

Director's Report

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DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY NEWS

Raising Our Light: An Evening of Remembrance in Montecito: Behavioral Wellness Response Team members along with other members of the Community Wellness Team provided strong support at the 1/9 Raising Our Light candlelight vigil. Thousands of community members gathered in Lower Manning park on the evening of 1/9 for a wonderful program followed by a candlelight walk to All Saints by the Sea church for a bell ringing of 23 rings to honor the 23 people lost in the 1/9 Debris Flow and to share in fellowship as a community. Huge thanks to all Behavioral Wellness staff who were present to offer support for our community.

24/7 Access Line Data Shows Positive Impact of Organized Delivery System Launch: Calls to the Access line have increased significantly since the Organized Delivery System (ODS) launched on December 1, 2018. Prior to December of 2018, the average monthly incoming calls to the Access line were 480. In the month of December, after ODS launched, 1,155 calls were received. This represents a 240% increase in Access line call activity with the majority of calls requesting Alcohol or Drug related services. When measuring the call volume in the month of December on a weekly basis, the call volume has decreased each week. Ongoing monitoring is needed to determine if the increase in call volume and requests for services will continue to decrease or remain constant. The Access line is continuing to recruit for additional Access line screeners to accommodate the increase in volume. In addition, several strategies are being initiated to expedite callers in being connected to a screener, such as a decision tree for incoming calls, use of live data to monitor Access line calls and the number of callers in queue to speak with a screener.

Appointment of Behavioral Wellness Revenue Manager: On December 17, 2018, Dipak Neupane assumed a new role as Revenue Manager. Dipak graduated Master in Business Administration (MBA) with honors from University of Dallas with concentration in Finance. Dipak has experience in Finance and Accounting field in various industries including Service, Education, Hospitality and Healthcare for more than 10 years including in a fortune 500 company. Dipak specializes in Finance and Accounting Reporting, Financial Analysis, Government Accounting, Financial Modeling, Process Improvements and Systems & Technical Analysis. Born and raised in Nepal, Dipak accepted the new role after working for Behavioral Wellness for over 5 years as Financial Systems Analyst.

New and Revised Policies Approved: Behavioral Wellness frequently updates policies to reflect enhancements and changes to programs and practices. The following policy was recently approved and is available on the Behavioral Wellness website at <http://countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness/policies>. You can find policies approved within the last 6 months under the tab “View Only RECENT Policies”. You can also search alphabetically, by category, or by keyword.

1. **Restricted Access to Consumer Information (REVISED)** – This policy establishes standards and procedures for the enhanced security protection of consumer medical records that may be more susceptible to inappropriate access or review due to special circumstances. A new form is now available through the policy to request access restriction for medical records.

Free Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Training to be held January 30th in Lompoc: The Department of Behavioral Wellness is proud to sponsor the first in-person SOGI training of 2019. Led by Patrick Lyra Lanier of the Pacific Pride Foundation, the training offers practical skills and key understandings to better serve LGBTQ+ clients receiving mental health and substance use services. The training will be held at the Grossman Gallery within the Lompoc Library (501 E. North Ave., Lompoc) on Wednesday, January 30th from 9:00am-11:30am. This training fulfills the annual cultural competence training requirement and is free and open to all Department staff, contracted providers, and partner organizations.

CEUs are available! Spots are limited. Please register on Relias Portal (for Behavioral Wellness staff) or on Relias Academy (for CBOs and partner organizations). For assistance with registration or if you have questions, please contact the Department’s Ethnic Services and Diversity Manager Yaneris Muñiz at ymuniz@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

Continued Improvement in Documentation at the Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF): In October of 2018, PHF received an audit visit by the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) which looked at services and billing. The disallowance rate for the review in October of 2018 was 38% overall compared to 58% during the 2015 audit for the same services. The 20% reduction is related to the assignment of dedicated Quality Care Management staff to conduct utilization review. In addition, Dr. Leslie Lundt, with her experience performing audits and evaluating documentation, has been an enormous asset in the training and compliance for the contracted PHF physicians.

Santa Barbara Regional Partnership Update: The Department of Behavioral Wellness, system stakeholders, community based organizational providers and other community members meet on a monthly basis. The purpose of these meetings is to collaborate with community agencies to improve services. As part of these meetings there are program updates, information sharing such as referral processes and program criterion, identification and trouble-shooting of obstacles to accessing care, strengthening of interagency relationships, ongoing efforts to expand the group participation and overall collaborative partnerships, and hearing from many community guest speakers on topics of shared interest. Some of the many participants in the Santa Barbara Regional Partnership over the past year include the Department of Rehabilitation, Public Health, Mental Wellness Center, Cencal Health-Holman, Housing Authority, New Beginnings Counseling Center, American Indian Health Services, PathPoint, Jodi House, Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics, ANKA Behavioral

Health, Community Action Commission, Santa Barbara Probation, Youth Well Coalition, SB Unified School District and many others. The Regional Partnership meetings will continue its work in promotion of interagency relationships and resulting enhanced coordination of services and care as we prepare for a New Year ahead.

Santa Maria Regional Partnership Update: Santa Maria's North County Regional Partnership Meetings are held monthly at the Santa Maria Adult Outpatient Clinic located at 500 W Foster Road, Santa Maria, CA 93455 (large conference room):

- Children's Regional Partnership Meeting – 3rd Mondays @ 10:00 – 11:00 am
- Adult Regional Partnership Meeting – 3rd Mondays @ 11:00 – 12:00 pm

The Santa Maria regional partnership meetings focus on sustaining and strengthening key community partnerships, such as those with the Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, local law enforcement and a variety of community-based organizations (CBOs) providing mental health and/or substance abuse treatment to promote cross-sector collaboration. The partnership meetings in December included an important presentation by the Behavioral Wellness' Alcohol and Drug Programs Division Chief, John Doyel, regarding the department's recent, successful implementation of California's Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Organized Delivery System (ODS), which now provides Medi-Cal beneficiaries access to all levels of substance abuse/dependency treatment services throughout Santa Barbara County.

Lompoc Regional Partnership Update: Lompoc's West County Regional Partnership Meeting occurs every other month on the third Tuesday. The next meeting is January 15th, 3:30-4:30 at 301 N. R Street.

The Lompoc regional partnership meetings focus on sustaining and strengthening key community partnerships, such as those with the Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, local law enforcement, Vandenberg Air force Base, Lompoc Valley Medical Center, and a variety of community-based organizations (CBOs) providing mental health and/or substance abuse treatment to promote cross-sector collaboration. The meeting has given the local community based organizations the opportunity to share available resources, and changes within their program.

At the last meeting in November 2018, a new initiative was shared by Emily Casarez, MSc. Director of Community Health, Healthy Lompoc Coalition. The Healthy Lompoc Coalition Farmers Market Project has been awarded a grant to support the 2017 Lompoc LEAF Project, whose primary goal is to determine the viability of opening a new Farmers Market in Lompoc that supports EBT. Because of the closure of the Farmer's Market in Lompoc and recently in Vandenberg, an initiative was shared to create a mobile Farmer's Market focusing on providing fresh produce and goods to individuals around the city and area of Lompoc. One of the main focus points is to make fresh produce available to underserved neighborhoods throughout Santa Barbara County each week. One way of doing this is to have vendors agree to accept electronic benefit transfer (EBT) at each mobile location. This new development also hopes to provide nutrition education on seasonal produce, how to prepare, and the health benefits as well.

Children's System of Care (CSOC) Action Team Update: The CSOC Action Team Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Thursdays @ 10:30 am – 12:00 pm at the SELPA conference room located at 240 E. HWY 246, Suite 200, Buellton, CA 93127. While the CSOC Action Team did not meet in December due to the

holidays, Behavioral Wellness' Policy and Project Development Coordinator and Ethnic Services and Diversity Manager from the Office of Quality Care and Strategy Management, Ms. Yaneris Muñiz, is planned to provide a thorough presentation on critical areas of focus, such as cultural competency and policy changes, to propel the team forward in 2019 as it continues to attend to the cross-sector needs of children and youth.

Crisis Action Team Update: The Hospital 5150 Pilot is going well. As mentioned in last month's report, Doctors Warren and Erickson completed the county's 5150 training. Dr. Warren has been very active at the Cottage Hospital Emergency Department doing 5150 evaluations and both writing and rescinding 5150/5585 holds. Cottage staff are now managing all LPS bed placements for privately insured adults on 5150 holds. Cottage is very pleased with the pilot project and the reduction in requests for evaluations by Crisis Services staff has allowed the Behavioral Wellness Crisis Services team to expand the Co-Response pilot project. Dr. Malaty and Dr. Lopez from Cottage Hospital and Dr. Garcia at Marian will be trained later this month.

The Co-Response pilot project was designed for Crisis Services staff to be paired up with a Sheriff Deputy who respond together to mental health crisis calls coming into dispatch. The pilot has been extremely effective and is now operating 3 days per week. In addition to Sheriff Deputies praising the program, George Kaufman, President of the Santa Barbara chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) reported at the January Crisis Action Team meeting that NAMI families have experienced positive interactions with the co-response team and are very happy to see it being implemented.

Behavioral Wellness has begun hiring to fill positions within the Children's Triage Grant. This grant provides the funding for two full-time licensed practitioners and two half-time Parent Partners to focus on working with adolescents on 5150/5585 holds in the Emergency Departments. The Children's Triage Grant staff will work closely with the adolescent and their family to try to develop a safety plan and rescind the hold, preventing inpatient psychiatric hospital placement. The grant staff will also do pro-active outreach to adolescents at-risk of a mental health crisis in order to prevent LPS hospital placement.

Crisis Services staff continue to assist our Alcohol and Other Drug Program (ADP) program by conducting Substance Use Disorder (SUD) screenings on the weekends and Holidays and assisting individuals in getting placed into withdrawal management and residential SUD beds.

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

Governor Proposed 2019-20 State Budget: The first release of the Governor's proposed FY 19/20 budget has been released. The California Behavioral Health Director's Association (CBHDA) has been actively following. A summary of the significant budget items in behavioral health follow.

Revenue Forecasts predict several major sources of behavioral health revenues for the 2019-20 budget year including 1991 Realignment, 2011 Realignment and MHSA funding.

Significant Medi-Cal proposals include:

- Growth for the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS)
- Increase in funding to support Managed Care Behavioral Health integration
- Funding for the Whole Person Care Pilot Program for supportive housing and the coordination of health, behavioral health and social services for people with mental illness
- Expansion of Medi-Cal eligibility to all income-eligible youth adults (ages 19-25) regardless of immigration status
- Funding for early development screenings for children in Medi-Cal
- Funding for Adverse Childhood Experiences screenings for children and adults in Medi-Cal, beginning no sooner than January 1, 2020
- Creation of a single-purchaser system for Medi-Cal prescription drugs by requiring the State Department of Health Care Services to purchase and negotiate the pricing of all prescription drugs for Medi-Cal beneficiaries and requiring all Medi-Cal managed care pharmacy services to be transitioned to a fee-for-service benefit

Other significant funding proposals include funding for Early Psychosis Intervention research and treatment, funding for University of California student mental health treatment to meet recommended staffing ratios, increase in subsidies to individuals and families insured through Covered California, establishment of a State Surgeon General to provide leadership in addressing root causes of serious health conditions such as Adverse Childhood Experiences and other social determinants of health, creation of a Governor’s Task Force on Brain Health for Alzheimer’s Disease program research grants, and funding for permanent positions to enhance the oversight and monitoring of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant.

Impacts on the **Criminal Justice System** including Proposition 47 savings, moving youth correction facilities from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to a new department under the Health and Human Services Agency with a focus on rehabilitative programming, and funding for law enforcement training on mental health crisis. Increases were proposed to the **Department of State Hospitals (DSH)** budget to treat more individuals determined to be Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST) through hospital expansions, jail based competency restoration beds, nursing staffing levels, court supports dedicated to forensic evaluations and forensic psychiatry technician training programs.

Lastly, increases in funding were proposed for **Housing and Homelessness** funding including increasing emergency shelters and navigation centers for supportive housing, regional collaboration between cities and counties, acceleration of granting No Place Like Home allocations, *Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act* and the *Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Act* funding allocation for supportive housing development for veterans.

Report on Drug Overdose Deaths among Women Aged 30-64: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention recently published a report citing information related to drug overdose deaths among women. Middle-aged women remain vulnerable to death by drug overdose, according to a [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#) released on January 10, 2019. CDC examined overdose death rates among women aged 30–64 years during 1999–2017 overall and by drug subcategories (antidepressants, benzodiazepines, cocaine, heroin, prescription opioids, and synthetic opioids, excluding methadone). Key

findings state that drug overdose deaths continue to rise among women. The crude drug overdose death rate among women aged 30–64 years increased by 260% between 1999 and 2017. The rate went from 6.7 drug overdose deaths per 100,000 population (4,314 deaths) in 1999 to 24.3 (18,110 deaths) in 2017.

The age distribution of drug overdose deaths among middle-aged women changed. Among women age 30–64, the average age of death from drug overdoses increased by nearly three years. Opioids are a significant contributor to the rise in overdose deaths among women aged 30-64. However, analyses confirm that the recent sharp increases in the drug overdose epidemic were driven by deaths involving synthetic opioids, like illicitly manufactured fentanyl (IMF). During this time, rates of drug overdose deaths increased for those involving synthetic opioids (1,643%), heroin (915%), benzodiazepines (830%), prescription opioids (485%), cocaine (280%), and antidepressants (176%).

SYSTEMS CHANGE CALENDAR

- **Behavioral Wellness Commission:** The Behavioral Wellness Commission meets on the third Wednesday of every month from 3:00pm – 5:00pm. Video conferencing is available at the Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic large conference room and the Santa Maria Clinic Conference Room. Questions: Karen Campos, kcampos@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
- **Change Agent Meeting:** Change agents meet the fourth Wednesday of every month 9 – 11 am except during quarterly in-person meetings, which are 9 am – 12 noon. Video conferencing is available at the Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic, Small conference room; Lompoc Conference Room, ACT, upstairs, 401 E. Cypress and Large conference room, 500 West Foster Road, Santa Maria. Questions: Dalila Brown, dbrown@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
- **Lompoc Regional Partnership Meeting:** Meetings occur every other month on the third Tuesday. The next meeting is November 21, 3:30-4:30 at 301 N. R Street. Questions: Nicole Becker, nbecker@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
- **Santa Barbara Adult Regional Partnership:** meets every 3rd Monday of the month from 10:00 am – 11:00 am at the Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic, large conference room. Questions: Veronica Heinzelmann, vheinzelmann@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
- **Santa Barbara Children’s Regional Partnership:** 3th Thursday of the month from 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm at the Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic, large conference room. Questions: Veronica Heinzelmann, vheinzelmann@co.santa-barbara.ca.us.
- **Santa Maria Children’s Regional Partnership Meeting** is held every 3rd Monday of the month at 10 am in the large meeting room at the Foster Road Clinic. Questions: Shana Burns at sburns@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

- **Santa Maria Adult Regional Partnership** occurs every 3rd Monday of the month at 11 am in the large meeting room at the Foster Road Clinic. Questions: Elodie Patarias, epatari@co.santa-barbara.ca.us or Geoff Bernard, gbernard@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
- **The Housing, Empowerment, Action and Recovery Team (HEART)** meets the second Wednesday of every other month, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Locations: Behavioral Wellness Conference Room 261 and Santa Maria Annex via videoconference. Contact Laura Zeitz, lazeitz@sbcbswell.org
- **The Cultural Competency and Diversity Action Team (CCDAT)** meets the second Friday of each month, 9:30-11:00 am, Locations: Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic Large Conference Room 119, Lompoc B St.
- **The Peer Action Team** meets the second Thursday of the Month from 2 – 4:00 pm. Locations: Behavioral Wellness Santa Barbara Conference Room 261, Lompoc Children’s New Port Room the Santa Maria Annex Room via videoconference.
- **The Crisis Action Team** meets the second Thursday of the month, 2:30 – 4:00 pm, Santa Barbara Children’s large conference room 119. Contact John Winckler, jwinckler@sbcbswell.org
- **The Children’s System of Care Action Team** meets the 4th Thursday of the month, 10:30 am - 12:00 noon. SELPA Conference Room, 240 E. Hwy. 246, Suite 200, Buellton CA 93127. Contact Ana Vicuña, avicuna@sbcbswell.org
- **Forensic Action Team** will be meeting every other month on the 4th Wednesday from 2:00 – 3:30. The meeting will be held at the Behavioral Wellness Children’s Mental Health Services building, room 119, located at 429 N. San Antonio Rd in Santa Barbara. Anyone wishing to join by videoconference or have questions may contact John Lewis in advance (805-450-2545) to make arrangements.