

RIVERSIDE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM-BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral Health Commission – Legislative Committee

Wednesday, April 2nd, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	PRESENT
Brenda Scott Dr. Walter Haessler Beatriz Gonzalez Dolores DeMartino Timothy Kirkconnell	April Jones Dylan Colt James (Tony) Ortego Shelley Lowther-Gutierrez Melissa Vasquez Richard Divine Ashley Housley Rhyan Miller	Sandy Awad Lt. Mark Miller Rayanne Monaghan

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION/FOLLOW-UP
CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS	Brenda Scott called the meeting to order at 10:32 am, and the attendees introduced themselves- Brenda requested that" Introduction to the Agenda" be added.	
MEETING MINUTES	The committee sent out the minutes for their reviewer.	
ANNOUNCEMENTS	<p>The MHSA plan is now available online for public review and feedback. Participants were encouraged to submit comments via email, phone, or the webpage.</p> <p>An upcoming Adult System of Care meeting would discuss public comments and updates on the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).</p> <p>A suggestion was made to discuss red cards further in the Legislative Committee rather than the Commission meeting, as the latter may be a more appropriate setting for policy-related discussions.</p> <p>A community member clarified confusion regarding Jefferson Wellness and Housing Workforce Solutions (HWS), explaining that HWS was responsible for their housing assistance, not Jefferson Wellness. They expressed frustration about the lack of funding and transparency in the housing process, particularly with the expiration of their rapid rehousing voucher. They shared their personal struggles, including relapse and temporary housing support, and emphasized their efforts to advocate for themselves. The discussion highlighted the challenges of securing stable housing, particularly in Riverside, and the difficulty of relocating due to personal circumstances. Another attendee offered to assist in finding potential housing options. The</p>	

	conversation was extended due to a speaker's absence, allowing more time for discussion.	
OLD BUSINESS	<p>Tim Kirkconnell, Government Relations Officer for RUHS, provided an update on recent initiatives. He discussed the county's applications for the Behavioral Health Infrastructure Program (BHIP) grants, which were submitted in December, with responses expected in May. The applications include three projects: a Wellness Center in Moreno Valley with 100 psychiatric acute care beds, a Beaumont campus for foster children's behavioral health needs, and a third unspecified project. The City of Moreno Valley has expressed support for the Wellness Center, improving its chances of approval. Additionally, RUHS has engaged with city officials to discuss expanding the emergency department and clinic space, with ongoing support from the city.</p> <p>Tim explained that state funding is divided between counties and cities to prevent competition and political issues. In January, the state began its new legislative session (2025-2026), introducing a rule limiting legislators to 35 bills per cycle, down from around 50. This change encourages more selective bill proposals and discourages symbolic legislation. Co-authoring a bill now counts toward each legislator's limit. The governor has proposed the initial budget, but many "placeholder" bills have been introduced without content, waiting for budget negotiations to conclude. These empty bills will be finalized and printed later in the spring or summer. Tim paused to check if there were any additional concerns or questions.</p> <p>he county is closely monitoring Senate Bill 16, introduced by Senator Blakespear, which would require counties with populations over 220,000 to fund 50% of all shelter operational costs from behavioral health funds. Riverside County opposes the bill, as it would divert critical behavioral health resources away from essential programs. The bill has support from major city mayors and is linked to Proposition 1, which restructured mental health funding.</p> <p>Opposition groups, including the County Executive Office, CBHDA, and CSAC, aim to prevent the bill from advancing past the policy committee. The concern is that while Prop 1 provided a one-time funding boost, SB 16 would create an ongoing financial obligation, potentially destabilizing behavioral health budgets.</p> <p>Potential budget cuts could impact public health and behavioral health services at the federal level. There are also concerns over the claw back of COVID-era grants, which has already forced some public health programs to shut down.</p> <p>The bill may ultimately serve as a "conversation starter" to push discussions on alternative funding streams for shelter operations rather than becoming law. The governor's office appears focused on imposing fiscal discipline on counties, but opposition groups hope to negotiate a more balanced approach.</p>	

	Tim will provide a list of legislation he discussed during this meeting in June's meeting.	
NEW BUSINESS	David Schoelen was not present today and is willing to provide the most recent MHSA updates at June's meeting.	
COMMITTEE UPDATES	N/A	
NEXT MEETING	Wednesday, June 4 th , 2025	
PUBLIC COMMENTS	No public comments	
ADJOURNMENT	The meeting adjourned at 11:37 am.	

FY 24/25 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE ROSTER

Present = **P** · Absent = **A** · Medical Leave = **ML**

Members	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
1. April Smith	A		P		A			A		A		
2. Beatriz Gonzalez	A		P		A			A		P		
3. Brenda Scott	P		A		P			P		P		
4. Dr. Walter Haessler	ML		P		P			P		P		
5. Melissa Vasquez	P		P		P			P		A		