesday, May 6, 2026 | 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM



Hybrid Meeting – 2000 Alameda de las Pulgas, Atrium, San Mateo, CA 94403; and online

BHC Members:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jean Perry – Chair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leticia Bido – Vice Chair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yoko Ng – Vice Chair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Silverfarb – BOS Rep <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dan Keohane <input type="checkbox"/> David Rice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frieda Edgette <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Sutherland <input type="checkbox"/> Kate Saywell <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kristin Kurczak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P.D. Kristina Bell	<input type="checkbox"/> Laura Gomez <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Lim <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul Nichols <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sid Palani <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Veer Chowdhary <input type="checkbox"/> Victoria Yu
SMC BHRS Staff:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Jei Africa <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chantae Rochester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kristie Lui <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doris Estremera	
Others Present (in-person)	Yolanda Ramirez, Douglas Rapp, Tashe Barthalomew, Stephanie Torres, Priscilla, Kira Liess, Karen Feliciano, Marta Perez, Maria Lorente Foresti, Camille Hicale, Nicolette Kelleher, Gil Perez, Gabriella Perez, Sylvia Tang, Walter Ng, Taylor Coutts, Michelle Ye, Patricia Baker, Dan		
Others Present (online)	Brenda, Chip, Frankie Anguiano, Jonathan, Lee Harrison, NAMI SMC, Susan Cortopassi, Sydney Hoff, Anna Tran, Camille Hicale, Twila Dependahl, NAMI SMC		

Meeting called to order at 3:34 p.m. by Chair Jean Perry.

ITEM	DISCUSSION/ACTION
Roll Call/ Introductions	Roll call was completed.
Approval of Agenda	The meeting agenda was approved with the following revision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move Tony Hoffman to after correspondence and public comment ► M/S/C Nichols/ Keohane
Approval of Minutes	The meeting minutes were approved. ► M/S/C Keohane/ Kurczak
Correspondence, Announcements & Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristina Bell- Gun buyback event happening on Saturday 6/6; It will be in South San Francisco at the Northern Court. There will also be a second one towards end of the year located in the Southern part of county. • Frieda Edgette- The SafeSpace P.O.W.E.R Walk hosted by the Youth Commission is happening May 9th at Central Park in San Mateo! Join us for a one-mile walk + community celebration with music, youth voices, and wellness resources. ✨ RSVP NOW-https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/power-walk-test?utm_source=ig&utm_medium=social&utm_content=link_in_bio&fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAc3JOYwZhcHBfaWQMMjU2MjgxMDQwNTU4AAGnhymgsazHy_QmnGD1pL0p9tE2S1EgzSEM0sGHvVQdbNoDCL4ZlcwC9h_UgSk_aem_rKkPcnVGU0tTeTzwhTftlQ • Frieda Edgette - It is application season for the youth action board. 7-10 positions available. Please share. • Leti Bido - To learn more about the many May Mental Health Month events visit: SMCHealth.org/MHM. Events include “Stress Less. Live More” free Zoom workshop on Monday, 5/11 @ 6:30pm. Registration Link: https://www.tgacoaching.com/stress_less_live_more

Tony Hoffman Awards

- Congratulations to our 8 recipients for this year's Tony Hoffman Community Mental Health Services Award!
- **Gil Perez** (he/him) is a queer, Filipinx full-time tenured faculty Personal Counselor at College of San Mateo. As a faculty leader, he has helped transform the mental health model at his institution to ensure students in San Mateo County have flexible and broad mental health services that meet the full range of mental health needs. He has integrated himself into the campus community and collaborated campus-wide with student support programs and instructional programs to deliver mental health programming that are culturally responsive and advance the educational mission, vision, and values of the college. With a decade of service in San Mateo County, Gil continues to bring energy, enthusiasm, and motivation to address the evolving needs related to the practice of mental health services in San Mateo County. The impactful work he does to meet the needs of our county and foster a culture of care, well-being, and safety permeates through his service to others and Gil continues to make a positive contribution to San Mateo County cultivating more inclusive, affirming, and thriving communities.
- **The San Mateo County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS) Parent Project** is a longstanding, community-rooted program that has made an extraordinary and lasting difference in the lives of families impacted by behavioral health challenges. For decades, the Parent Project has provided parents and caregivers across San Mateo County with practical tools, emotional support, and a trusted community space to strengthen family relationships, respond to youth behavioral health concerns, and navigate challenges with greater confidence, compassion, and connection. In doing so, the program helps families move from crisis and disconnection toward resilience, understanding, and hope. The current coordinator, **Nicoletta Kelleher**, first became involved as a high school volunteer. Through that experience, she developed a deeper understanding of what families face and how meaningful community-based support can be. That early experience helped guide her career pathway, and today she now coordinates the very program that once inspired her. Her journey reflects the Parent Project's role not only in supporting families, but also in helping cultivate future leaders grounded in empathy, service, and community connection.
- In Redwood City, moments of crisis are met with a calm and compassionate introduction: "Hi, I'm Patricia. What's going on?" This simple yet powerful approach reflects the empathy, professionalism, and clinical expertise that **Patricia Baker** brings to every interaction. Patricia has made an extraordinary and lasting impact through her work on the Community Wellness and Crisis Response Team, a collaborative co-response program between law enforcement and behavioral health providers. Officers ensure safety while Patricia conducts on-scene mental health assessments, de-escalates crises, and connects individuals to appropriate services. Her work exemplifies a care-centered approach that prioritizes dignity, safety, and long-term stabilization. Through her leadership, dedication, and vision, Patricia has helped transform how Redwood City responds to behavioral health crises, reducing stigma, strengthening cross-system collaboration, and improving outcomes for some of the community's most vulnerable residents. Her work has made a profound difference in the lives of countless individuals and has helped build a more compassionate, effective, and responsive, mental health system in San Mateo County.
- **Kira Liess** is a NAMI consumer and part time employee of NAMI for fifteen years. During that time, she has taught countless courses and cohosted countless support groups for NAMI. She is currently teaching an 8-week in-person mental health "Peer-to-Peer" course again at NAMI's San Mateo office. She also continues as an ongoing cohost for various NAMI "Connections" zoom consumer support groups and the age 55+ group

twice a month. As a volunteer, she cohosts a new “Coloring and Coffee” art group for consumers. Kira also holds a Peer Specialist Certification. Despite her own mental health challenges, Kira maintains an upbeat, insightful, perceptive and nurturing demeanor. Her observations, supportive comments and encouragement for peers is invaluable.

- **Caltrain** has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to addressing both rail safety and suicide prevention through a comprehensive, multi-layered approach grounded in education, engineering, and enforcement. Beyond traditional safety efforts, Caltrain has meaningfully evolved its work to center mental health, stigma reduction, and community collaboration — particularly following critical incidents that reshaped their approach to suicide prevention.

Caltrain has shown leadership in shifting public narratives around suicide by working with partners to discourage harmful media practices and promote safe, stigma-reducing communication. Their willingness to evolve their messaging and practices based on community feedback reflects a strong commitment to continuous improvement and compassion.

- **Sylvia Tang** is not someone who seeks recognition or attention. Instead, she remains steady and thoughtful and is deeply committed to mental health stigma reduction and interagency collaboration in a way that feels both genuine and rare in this work. As Co-Chair of the Suicide Prevention Committee, Sylvia shows up consistently with intention and care, always centering the voices of those with lived experience and making space for meaningful collaboration in suicide prevention efforts. She has a beautiful way of bringing people together across systems and perspectives, despite the often heavy subject matter, helping us move forward in ways that feels both inclusive and impactful.

What stands out most about Sylvia is her heart. Sylvia's impact is not loud or showy but is instead consistent and intentional. This is deeply felt by the countless folks who have the opportunity to work with Sylvia in pursuit of increased mental health outcomes and suicide prevention efforts.

- **Dr. Gabriela Perez, EdD, LMFT**, is an exceptional leader and service provider who has dedicated over 10 years to San Mateo County BHRS, beginning as a frontline clinician in the EPA Clinic and advancing to Supervisor of the South/EPA School-Based Team. She is widely recognized for her strong clinical judgment, calm and solution-focused leadership, and commitment to trauma-informed and culturally responsive care, including serving Spanish-speaking and immigrant communities. In addition to maintaining high-quality service delivery during staffing challenges, she has taken on broader system roles—such as facilitating the Interagency Placement Review Committee (IPRC) and co-chairing the Latino/a/x Collaborative—further advancing cross-system coordination and ensuring that the voices of clients and families are heard across all youth systems of care.

Gaby's work reflects innovation, collaboration, and a deep commitment to reducing barriers to care and stigma in underserved communities, making her highly deserving of recognition in the Service Provider category.

- **Michelle Ye** is the Co-Founder of Project EDSA (Eating Disorder Support & Awareness), a youth-led nonprofit founded in May 2025 to bridge the critical gap in eating disorder support in youth, by embedding prevention, awareness, and peer support systems directly into schools, especially under-resourced ones, through the partnership with ANAD (The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders) and Stanford's Stice Lab. Michelle has helped scale this nonprofit from the ground up to 100+ chapters across 15 countries, educating over 100,000 students globally and reaching millions of people.

Michelle is actively involved in San Mateo's Futures Commissions, where she works closely with Frieda K. Edgette, a Behavioral Health Commissioner and the initiative's founder with the focus on intergenerational wellbeing, ensuring that the mental health needs of

	<p>current and future generations are embedded into the San Mateo County's long-term policy and visioning.</p>
<p>May Mental Health Month Presentation by Sylvia Tang (BHRS), Taylor Coutts (Felton Institute), and Walter Ng (Felton Institute)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy Mental Health Month, AANHPI Heritage Month and Older Adult Month! • The color lime green was chosen for mental health awareness because it is such a bright color, and it is intended to shine a light on the stigma of mental health. The purpose of it is to reduce stigma and connect people to mental health and substance use support. • The Felton Institute team, who were formerly with StarVista Crisis Center have been wonderful to work with and hosted a wonderful kick-off event yesterday. • Peninsula Suicide Prevention, formerly a program under StarVista is now unified under, Felton Institute, ensuring uninterrupted global crisis care for our community right here in San Mateo County. Ensuring uninterrupted local crisis care for San Mateo County. • Peninsula Suicide Prevention offers 24/7 crisis support through 988 Suicide and Crisis Line. • As of April 2026, we found the 988 lifeline has been linked to 4400 fewer suicides among U.S. teens and young adults ages 15-34 then projected between July 2022 and December 2024. • In addition to 988, our team also provides clinical follow-up services to help those at risk navigate mental health crisis after their initial connection with our services. • Our team which is 96% lived experience counselors with mental health challenges and/or suicidality averages over 24,000 contacts annually right here in San Mateo County. • Our goal is to increase awareness, reduce stigma, celebrate recovery, and connect to care. • This May, the theme is Mental Health is Ours. It reframes mental health as a collective ecosystem where every neighbor, student, and coworker has a stake in each other's community-owned asset, mental health. At our kickoff event yesterday, there was a discussion by an expert panel of individuals throughout the county. Having a voice from multiple different communities is vitally important. • There is also a free calendar of events that you can find at our website on SMCHealth.org/MHM. • You can also talk about 988 and share the number or website at 988lifeline.org. • We have clinical and nonclinical trainings throughout San Mateo County regardless off affiliation. • Thank you, San Mateo County Behavioral Health Commission. Thank you Mayors Mental Health Initiative and to everyone else participating in proclamations this year. Thank you to the 2026 mini grantees. Immense thank you to Sylvia Tang for her deep commitment and guidance in the Suicide Prevention Committee.
<p>May Mental Health Month Presentation Questions and Responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristen Kurczak - How are people finding you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: Current poll is that 30% of Californians know about 988. Awareness comes from people in this room. Free of charge, no insurance needed, no crisis level needed. We've seen 988 put on all students' ID cards, so we have a lot of our youth utilizing. Walter does a lot of tabling. When polling SMC residents, 1 in 100 know

	<p>about 988. Last year we had a panel on psych emergency. More work needs to be done. We know suicide risk is highest after someone leaves hospitalization. We have someone prepared to support these people. At this moment we don't have formal partnerships with psych emergency. Ensuring someone has a phone call within 24hrs of discharge is so important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoko Ng - Asian culture has no idea of difference in suicidal ideation and suicidal tendency. It's important to educate new generation and immigrants on the differences. What is the schoolwork and training being done? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: In SMC we have higher youth suicide rates than any other city in CA. We have expanded on Charlotte Ross's work. We have a 4-tier curriculum system. We train clinical personnel, teachers, parents, and then lastly students with the idea that one falls on the other. • Jean Perry - I've volunteered with Suicide Prevention Committee since 2012. Our adults dying by suicide has been high. For youth there is a place where they are able to go. Where is this for older adults, particularly for older adult men? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: We were just awarded a grant for Peninsula Health Care District for both youth and older adult outreach. On our 988 hotline, we see the most repeat calling from older adult population due to lack of resources, lack of connection. There are definitely specialized efforts in this area. • Yoko Ng- Is there a time limit? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: We will stay on the phone for as long as you like unless it needs to be escalated. Especially for first time calls, it will be around 45 minutes to make sure people feel comfortable. We have a less than 1% rate of involving law enforcement because we are exploring all our options. • Jean Perry - Is there a number of how many who have died by suicide have called the line? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: Currently not a lot. We don't see a lot of folks have reached out. This means more awareness is needed. • Kristen Kurczak- Can we access info about people who have reached out? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: At this time not publicly available. We are trying to find more understanding around it. There is a big ask of transparency and understanding. Internally we use it to see where outreach efforts are needed. However, demographic isn't needed to utilize 988. • Jean Perry- What portion of your calls are not from the person in crisis but someone calling concerned about another person? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: I don't have this number, but some skills we work on is roleplaying on how to have the convo. We explore options beyond just welfare check. • Yoko Ng- What are the threshold languages? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: At this time, we have Spanish speaking and ASL. Otherwise, we do use language line which isn't perfect but an option. We also can do a warm hand-off to a language line.
<p>Standing Committee</p>	<p>Committee for Children & Youth Service Reported by Frieda Edgette</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given during correspondence. <p>Next meeting is Wednesday, May 20, 2026, 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</p> <p>Committee for Adult Services</p>

	<p>Reported by Jean Perry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jean Perry will be covering for David Rice during his absence. <p>Next meeting is Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. Virtual: Zoom or dial 669- 900- 6833 Meeting ID: 983 9161 3998</p> <p>Committee for Older Adult Services Reported by Jean Perry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are discussing appropriate centers for care for future site visits. <p>Next meeting is Wednesday, May 20, 2026, 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</p> <p>Committee for Alcohol and Other Drug Services Reported by Paul Nichols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We received an overview of CalAIM. We were wondering how fee-for-service is impacting the county. The general impression is that it is not as bad as some of us initially feared. <p>Next meeting is Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 2 p.m. Virtual: Teams</p>
Director’s Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am grateful many commissioners who have been attending a lot of Mental Health Month activities so far. Please continue attending and introducing yourself at these activities. We are in week 2 in our Triennial Audit. State would like additional sessions. Many things we heard we were not surprised. e.g. questions about CARE Court, our workflow and processes. We are waiting on a few more sessions beginning tomorrow. We continue to have conversations with the State about Vehicle License Fee (VLF) funding. Suicide prevention work will move to public health (due to Prop 1). In August or September, it will be good to bring public health colleagues to hear what their plan is. This doesn't mean we're not doing the work, but a lot will be housed in public health. Part of the shift to BHSA is the shift to more housing/ housing supports for behavioral health clients, so a lot happening on that front.
Director’s Report Questions and Public Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jean Perry - Are we the only county pursuing leniency with VLF fees? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: Two smaller counties, so amount owed to them is a lot lower than amount owed to us. Jean Perry - Is peer support considered evidence based? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: Not considered evidence based in the form I just talked about but it is recognized by CMS and DHHS. Peer based is now a MediCal billable service in CA. Lee Harrison - Has BHRS evaluated rations of Peer Support Specialists in relation to clients? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No.
Liaison, Task Force and Ad Hoc Committees	<p>Suicide Prevention Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No report given <p>New Member Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No report given <p>QIC Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No report given

	<p>Site Visits Committee Reported by Paul Nichols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site visits - Jean, Dan, Frieda, Leti and I met. Clara came back with insightful questions. She said she can bring data to the chair before site visits. We are confirming what we can get access to. Once we have that data available to us, we will decide if questionnaire may be more of a guide. <p>Cal BHB/C Reported by Dan Keohane</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next meeting is June 19th. Large part of agenda will be reorganization of services. It is the month and year for election on commission for managing team. There are 6 people making up that team. I am currently nominated.
New Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medi-Cal Eligibility Awareness Ad Hoc Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly spearheaded by Commissioner Gomez. We will table till next month.
Adjournment	This meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m. by Chair Jean Perry.

Next BHC Meeting:	Wednesday, June 3, 2026, from 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. 2000 Alameda de las Pulgas, Room 201, San Mateo, CA 94403 and Online Information will be posted on www.smchealth.org/BHC .
Next Executive Committee Meeting:	Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. 2000 Alameda de las Pulgas, Room 201, San Mateo, CA 94403 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.