

RIVERSIDE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES FOR September 3, 2025 • 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS –

Madam Chair Brenda Scott called the Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) meeting to order at 12:00 pm and led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner attendance was taken by roll call and followed by introductions.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING –

Victoria St. Johns made a motion to approve minutes as written from July 2, 2025 and April Smith seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS – Madam Chair Brenda Scott thanked BHC liaison for organizing the annual training that took place in August.

COMMISSION MEMBER REMARKS –

No Commission member remarks.

PUBLIC REMARKS –

Joseph Page gave praise to the department and was confident he could depend on the department as partners to support the community. Also recognized the department for the media program they've provided to the consumers to allow them a platform to share their stories and testimonials.

Cat Ferguson with the non-profit ILP (Independent Living Partnership) announced that the program provides transportation for those who cannot drive and asks that this information be shared with those in need of their services so they can reach out.

Antonio V. gave recognition to the Blaine Clinic, sharing he attends groups there and they have helped him to express himself, speak and connect with others. He shared that consumers and himself could benefit from a literacy group to help the group articulate and express themselves and would like more attention brought to his suggestion.

Another public member shared her son is a consumer of behavioral health services with the department and one of her concerns was that her son's visit to the clinics cannot be documented into epic and the challenges she has faced with billing.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Dr. Matthew Chang

Dr. Chang provided a brief update on department staffing, sharing that the county is on a tight budget, but RUHS BH is currently able to hire for some positions and the DA's office is also able to hire but other departments are on a hiring freeze. He concluded by sharing that although there may be positions posted they cannot all be filled without proper justification and proof that productivity is being met.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY- Consumer Peer Services (Kristen Duffy)

Kristen Duffy, Consumer Peer Services Program Manager, introduced Sergio Rodriguez. Mr. Rodriguez shared his experience through the system of care and how losing his brother a few years ago has affected him. He expressed that the crisis team had assessed his brother, and he carries guilt over his brother's passing especially because his brother was in a convalescent home and when he returned home with him his brother was never the same. Mr. Rodriguez shared that his brother's passing has affected him deeply and that his brother helped him a lot and through his loss he has turned to the department for help and through services he received at Pathways to Success he is now an interpreter. He concluded by sharing he wants others to know if you give the system an opportunity to help it can work for you too.

NEW BUSINESS-

1. BHC Annual Report FY 24/25 (Action Item)

Greg Damewood made a motion to approve the BHC Annual Report as written to send to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval. Victoria St. Johns seconded the motion, after discussion the motion did not pass as revisions were requested. The following commissioners either abstained or voted against the motion; Quintilia Avila, Beatriz Gonzalez, Walter Haessler, April Smith, Elysse Rico, Carole Schaudt and Launa Wilson. (Not in attendance was Sheila Mallett-Smith and Harshita Arunkumar.)

At the request of the said commissioners an additional week was provided to allow sufficient time for submission of any revisions.

2. Employee Recognition Winner (Cheryl Coson)

Cheryl Coson, Senior Clinical Therapist with Workforce Education and Training announced Marina Hughes, certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist with RUHS as this quarter's employee recognition winner. Ms. Hughes was given praise by her coworkers and leadership for her outstanding work efforts with the consumers she serves and received a plaque for this recognition of achievement.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nOuQM3Bd_M

3. Suicide Prevention Coalition (Diana Gutierrez)

An overview of the Suicide Prevention Coalition was provided by Diana Gutierrez, Administrative Services Manager for PEI. Please see power-point link of presentations included below.

https://www.ruhealth.org/sites/default/files/Behavioral_Health/BH%20Commission/2025-spc-overview-bhc-090325.pdf

OLD BUSINESS-

1. Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Update - (David Schoelen)

David Schoelen, Mental Health Service Act Administrator, graciously tabled his old business until next month due to the limited meeting time remaining.

2. Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program (SAPT) Update – (April Frey)

April Frey, SAPT Administrator, announced September is National Recovery month and 9/25/25 is the Recovery Happens event at Fairmount Park in Riverside and all are welcome to attend.

She also shared that there will be an integrated forensics provider meeting on 9/11/25 and concluded by sharing Friday Night Live has staffed a team in Mid County.

3. Care Court Update – (Marcus Cannon)

Marcus Cannon, Deputy Director of Forensics, provided a brief update on CARE Court. Please see power Point presentation below.

Care Act Update power point presentation:

[https://www.ruhealth.org/sites/default/files/Behavioral Health/BH%20Commission/bhc-care-act-update-9.03.25-2025-06-30.pdf](https://www.ruhealth.org/sites/default/files/Behavioral%20Health/BH%20Commission/bhc-care-act-update-9.03.25-2025-06-30.pdf)

**COMMITTEE UPDATE –
TABLED**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS-

County Medicaid solutions suggested by Greg Damewood.

Alternatives to conservatorship suggested by Greg Damewood.

RUHS Foundation Overview suggested by Greg Damewood.

Public Guardian Overview suggested by Marcus Cannon.

BHSA Update suggested by Sandy Awad.

Ad Hoc Committee for form revision and Bylaws suggested by April Smith.

QIC Update suggested by Launa Wilson.

ADJOURN – The Behavioral Health Commission meeting adjourned at 2:01 pm.

Sylvia Bishop

Sylvia Bishop, Recording Secretary

Minutes and agendas of meetings are available online at:
<http://www.ruhealth.org/behavioral-health/advisory-committees>

To request copies, please contact the BHC Liaison at 951-955-7141
or email SBishop@ruhealth.org

FY 2025/26 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION ATTENDANCE ROSTER

MEMBERS	JUL	SEP	OCT	NOV	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
April Smith, District	P	P								
Beatriz Gonzalez, District 4	P	P								
Brenda Scott, District 3	P	P								
Carole Schaudt, District 4	P	P								
Daryl Terrell, District 5	P	P								
Elysse Rico, BOS Rep. Dist. 2	P	P								
Greg Damewood, District 5	P	P								
Harshita Arunkumar, Dist. 1	P	A								
Launa Wilson, District 1	A	P								
Quintilia Ávila, District 2	P	P								
Rick Gentillalli, District 5	P	P								
Sheila Mallet-Smith, Dist. 3	P	A								
Victoria St. Johns, District 4	P	P								
Dr. Walter Haessler, Dist. 3	P	P								

Present = P • Absent = A

PRESENT			
Bill Brenneman	Kelly Grotsky	Antonia Vival	Cesar Bentancourt
Lucy Lopez	Alea Jackson	Dani Damewood	Lauren Adamson
Sylvia Bishop	Marina Hughes	Lawrence Blake	Monika Torres
Deborah Johnson	Marcus Cannon	Cat Ferguson	Melissa Vasquez
Jaqueline Markussen	Francisco Huerta	Misty Martin	Martha Burns
Rhyan Miller	Kami Winston	Carolina Ayala	Cheryl Coson
David Schoelen	Ronald Howard	Isamarra Zepeda	Tunisia Nelson
Shannon McCleerey-Hooper	Sergio Solis	Miriam Resendiz	Dylan Colt
Andrew William	Ty Peterson	Maria Cruz	Rosemarie Gomez
Willard Wynn	Don Tery	Luz Rodriguez	Israel Torres
Kristen Duffy	Claudia Vizcaino	Charla Monroe	Sandra Colon-Williams
Novanh Xayarath	Hunar Moon	Sergio Rodriguez	Laura M.
April Frey	Carmela Soto	Felipe Diaz	Luz Rodriguez
Diana Gutierrez	Hono Moon	Ashely Lauler	Marisela Gil
Chris Benetiz	K. Coren	Joseph Page	Sandra Boyd
Maria Martha Moreno	Connie Ryder	Joe Salamanca	Charles A.

OTHERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY		
Richard Divine	Steven Willis	Steve McNally
Jane Beamer	Orli Zaprir	Aaron Perez
Mary Carpio	Melissa Dalke	Silvia Silva
Dolores DeMartino	Nancy Stevens	Selenne Barajas
Girlyanne Lacson	Mary Appril	
Miranda DeShields	Tauna Butler	