



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE ABUSE RECOVERY COMMISSION

Unadopted Minutes Wednesday, February 2, 2022 Zoom Meeting

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Sheila Brar, Chris Rasmussen, Frieda Edgette, Jean Perry, Chelsea Bonini, Cherry Leung, Katelyn Chang, Kristina Bell, Don Mattei, Leticia Bido, Randy Torrijos, Michael Lim, Yoko Ng, Hudson Fox, Paul Nichols

STAFF: Scott Gilman, Chantae Rochester, Sylvia Tang, Doris Estremera, Claudia Saggese, Charo Martinez,

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Excused: Hudson Fox

Un-excused: Candice Hawley

OTHERS PRESENT (signed in):

John Butler, Martin Fox, Monica, Arturo Salazar, Clara Jaeckel, Chris, Eddie Flores, Mary Bier, Pamela Ward, Adriana Furuzawa, Sara McDowell, Susan Cortopassi, Suzanne Moore, Sydney Hoff, Bruce Adams, Carolyn Shepard, Kira, Yuka Merritt, Melinda Henning

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Sheila Brar

INTRODUCTIONS

Commission members introduced themselves

APPROVAL OF TODAY'S AGENDA

Approval of the Agenda

► **M/S/C** Edgette/Rasmussen

PRESENTATION

Mayors Mental Health Initiative

Presented by:

Mary Brier, Mayor of Pacifica

Sara McDowell, Mayor of San Carlos

Eddie Flores

Sara McDowell

As incoming Mayor's, Mary and I were thinking about what we wanted to focus on as mayors, we are both moms and both have heard personal stories with mental health during the pandemic. We decided we really wanted to focus on mental health. We started reaching out to non-profits and organizations in the county to better understand the issues that are facing our residents.

Two Main Issues

- Awareness
 - Helping our communities understand the resources available
- Access
 - Once the community is aware of the resources that they can access those resources
 - Without being on a waitlist for 8-10 weeks

We began reaching out to other mayors and Eddie Flores is not a mayor, but he is very focused on mental health. We've received support from 12 out of 20 Mayor's in our county. We feel that there is a lot of momentum right now.

Next Steps

- We've been talking about what we want to do and the areas we want to focus on
- We've been meeting with Scott Gilman
 - Discussing Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
 - Share information about the services available and our community members trained
- We are hoping to move forward with MHFA in May (Mental Health Awareness Month)
- We want to work with our youth, make sure they are supported
- We are putting together a list of various actions'
 - We will share those actions with the mayor's who have not signed on
 - Show them what we are doing and our plan going forward
 - Hope that they will join
- We are looking to support legislation that will benefit our communities and our service providers

All the mayors who have signed on, believe that this is the time to bring awareness and to bring about prevention.

Public Comment

Randy Torrijos

A heartfelt thank you for coming to this meeting and for starting this initiative. We've become more knowledgeable and sophisticated about the mental health challenges in our community, it's become apparent that this requires a multi-jurisdictional effort and solution. I think everyone here would agree and Supervisor Pine agrees that will resolve the best solutions, but it is also more complicated procedurally. We haven't had a lot of council members come to these meetings this is really encouraging. I know that Supervisor Pine will be very happy to hear that dialogue is opened and hopefully this will just be the start of continuous conversation and dialogue between this commission and the cities.

Michael Lim

I understand that this is relatively new and you're still in the process of onboarding new cities, I was wondering are you the only three currently signed on to this initiative?

A: The following cities have joined:

1. Redwood City
2. San Carlos
3. Daly City
4. South San Francisco
5. San Mateo
6. Menlo Park
7. Belmont
8. San Bruno
9. Foster City
10. Pacifica
11. Half Moon Bay

Chris Rasmussen

We have a very robust group of people on this commission and it's personal to us that's why we joined this commission to do the behavioral health work. You have our support; my question is how and/or what can we do to help?

Mary Bier

That's why we're here, to have that conversation. How can we collaborate on this and how can we make it even broader than it is now?

Scott Gilman

I'm thankful that you are talking countywide, that was one of the things to speak to you about next week. We have secured \$200,000 funding from the County and BHRS has funds to add to that amount for this initiative. I will keep reporting back to the commission as this develops. We'll need help to facilitate the trainings, the train the trainers for MFHA. We'll need libraries and gymnasiums, spaces to hold trainings and more importantly we need people. Encourage people to devote a day to becoming certified in MHFA.

Chris Rasmussen

I wanted to plant the seed that we are here. We just developed a legislative committee to let elected officials know that we're here and to let them know that we are a resource and to explain what we do and to explain our mission and goals. Keep that in mind that we are a group of people that can help, and we welcome the work, and you are always welcome to our meetings.

Eddie Flores

One thing you can do right now, if your mayor was not named in the list, give them a friendly tug, and ask them to contact us, that is one immediate way you can help.

Frieda Edgette

I'm the chair of the Children's and Youth Committee and one of the things we are focusing on is strengthening our consortium of community partners so Eddie it's great to see you here. Mary, you mentioned how to elevate and bring in the youth voice and youth leadership. It's so heartening to hear the readiness and the spirit around focusing on resilience because so much healing happens by paying it forward by sharing stories and

supporting others in the recovery process. Thank you and I look forward to future collaboration and continuing the conversation for some significant impact in the county.

Yoko Ng

I am a MHFA instructor, and I can also teach it in English, Cantonese and Mandarin as a National Health Care Interpreter certified for those languages. I think it is very important to have different language capacity within our county. If we can provide this to parents, teachers, anyone who serves the public that would be wonderful to kick start this program. It's all about raising awareness.

Randy Torrijos

A lot of times the community, whether its public comment at this meeting or individual meetings they might request from the supervisors, have input on mental health issues and/or programs. One of the best ways to address those is by directing them to cities. If there is a way when we do get comments from the public about their concerns that we think involves the cities, to get that information to you to address the issue. Maybe have a contact person to send those comments and/or schedule a meeting.

John Butler

I'd like to point out that the Older Adult Committee met this morning under the guidance of Mariana Rocha and tonight the NAMI San Mateo is having its 55 plus support group. I'd like to point out that I appreciate the emphasis on youth, but I want to remind you that the senior community have voices and leadership skills. Don't forget this population of 55 and over, there's a history of isolation in older age and not being included in activities, being forgotten by families, being left in residential facilities. We have value and are willing to act and speak up during mental health month. I also want to remind you that through the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs (OCFA) you can contact Jairo Wilches for the Lived Experience Academy, they have numerous lived experience peers that are able to speak during mental health month throughout your cities. I appreciate that my mayor, Betsy Nash of Menlo Park (my hometown) is included in your community. I want to remind you that we are all ready and willing and totally able to speak up about our lived experience.

Martin Fox

I'm speaking on behalf of parents of adult children with serious mental illness, especially the ones who age out of the system at age 19 and parents cease to be recognized because the only program that we have right now in San Mateo County is assisted outpatient treatment, commonly known as Laura's Law. It has been up and running for several years, and it provides assistance to parents who don't know what to do when their child, who's been having problems in school, ages out of school support system and enters the adult system. If they have a serious mental illness like schizophrenia or bipolar and the rage doesn't qualify them to be a danger to themselves or others or gravely disabled because they can eat out of garbage cans, they can sleep in tents and be found to meet their own basic needs, they go to Utah. California has been exporting and we have one right here in the county that we just exported again on Saturday to get the kind of treatment that we need, and that is why I've thought legislation to see the repeal of the Lanterman-Petris-Short-Act. Like the woman who's living in the tent out on the beach, because she's not dangerous and she can provide her own food, shelter, and clothing she doesn't get treatment. I would ask your legislative committee to start right there and go to our state legislators and get them headed in the right direction.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes from the January 5, 2022 Mental Health & Substance Abuse Recovery Commission Meeting with the following changes:

- Move Yolanda Ramirez to Staff Attendance
 - Michael Lim did not attend the meeting
- ▶ **M/S/C** Rasmussen/Edgette

Approval of minutes from the January 19, 2022 Executive Committee Meeting

▶ **M/S/C** Rasmussen/Edgette

Correspondence, Announcements, and Public Comment

Chris Rasmussen

Last Friday, a bunch of the commissioners attended the Be Sensitive, Be Brave training. It was a two-hour training, it's an excellent training and a good program for the community.

Sheila Brar

The training was great. Thank you to Sylvia and Dr. Joyce for leading the training. I learned a lot and look forward to the Be Sensitive, Be Brave Suicide Prevention training that is coming up.

Frieda Edgette

February 21-27 is National Eating Disorders Awareness Week. It's put on by the National Eating Disorders Association which is celebrating 20 years. This year's theme is See The Change, Be The Change. People with eating disorders are not widely understood and just for the members of the public, I'm in recovery from an eating disorder. I've had anorexia, bulimia, compulsive overeating, orthorexia...you name it, it was part of my story. Millions of Americans have an eating disorder or have struggled with an eating disorder and it is one of the leading causes of preventable deaths from mental health challenges in America just behind opioid addiction, resulting in about 10,200 deaths each day.

We've seen the effects of the pandemic, one of them being those suffering from mental health challenges like eating disorders will spike. Eating disorders can grow in isolation and so many people are struggling on the restrictive side because of increased anxiety and uncertainty, for me I know that is what led to the restricted behaviors with a false sense of control. On the other side being in quarantine in their homes is keeping individuals that are suffering from binge eating and compulsive overeating being in their kitchen all the time, which presents a different challenge. There's the universal challenge of accessing recovery services and resources. The Be The Change, See The Change is one way of elevating the stories, experience strength and hope of those individuals that are on the road to recovery and those who are still suffering. I encourage you to mark your calendars (February 21-27). Go to NED (National Eating Disorders) to get involved, following them on social media and help spread the word.

Kristina Bell

The date for our next gun buyback is Saturday, June 4, in South San Francisco at the northern courthouse. Once the flyer is ready, I will distribute to the commission.

John Butler

I'd like to wish everyone a Happy Lunar New Year! Year of the Tiger. Mental Health Month is coming and Suicide Prevention Month in September. I would like to ask the mayors to support us in our events that we create for these months. Help us spread the word through your city websites, we usually work with the libraries and I've received a lot of support over the years. Especially from the Redwood City, Burlingame, and Menlo Park libraries. These events come once a year, but we never forget the meaning of mental health awareness and suicide prevention. I just want to emphasize suicide prevention is very close to my lived experience, and I have tried each year forming events (with the help of others) to promote these events and circulate the knowledge of these events through social media and we need your help to spread the word. With your support, those of us living in isolation and misery and alcoholism and addiction and substance use can be informed about these events.

Martin Fox

We are experiencing historically high suicide rates amongst the members of our military and we don't have a designated member of the commission that would represent veterans and the problems they must deal with. The fact that the Department of Veterans Affairs has divided San Mateo County into two different healthcare systems, one in San Francisco and one in Palo Alto so coordinating efforts in the case of veterans is a little more complicated. I would ask that you remember what happened when we evacuated from Saigon and very similar experiences are happening to our service people who are returning from their deployment in Afghanistan.

STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Committee for Children & Youth

Reported by Frieda Edgette

Next meeting will be held on February 16, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

Via Teams

B. Committee for Adults

Reported by Yoko Ng

Next meeting will be held on February 16, 2022 at 10:30 a.m.

Via Teams

C. Committee for Older Adults

Reported by Jean Perry

The next meeting will be held on March 2, 2022, at 10:30 a.m.

Via Teams

D. Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Steering Committee

Reported by Jean Perry and Leticia Bido

The next meeting will be held on May 5, 2022

Via Zoom

MHSA Public Comment

Jean Perry

Commissioners have stated they are interested in being on the MHSA Steering Committee, we would I like to hear from you that you can make the commitment to participate. Part of the Brown Act requires that there be less than a quorum of commissioners' present, otherwise it is considered a commission meeting and follows the rules of the Brown Act.

Leticia Bido

The thought was for those who are currently listed as members of the MHSA Steering Committee to confirm their interest/commitment to being part of the committee and to open it up to anyone else wanting to join. We are allowed 6 members from the commission. Our current members are:

1. Jean Perry, Co-Chair
2. Leticia Bido, Co-Chair
3. Sheila Brar
4. Chris Rasmussen
5. Yoko Ng
6. Michael Lim

Yoko Ng

I have a schedule conflict with an afternoon online class I'm teaching at City College. I would like to step down as a MHSA Steering Committee Member, someone can take my place.

Sheila Brar

Being Chair of the MHSARC and being on the Executive Committee, I would like to open it up the spot to any other Commissioner who would like to take that on as one of their roles.

Chelsea Bonini

I'm still struggling with the rules around this, but we can address it offline. I did want to be able to attend, but I have a conflict that goes through April, so I can't at this time. The last couple of meetings I've heard that we're going to have a more robust discussion about it and there was a meeting in December and there is a meeting tomorrow, can share a little about how that is going to work for this meeting (the full commission meeting)?

Doris Estremera

We are trying to figure out the types of questions and things that we want to bring to this Commission. When Jean and Leticia come to the commission with information it will be more than a report out of the final product but them asking for input so that your opinions are incorporated. This does impact the timing of plans, but we will work through that and our hope is to bring you information at least four times a year.

Tomorrow we have the annual update and we'll be coming to present to the commission in March and to open the 30-day public comment so there will be a robust conversation at that meeting. Chelsea I would love to have a conversation with you to see how it feels, I want to make sure we are hearing your concerns appropriately.

Chelsea Bonini

I think what I heard was that it wasn't so much an issue but more of a concern that we wouldn't reach quorum, not that we would have too many people, because if we didn't reach quorum it wasn't an actual meeting. It used to be part of our meetings; I think that's what I heard.

Sheila Brar

It's a timing thing. Before the change was made there were two separate meetings, there was an issue of having quorum. Then we combined the meetings and then it was too much for our commission meetings.

Chelsea Bonini

My experience and knowledge of the Brown Act is that there are multiple meetings that happen for elected bodies and for appointed bodies that are subject to the Brown Act that just get noticed because there'll be more than a quorum, they just get noticed it isn't that hard. I would really like clarification on why we can't just notice the meetings and then we can talk there, I don't understand why that is not possible.

Randy Torrijos

We should probably just get County Counsel in a meeting. That is not exactly my understanding but I'm not county counsel and I don't want to give incorrect information.

Scott Gilman

We can invite Gina Beltramo to come to our next meeting to have this discussion.

Director's Report

Please see the [latest issue](#) of the BHRS *Director's Update*.

Topics include:

- Improving California's Infrastructure
- COVID-19 Response Grant Expands Suicide Prevention Trainings
- George Culores Hall of Fame Award
- Congratulations Kim Pijma
- Pride Center MHSA Project Outcomes

Find past issues [here](#).

Public Comment

Suzanne Moore

Happy new year to all the Committee members and the public!

My name is Suzanne Moore, and I am a member of Solutions for Supportive Housing. I was privileged to hear a recent presentation from Louise Rogers, Chief for San Mateo County Health, on a priority commitment to assist our unhoused with mental health and substance use conditions. I also heard language around prevention for those at imminent risk for homelessness, and I am very, very grateful. I want to support further studies in this area.

We have learned that those at highest risk for homelessness are folks who spend > 50% of income on housing, and those in transition from foster care/incarceration/ and the armed services. We are confident that there is an overlooked population of mental health clients at high risk for homelessness - those living with aging family members. We realize San Mateo County doesn't know how many there are and whether families are prepared for an inevitable

housing transition. I would like to propose our County estimate this population size, do a risk assessment, and suggest appropriate interventions based on your data.

We know that our mental health folks do not fare well on the streets. If we can prevent that from happening, we can likely prevent a tragic decompensation of their illness. Thank you.

Old Business

MHSARC By Laws Changes

Public Comment

Sylvia Tang

I wanted to update you on some language recommendations we've received from our peer community and I was hoping this could get integrated into the bylaws and how the language is used in the bylaws. I reached out to the Lived Experience Education Workgroup, Heart & Soul, California Clubhouse, NAMI, and Voices of Recovery and we had a discussion and received some great input. For what is inclusive language at this time I was hoping that the recommendations on the left of the graphic with the green check marks would get incorporated into the bylaws. See attached graphics for details.

Jean Perry

Is there any harm in putting this forward and pushing it back and incorporating the language and then voting next month?

Frieda Edgette

I think the question here is if we're changing the language of misuse to substance use condition or some of the other suggested language then I'm fine with tabling it another month and going through with a fine-tooth comb. I think its worth it, this is a priority, this is important.

Paul Nichols

Just to be clear it's not going to be one month. We're going to make the changes and it will be an additional month. My concern with the language changes is these kinds of expressions change all the time, are we going to be doing these every six months? every year? every two years? I've recently become aware that in suicide it's important to not say committed it's important to say died by suicide so maybe that should be added as well.

Chantae will make the suggested changes and send to the commission for review by Friday with a request to receive changes/comments by Sunday and we will vote to the submit to the BOS at the March meeting.

Randy Torrijos

I want to give you a sense of the length of the process. Once the commission approves the changes, it would then go to the Health Department and then the Health Department would put it on the Board of Supervisors Agenda.

New Business

None to report currently.

Liaison, Task Force and Ad Hoc Committees

Suicide Prevention Committee

Report not given at this meeting.

Next meeting is Tuesday, March 1, at 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Mental Health and Law Enforcement Partnership

Report not given at this meeting.

Next meeting is Tuesday, March 15, at 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. by
Sheila Brar

Next MHSARC Meeting:

March 2, 2022 from **3:30-5:00 p.m.**
Virtual Meeting

Next Executive Committee Meeting:

Wednesday, February 15, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

2022 George Culores Hall of Fame Honoree
Michael Krechevesky
Congratulations!

PLEASE BE SURE TO CONTACT CHANTAE ROCHESTER AT 650.573.2544 IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND EITHER THE MHSARC 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.