

# Director's Report

October 21, 2020



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## DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY NEWS

**Zoom Fatigue and What You Can Do About It:** People have shared some hilarious stories about their online meeting experiences during the pandemic; everything from participants showing up to “Zoom” in their pajamas and shaving during the meeting, to having a family member walk behind the screen, wearing, well, not much. Those heads staring back at us for long periods of time can be a bit disconcerting. And then there is the fatigue that sets in after hour three or four of Zooming. There is no doubt that working from home during the pandemic has meant a lot of changes to routines.

For the record, it is not just Zoom. This online meeting fatigue is just as likely with other video conferencing platforms, including Google Hangouts and Meet, Skype, Microsoft Teams, GoToMeeting, FaceTime, BlueJeans, Slack, Houseparty, and so on. If you are one of those working remotely and participating in a plethora of online video meetings, you may wonder why these meetings seem more tiring than in-person meetings. One reason may be the need to appear constantly in-tune and interested in what is being said. Continued and sustained eye contact is exhausting to say the least.

Also, with in-person meetings, we automatically rely on nonverbal cues such as body language, to make judgements regarding asking questions or providing input. Physical cues such as participants fidgeting and checking their smart phones, help us determine how information is being perceived and the level of attentiveness. With online meetings, we must rely mainly on verbal information to interpret people's emotions. Paying more attention to these consumes a lot of energy and that gets tiring.

Another reason may be the lack of the usual in-person meeting rituals, such as greetings, handshakes, fetching coffee and water, and general chit chat among meeting participants. Missing out on these rituals that serve to put people at ease and help build rapport, all make for a less comfortable, more exhausting day “at the office.” So, what can you do?

1. Consider whether the online meeting needs to happen at all. In some cases, shared document platforms with detailed comments can reduce the need to meet.
2. Consider working to limit the number of Zoom meetings in a day, including giving yourself a break in between meetings. You should also consider forgoing the online meeting and instead use email and messaging to get the work done.

3. Make sure there is an agenda for every one of your video meetings. This way, everyone will know what is expected to be accomplished during the meeting, making the meeting more productive and hopefully shorter.
4. You may also consider picking up the telephone for one-on-one conversations instead of scheduling an online meeting. By using the phone, we only have to concentrate on voices, and we can move about while talking, which gets us moving and can enhance the thinking process.
5. Be sure to schedule “screen free” time into your days. By designating some video call-free time, you can reduce feelings of being overwhelmed. Instead, choose some screen-free activities such as exercise or a enjoying a hobby.

Finally, let’s keep in mind some of the *good* things about Zooming and online meetings. We don’t have to travel to and from a meeting; we don’t have to dress up from the waist down; we can sit on our favorite chair with a cuddly blanket and fuzzy slippers and no one will be the wiser; we have the choice to mute ourselves and stop video if needed, and for animal lovers, you can Zoom and pet your pet at the time. Sometimes, it really is the little things that matter!

**State Guidance for Infection Mitigation and Testing for Behavioral Health Facilities:** The State has updated the Infection mitigation and testing guidance for Behavioral Health facilities which is not posted and is expected that counties and providers follow this guidance. The full guidance can be seen [here](#).

**New Federal Provider Relief Funding:** New federal provider relief funding is available for providers affected by COVID-19. \$20 Billion in provider relief funds has been released with a deadline of 11:59 Eastern time on November 6 for providers to apply for this funding. Providers who have already received funds can receive more – new opportunity to recover costs due to COVID as well as operating losses. Providers just starting practice in early 2020 are now eligible. New opportunity for a wide variety of mental health and SUD providers. More information on how to access this funding can be found [here](#).

**988 - New Suicide Prevention Hotline:** During National Suicide Prevention Month, the Federal Communications Commission highlighted the launch of 988, a new nationwide, 3-digit phone number for suicide prevention and mental health crisis services. The number has been active since July and has been designated as a phone number for people in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. Over the next two years, a transition will take place resulting in phone service providers directing all 988 calls to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) which will remain operational during and after the 988 transition.

Suicide prevention is a critical need. Since 2008, suicide has ranked as the tenth leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide claimed the lives of more than 48,000 Americans in 2018, resulting in about one death every 11 minutes.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of approximately 170 local- and state-funded crisis centers. The Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration administers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, which manages the Veterans Crisis Line.

**Governor Newsom Announced \$137 Million in Third Round of Homekey Awards and Announces Request to Legislature to Approve Additional \$200 Million for the Program:** The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), which administers Homekey, awarded more than \$137 million for 19 projects in 15 California communities, totaling 938 units. These awards bring the total awarded under Homekey to \$449.9 million for 33 successful applicants and 49 awards totaling 3,351 units. The statewide average cost to Homekey thus far is approximately \$134,000 per unit.

The Housing Authority of Santa Barbara has been awarded \$3.12 million to acquire an office building to convert into permanent housing with wraparound services. The Housing Authority has developed a comprehensive equity strategy to reach underserved populations, which includes outreach in Spanish and English as well as Spanish and Mixteco speaking staff. Local communities continue to demonstrate imagination and innovation for using Homekey dollars," said Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramírez. "From a project in Santa Barbara that includes a comprehensive equity strategy to reach underserved populations, to a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, to providing units for post hospitalization care for homeless persons, local communities are taking full advantage of Homekey's flexibility." Another example of collaboration and partnership on known community needs within Santa Barbara County.

**Youth Empowerment Summit:** The Santa Barbara County Education Office, Transitional Youth Services, is sponsoring a first ever Youth Empowerment Summit on October 28<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 A. M. – 4:30 P.M. The keynote speaker for the summit is Father Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries. The summit is free of cost and will have a youth panel. The summit will include many community resources as well as information targeted to the transition youth population including paying for college, trauma informed practices, student rights, and more. There will be separate workshop tracks for students, parents and guardians, educators, and service providers. For more information, please visit [sbceo.org/YOUTHSUMMIT](http://sbceo.org/YOUTHSUMMIT).

**Governor Newsom Signs a Senate Bill to Support Peer Support Certification Which Expands the Mental Health Service System:** We applaud the passage of Senate Bill 803, supporting Peer Support Certification, which is one of several historic mental health bills recently signed by Governor Newsom. This bill requires the state to establish statewide requirements for certifying peer support specialists. The peer support specialist role supports people with personal experience with the mental health system, who are trained to support and assist others who are going through mental health challenges. Senate Bill 803 requires Counties that hire peers into this role, to have responsibility for implementing and managing the program(s) in which they work.

In anticipation of the passage of this bill several months ago, Behavioral Wellness collaborated with Crestwood (who was recently awarded a grant) to begin training the first of three cohorts active throughout the county, in a 40-hour professional development training for peers. Additionally, in an effort to support the signing of the Peer Support bill, Behavioral Wellness has secured a renowned peer support subject matter expert, Shannon McCleery-Hoppe who serves as the Consumer Affairs & Family Advocate Programs Manager for the County of Riverside, to provide a supervision training for all departmental managers and supervisors who employ Peer Support Specialists. We look forward to our continued growth as a system, supporting peer specialists, as this training will take place in November.

**New and Revised Policies Approved:** Behavioral Wellness frequently updates policies to reflect enhancements and changes to programs and practices. The following policies were recently approved and are 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. **Photographs of Clients (Revised)** – This policy ensures that the production, storage, transmittal and disposal of all photographs are done in accordance with all state and federal laws and regulations governing protected health information.
2. **Health Record Content (Revised)** – This policy provides guidance to staff and providers on the required content of a client’s health record.
3. **Security and Access to Shred Bins (Revised)** – This policy implements reasonable safeguards that limit disclosures of and avoid prohibited uses of protected health information.
4. **Substance Use Disorder Wellness and Recovery Access Point Intake Procedures (New)** – This policy establishes SUD Wellness and Recovery Access Point referral, screening, and approval for medication assisted treatment services procedures.

**Santa Barbara Regional Partnership Meetings: Adult:** The team met on September 21<sup>st</sup> and include speakers from New Beginnings as well as the United Way Home for Good program as well as updates from many other agency participants. Anne Cravens from New Beginnings shared of the Veteran services offered as well as life skills coaching and counseling services for children. Unique to the impact of COVID-19, isolation groups are among the many groups offered by telehealth at this time.

Emily Allen shared updates on the United Way Home for Good program and the funds becoming available to help with families experiencing homelessness and in need of services. This program is able to assist with deposit and rental assistance if a client has a housing opportunity.

**Veronica Heinzlmann, Regional Manager** for Behavioral Wellness provided an overview of service entry including orientation groups and she overviewed the core programs within the Behavioral Wellness Adult Outpatient system including: the Wellness, Recovery, and Resiliency (WRR) program, the Medically Integrated Older Adult (MIOA) program, and the Co-Occurring program.

**Children’s:** The most recent meeting took place on September 17<sup>th</sup>. Rachel Steidl, Executive Director for YouthWell and Elise Fields, Wellness Navigator for YouthWell presented to the team. They shared of the collaboration of efforts led by YouthWell to provide mental health support for youth, ages 12-25, and their families. Their work concentrates on crisis prevention and is committed to increasing education, prevention, and early intervention outreach. QuaranTEEN workshops are held weekly and are open for students grades 7 through college. In addition to services and supports for youth, the CommunityConnect workshops are offered for parents, educators and providers to offer tools for connecting with youth. This coalition aspires to eliminate stigmas by normalizing and promoting mental wellness and self-care. For more information or to register for a training or workshop, please visit [www.youthwell.org](http://www.youthwell.org). For questions on YouthWell, please email [info@youthwell.org](mailto:info@youthwell.org) or call 805-448-2426.

**Lompoc Regional Partnership Meetings:** After a seven month hiatus, the Lompoc Regional Partnership resumed in collaboration, meeting with the Lompoc Public Health department. Held on September 15, Public Health shared how COVID-19 has impacted services, systems and operations. Testing for essential workers and information on obtaining a test was made available. Information on services provided by Behavioral Wellness was shared along with strategies for engagement. Other community organizations gave updates and shared info as well. The next partnership meeting is scheduled for November 17 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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

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

The Santa Maria regional partnership meetings focus on promoting the expansion of cross-sector collaboration through strengthening and sustaining key community partnerships, such as those with the county of Santa Barbara's Department of Public Health, Department of Social Services, law enforcement, CenCal Health and a variety of community-based organizations (CBO) providing mental health and/or substance abuse treatment to children, transitional aged youth (TAY) and adults in the Santa Maria region. At the recent meeting, **Shana Burns, Forensic Services Manager**, spoke to recent roundtable discussion which occurred at the recent Forensic Action Team meeting and is described in greater detail in the Forensic Action Team report below in this report.

**Change Agents:** Change Agents met this month to review current process improvements in the Behavioral Wellness clinics and program operations and receive feedback and support from the team. Some of the current projects include developing a more welcoming and informative lobby using client art; increasing group attendance on Zoom, increase the utility of the lobby video with information and resources for clients; increasing appointment attendance (decrease no show rate) by utilizing RxNt scheduler/appointment reminders and increasing the number of Service Provider Identification (SPID) updates received by QCM so that appropriate processes can be quickly followed up when staff departures occur.

**Children's System of Care (CSOC) Action Team:** The most recent CSOC took place on September 24. The group continues to work in subgroups on the goals identified by the group. The identified group goals include a) Access & Engagement b) Safety & Resilience c) Criteria for Services and d) Youth of Color. A presentation on Coordinated Entry and the impact on youth/family homelessness was shared with the group by Emily Allen, Director, Homeless and Veterans Impact Initiatives from the United Way in Santa Barbara. The next CSOC meeting will be held on October 22 from 10:30 a.m. to Noon.

**Consumer and Family Member Action Team (CFMAT):** The September meeting began with a Mindfulness practice lead by Dr. Brock Travis. The team was provided information on the upcoming *Appy Hour* sessions of Oct. 14 and Oct. 21. These sessions will be provided by the Help@Hand team utilizing the Zoom platform. **Lindsay Walter** joined the meeting to provide updates to the action team, and identified

team members who will be assisting with the following MSHA Three-Year Plan initiatives: Implementation of expanded Youth-Focused Care and Youth Driven Initiatives, Integration of Peer Philosophies, Expansion of Housing Support and Integrating Whole Person Care philosophies. Chuck Hughes provided an update on ACCESS California and Bridget Hochman shared CFMAT's "Together in Our Journey Newsletter" and invited members to join or send articles to the newsletter committee members. CFMAT meeting the third Thursday of each month from 1 to 2:30PM via Zoom platform.

**Cultural Competency and Diversity Action Team (CCDAT):** The CCDAT met on September 11 and continue to focus on identified goals a) Language Accessibility b) Outreach/Engagement c) Native/Indigenous Addiction Pilot program d) Cultural Competency Training. **Lindsay Walter, Deputy Director of Administration & Operations** gave a presentation on the "whole person" model of care as identified by MSHA. Our intention is to explore ways to support whole person care and a develop a goal to effectively demonstrate this. Please join us at the next Cultural Competency and Diversity Action Team meeting, which will take place on Friday, November 13, from 10 A.M. - 11:30 A.M. We would like to extend a warm invitation to any of our consumers including teens, adults and seniors to join us. If you are interested in joining CCDAT, please email the co-chairs, Maria Arteaga [marteaga@sbcbswell.org](mailto:marteaga@sbcbswell.org), Anthony Hollenback [ahollenback@sbcbswell.org](mailto:ahollenback@sbcbswell.org), or Jordan Tennison [jtennison@sbcbswell.org](mailto:jtennison@sbcbswell.org), so that they may welcome you as you join in the meeting.

**Forensic Action Team:** The Forensic Action Team Meeting seeks to connect a wide variety of leaders and stakeholders invested in cross-sector collaboration and ongoing systemic enhancements for services provided to criminal justice-involved juveniles and adults. Meetings occur monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays @ 1:30-3:00 pm (via Zoom until further notice). The September meeting involved a lively roundtable discussion with a diverse group of stakeholders and forensic partners regarding the countywide Prop 47 mental health diversion initiative and implemented programs, such as: 1) Co-Response (Sherriff's Office and Behavioral Wellness mobile crisis collaboration); 2) CREDO 47 Sobering Center (Crisis, Recovery, Engagement, Diversion and Outreach) headed by Good Samaritan; and, 4) the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) induction services provided by the Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP) division of the Department of Behavioral Wellness. The next Forensic Action Team meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30-3:00 pm**. Please contact Shana Burns, LMFT, Forensics Services Manager, at (805) 335-4263, with any questions and/or if you would like to be added to the invite list.

## **NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS**

**Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) Reaffirm to States that Under the SUPPPORT Act, State Medicaid Programs are Required to Provide Coverage of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT):** On October 1, CMS announced the requirement of Medicaid programs to provide coverage of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) services and drugs under a new mandatory benefit. The purpose of this new mandatory benefit is to increase access to evidence-based treatment or Opioid Use Disorder for all Medicaid beneficiaries and to allow patients to seek the best course of treatment and particular medications which may not have previously been covered.

ONDCP is pleased to announce that, on October 1, the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) reaffirmed to states that under the SUPPORT Act, state Medicaid programs are required to provide coverage of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) services and drugs under a new mandatory benefit. The purpose of this new mandatory benefit is to increase access to evidence-based treatment for Opioid Use Disorder for all Medicaid beneficiaries and to allow patients to seek the best course of treatment and particular medications which may not have previously been covered. The entire announcement can be read [here](#).

## SYSTEMS CHANGE CALENDAR

**Please Note:** Due to COVID-19, to protect the health and safety of our staff and other partners, no Action Team meetings will be held in person for the foreseeable future. All will be held remotely.

- **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, Santa Maria Clinic Conference Room and the Lompoc Children’s Clinic Newport Harbor Room. Questions: Jacob Ibrahim at [jibrahim@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:jibrahim@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; and the Santa Maria Adult Clinic large conference room located at 500 West Foster Road, Santa Maria. Questions: Janal Lopez, [janlopez@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:janlopez@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- **Lompoc Regional Partnership Meeting:** Meetings occur every other month on the third Tuesday at 301 N. R Street. Questions: Anthony Hollenback, [ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:ahollenback@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](mailto: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](mailto:vheinzelmann@co.santa-barbara.ca.us).
- **Santa Maria Children’s Regional Partnership Meeting** is held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 10 am in the large meeting room at the Foster Road Clinic. Questions: Roberto Rodriguez at [robertor@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:robertor@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: Questions: John Winckler at [jwinckler@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:jwinckler@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](mailto: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, Santa Maria Annex and Lompoc B St. Contact Maria Arteaga at 805-681-5208 or [marteaga@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:marteaga@co.santa-barbara.ca.us) or Anthony Hollenback at 805-737-6610 or [ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us) to get zoom log in information.
- **The Consumer and Family Member Action Team** meets the third Thursday of the Month from 1 – 2:30pm. Locations: Behavioral Wellness Santa Barbara Conference Room 261, Lompoc Children’s New Port Room the Santa Maria Annex Room via videoconference. Contact Maria Arteaga at 805-681-5208 or [marteaga@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:marteaga@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- **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 Jeff Shannon, [jeshannon@sbcbswell.org](mailto:jeshannon@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 Anthony Hollenback at [ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- **Forensic Action Team** will be meeting every other month on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday from 1:30 - 3. Meetings are held at the Behavioral Wellness Children’s Mental Health Services building, room 119, located at 429 N. San Antonio Rd in Santa Barbara. For questions or Zoom log in information, please contact Shana Burns at [sburns@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:sburns@co.santa-barbara.ca.us) or Celeste Andersen at [candersen@sbcbswell.org](mailto:candersen@sbcbswell.org)