

# DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Scott Gilman, MSA, CBHE

## MHSA Tech Café Innovation Project Expands to Address Digital Literacy



Last year, BHRS and San Mateo County Health expanded telehealth with remarkable speed due to the pandemic, to ensure the continuation of care, adherence to COVID-19

precautions, and the safety of our workforce and those we serve. However, without proactive efforts to ensure equity, we could inadvertently increase the disparities in health care access for vulnerable populations with limited digital literacy or access.

In November 2020, BHRS started distributing technology supports funded by the Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Support for clients (and their family members) who could benefit from telehealth and/or other behavioral health services and their providers include:

- Tablets and smartphones with data plans for up to 790 BHRS clients.
- 30 tablets for residential board and care homes.
- 290 tablets with a one-year data plan to support BHRS contracted provider services.
- Phones and accessories for BHRS contracted providers to support clients' use of the technology.

Through feedback from the Community Race and COVID-19 Townhalls, peer support workers distributing the devices, and clients receiving these devices, we learned that the digital divide stems from both the lack of access to technology and the knowledge to use them effectively. Therefore, to better utilize these resources, the communities most impacted by COVID-19, and

those supporting them, had to improve their digital literacy.

Also, faith leaders, community organizations, and providers needed advanced training on hosting virtual meetings/webinars and events, and on supporting the community in connecting to telehealth appointments.

To mitigate these barriers and improve client engagement in care and wellness supports, BHRS contracted with Painted Brain to launch a series of trainings. These trainings which began last month include:

- Tech Cafe's for the community at large and clients who need basic technology supports (i.e., navigating telehealth, Zoom, other applications, devices, staying safe online, etc.).
- Digital health technical support for peer and family partners who distribute the devices to prepare them to provide basic orientation for clients.
- Training on advanced Zoom topics for providers, CBOs, and faith leaders.

By providing the community and workforce with the skills necessary to support clients, community leaders, and partners in utilizing these resources, we can begin to bridge this digital divide.

## California Peer Certification Program Moves Forward



Last September, Governor Newsom signed into law SB803, which establishes a statewide certification program for peer support specialists. The bill also provides the structure

**30.3%**

Revenue Ratio (R3)

**9,020**

Total Clients

**689**

Admitted

**643**

Discharged

needed to maximize the federal match for peer services under Medi-Cal.

The program defines the range of responsibilities and practice guidelines for peer support specialists, specifies required training and continuing education requirements, determines clinical supervision requirements, and establishes a code of ethics and processes for revoking certification.

Studies demonstrate the use of peer support specialists in a comprehensive mental health or substance disorder treatment program helps reduce client hospitalizations, improve client functioning, increase client satisfaction, alleviate depression and other symptoms, and diversify the mental health workforce. That's why 48 other states have already adopted peer certification programs.

### California Certification Program Guidelines

To establish the guidelines for California, DHCS (the Department of Health Care Services), which is tasked with implementing the program by July 1, 2022, held listening sessions to gather feedback from stakeholders statewide.

Counties can opt-in to the program to provide certified peer support specialist services. Each county has the latitude to develop its training guidelines and standards as long as they meet the state's minimum requirements.

### San Mateo County Program

San Mateo County has already begun offering trainings for its peer support workers/family partners/lived experience workers and their supervisors to prepare them for certification. These trainings include:

- Documentation training for peer providers
- 60-hour interactive training series for peers working in the public behavioral health system on essential skills, knowledge, and values
- Supervising peer/family partner/lived experience workers

Training topics were drawn from SAMHSA's Core Competencies for Peer Workers in Behavioral Health, stakeholder input through the Working Well Together Collaborative, the iNAPS (International Association of Peer Supporters) 12 Core Practices of Peer Providers, and the 16 core competency areas for peer providers as defined by the DHCS. This training is part of an initial three-year plan to prepare our peer, family partner, and

lived experience workers to meet state and national best practices for peer professional services.

To date, 17 family partners and peer support workers have enrolled in the training, and a limited number of slots are offered to community-based organizations and BHRS contractors.

## Health Ambassadors Support Local Vaccine Outreach Efforts



Health Ambassador Adriana Romo (right) with community member.

Ambassadors from BHRS's Health Ambassador Program (HAP) are canvassing their local communities to distribute masks and vaccination information. More than 600 fliers and masks have been given out since March.

As part of HAP's mission to increase community awareness of services and help connect individuals to appropriate care and support, five ambassadors volunteered to go door to door in their local communities—San Mateo, East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Half Moon Bay—to reach those most affected by the pandemic. They are also outreaching to their community at their local laundromats, grocery stores, and food distribution centers. Learn more about the [Health Ambassador Program](#).

## Workforce Wellness Month



On the anniversary of the pandemic, we reflect upon how we have all been impacted, both personally and professionally. This pandemic is a unique stressor in that it is ongoing, and we continue to deal with it one year after it began. During this time, people have also experienced and witnessed heightened levels of racial and social unrest, as well as wildfires, and the loss of loved ones due to COVID-19 or racial injustices.

We can account for many milestones and heroic moments with pivots in many directions to provide essential services. At the same time, we may be feeling a little heavier as we reflect on how this has affected us.

You may feel inspired and proud of how you have contributed to the pandemic response. At the same time, you may be experiencing pandemic fatigue, Zoom fatigue, decision fatigue, and just plain fatigue.

Although this is a collective experience of trauma, we cannot say that we are all in the same boat as we all have different privileges, experiences and access to resources.

### **A Month of Wellness**

In recognition of the fact that our workforce may need restorative opportunities to build on its wellness and resiliency, BHRS, the County Office of Education, the Human Services Agency, First Five, the County Manager's Office, and Human Resources came together to offer "Workforce Wellness Month (WFWM)" this month (April 2021).

WFWM is a month-long event with various speakers and activities to inspire, motivate, and provide a space for healing and growth. The events intentionally focus on trauma and culturally informed practices.

### **Wellness Kits**

BHRS also plans to distribute wellness kits to its staff. The kits will include a book about caring for oneself as a provider during times of stress and a few items to support sensory regulation. Sensory regulation is foundational to self-regulation; regulating through our senses can help us maintain a sense of calm and presence.

Stimulation of our proprioceptive sense (located in our joints and muscles) which can sense pressure, is one of the most calming and soothing experiences (e.g. weighted blankets, weight bearing exercises, swimming, massage, chewing gum, etc.).

Some of the sensory supports in the kit include: magnetic beads to support the proprioceptive, visual, and tactile senses, squishy tension balls to support proprioceptive and tactile senses and lavender essential oil to support the olfactory sense.

We hope our workforce utilizes the array of excellent speakers and activities during Workforce Wellness Month and the wellness kits for self-care. We are grateful to each member of our workforce for their unwavering commitment to service. Visit [wellness.smc-hr.org](http://wellness.smc-hr.org) to register for WFWM events and activities.

## **IMAT Support Line Now Available 7 Days a Week**



After several months piloting its Integrated Medication Assisted Treatment (IMAT) Support Line, BHRS has extended their service hours to broaden its reach. The line first launched last

October and was available for a total of eight service hours per week (weekdays only).

We are happy to announce that the support line is now available **7 days a week from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. at 650-573-2735** (84 service hours per week) for anyone who has questions about medicated assisted treatment, or who needs case management services or just to check in. See the [flyer](#) for more info.

## **StarVista's New Crisis Center Website and Teen Text Line**



**STAR VISTA**

StarVista's Crisis Center offers multiple crisis intervention and suicide prevention services in San Mateo County. The Crisis

Center launched its new website, [www.sanmateocrisis.org](http://www.sanmateocrisis.org), on March 1. This online resource provides quick links and information about Crisis Center services, resources and news, and is the new home for its Teen Crisis Chat and the recently launched Teen Crisis Text Line.

### **Onyourmind.net and Teen Crisis Chat Moved**

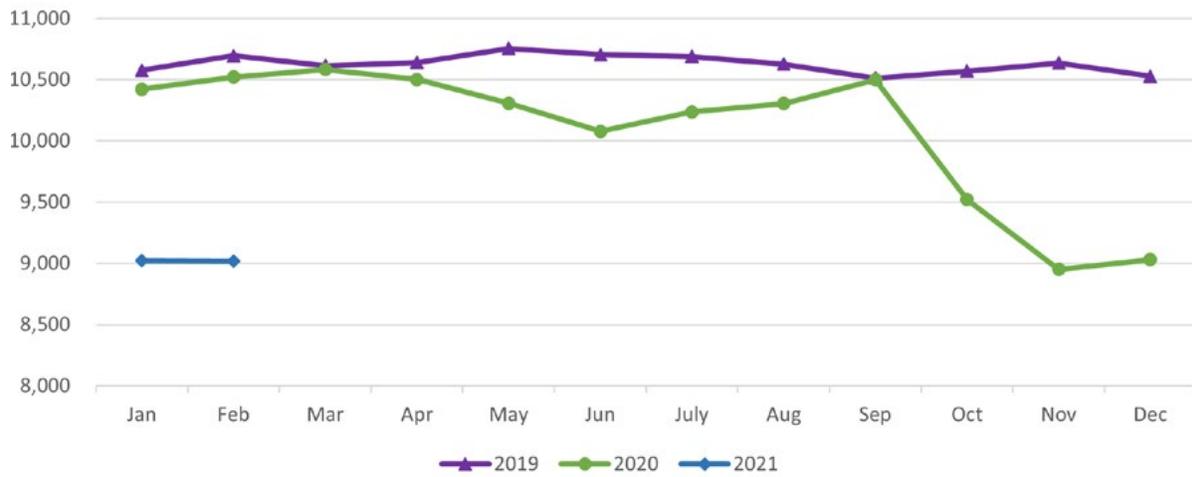
The StarVista Teen Crisis Services were originally hosted on Onyourmind.net, which has merged with the Crisis Center's new website. The online teen crisis chat can now be found on its [homepage](http://homepage) or at [sanmateocrisis.org/teen-crisis-services](http://sanmateocrisis.org/teen-crisis-services). Chat hours are Monday to Thursday, 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

### **New Teen Crisis Text Line: 650-747-6463**

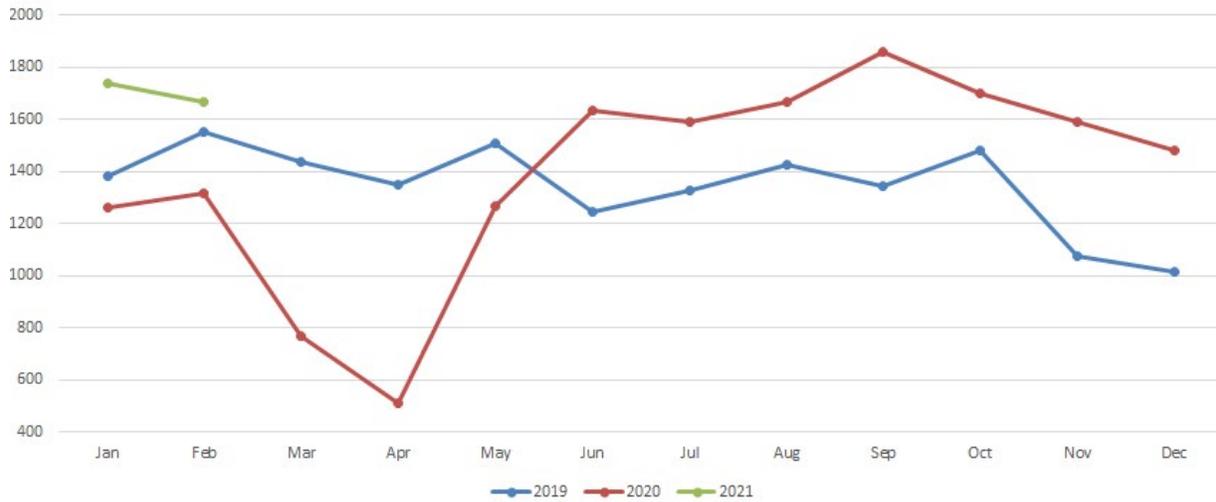
The new teen text line has been added to the Crisis Center program. This is an expansion of the teen crisis services that began with the teen chat and Onyourmind.net in the 1990s. Like the teen chat, the teen text line is a free, peer-to-peer service staffed by youth volunteers under Crisis Center staff supervision. The text line hours are Monday to Thursday from 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

# SNAPSHOT: BHRS Clients - as of February 28, 2021

## Total BHRS Clients by Month (2020 vs. 2019)



## BHRS Access Call Center - Total Calls by Month (2019 - 2021)



Service Category	Total Clients	Admitted - February	Discharged - February
Mental Health Services County SMI	5,755	476	469
Mental Health Services Contracted SMI	2,332	98	75
AOD Services	933	115	99
<b>Total BHRS Clients</b>	<b>9,020</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>643</b>

Total clients are unduplicated within each service category, however, if a client received services in more than one category during the same period, the client is counted in multiple categories.

**R3%** - 30.3% (revenue ratio of billed services as of 02/28/21)

Office of Diversity & Equity (ODE)  
San Mateo County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS)

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY COUNCIL (DEC)  
PRESENTS

# COMMUNITY & COVID 4TH TOWN HALL: A YEAR LATER

Thursday, April 29th, 2021

3:00-5:00 PM

[Register Here](#)

*Interpretation available in Spanish*

For more information or for support with registration, please contact:  
Frances Lobos at [flobos@smcgov.org](mailto:flobos@smcgov.org)

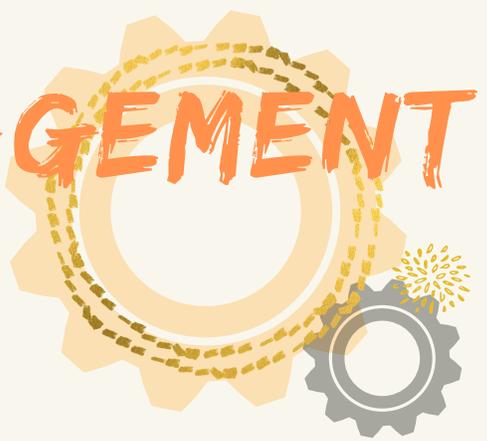
We invite you to our *4th Community Town Hall: A Year Later*.

It has officially been a year since the onset of the global pandemic, we'd like to hear from you as we reflect on the past year: what are challenges you are currently facing, what are some ways that you've seen community growth, & what are some opportunities for continued support.



REAL LIFE. REAL SUPPORT.

# IMAT CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT LINE



HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT MEDICATED ASSISTED TREATMENT?  
NEED TO JUST CHECK IN? CALL US.

**WHAT:** Compassionate support & case management services

**WHO:** Current IMAT clients, or anyone interested in MAT

**WHEN:** 7 days a week, even holidays

**CALL:** **650. 573. 2735** **9AM - 9PM**

\*Didn't get us? We're probably helping someone, leave a msg and we'll call you back soon!

Staffed by experienced IMAT Case Managers, we provide informed and non-judgmental support, no matter where you are in the recovery journey, We can help navigate questions about starting MAT, insurance issues, treatment options and other behavioral health services.

...or, call us if you just want to talk to someone who gets it.

**~ YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THIS ALONE ~**



The science is clear: addiction is a chronic disease that changes our brain and IS treatable with medication, behavioral therapies, and support.

**WE'RE HERE TO HELP WITH ALL THAT.**

If you, or someone you love is having a medical or psychiatric crisis please dial 911