

Director's Report

June 16, 2021



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DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY NEWS

Behavioral Wellness Services Remain Active: With COVID-19 impacting many workforces throughout the community, Behavioral Wellness has been able to remain active with providing direct services. As we near June 15 when the State's tiered system will end, it would be wonderful if the worldwide coronavirus pandemic were truly over. The fact is, June 15 marks the beginning of our return to normalcy in California, not the end of the Pandemic. California's COVID-19 [state of emergency order](#) will remain in place beyond June 15, despite plans to fully reopen the state's economy on that date. **What does this mean for Behavioral Wellness?** As services have continued to operate fully, little will change. Telehealth will still remain an option for clients, the Psychiatric Health Facility is now accepting visitors, and the crisis services continue to be as busy as ever. Tremendous thanks is given to all of the staff within Behavioral Wellness who have managed to continue quality and caring services throughout the pandemic.

Mental Health First Aid Training Opportunities: The Mental Wellness Center is offering many free Youth Mental Health First Aid classes for parents, teachers and youth agency staff, this summer. The Mental Wellness Center can even provide classes for organizations, employers and community groups beyond the organized classes offered for the public. Class registration and more information can be found on Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid, [here](#).

Congratulations to Kay Thomas on her Retirement - And - Welcome Back!: After 22 years of serving the Department of Behavioral Wellness, Kay Thomas officially retired on April 30, 2021. During this lengthy period of service, Kay worked in a number of important, client-centered roles beginning as a Qualified Mental Health Worker and certified CAADE substance use disorder provider. Kay was a member of the first graduating class of the Allan Hancock/Santa Barbara City College/Sheriff's Office Co-Occurring Conditions Program – the first program of its kind in the nation. Following her training, Kay assisted in the Mental Health Treatment Courts raising awareness about clients dealing with co-occurring conditions. She also built relationships with Court officials and Probation Officers to ensure the best outcomes for the clients she was serving. This led to Kay being honored by the Probation Department with a Certificate of Appreciation. Kay then moved on to become a Patients' Rights Advocate for the Department – a role she is passionate about and in which she served until her retirement. Kay brought the "whatever it takes" approach to supporting clients, visiting them in the hospital, Juvenile Hall, or the jail as needed. She would not hesitate to keep working after everyone went home when her client's need for support didn't wrap up at 5:00. Kay's supervisor, Celeste Andersen recounts, "I can't tell you how many times clients have called

me to say that Kay made all of the difference in their lives, making them feel heard, cared for, and supported. Some clients reported that Kay had ‘saved their lives’.” Kay did this work while maintaining positive working relationships with the Department Psychiatrists and medical staff, clinical teams, and partners at Community Based Organizations, hospitals, the Sheriff’s Office, Probation, etc. Her goal was to listen to all sides and hopefully find a solution that worked for everyone. Thankfully, because of the State mandate for the Department to maintain sufficient Patients’ Rights Advocates, on May 4, 2021, the Board of Supervisors granted an employment waiver to Kay, allowing her to return to the Department as an Extra-Help part-time employee to assist with the recruitment and training of her replacement. She also will continue to support Patients’ Rights Advocate Enrique Bautista with the ever-growing workload. It is great to have you back Kay!

Behavioral Wellness Receives Award for Partnership and Service: On May 7, 2021, the Lompoc Behavioral Wellness region accepted an award from Goodwill Industries of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. This award was given in honor of National Goodwill Week and Community Partners Appreciation Day in recognition of the power of changing lives through work. This award honors the collaborative partnership between Behavioral Wellness and the Department of Rehabilitation, and the impact made on the multiple lives touched through the Behavioral Wellness Transition Age Youth Program.

Santa Barbara Regional Partnership Meeting: The **Adult** Regional Partnership meeting took place on May 17, 2021. Dr. Paula Strauss provided a presentation which overviewed the Santa Barbara New Beginnings Counseling Center. The New Beginnings Counseling Center (NBCC) has served low income individuals and families for 50 years; serving approximately 500-600 clients annually. The center offers psychological assessment, group sessions, and counseling services. Counseling is available to individuals, children (9+), families, and couples. Fees are based on a sliding scale with select counselors accepting Medi-Cal. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the center had just implemented a new telehealth platform with the goal of increasing accessibility. Both, telehealth and in-person counseling sessions continue to be offered. New clients may call the center at: [805-963-7777](tel:805-963-7777) and will be connected to the intake coordinator. The current wait time for English speaking clients is 2 weeks. Due to a lack of bilingual staff, longer wait times are expected for Spanish speakers.

The Counseling Center provides trainings for Master’s and Doctoral level counselors and is a CEU provider. CEU eligible events are provided at least once a year. Recently, NBCC hosted a training on Secondary Trauma Stress. This training addresses the impacts of exposure to the suffering of others and methods for preventing over-exposure.

Other program updates that were shared at this meeting included the Safe Parking Shelter and Rapid Rehousing program, the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, and the Life Skills Parenting and Education program.

The **Children’s** Regional Partnership meeting met on May 20, 2021. An update was provided on the LAGS Medical Center closing and the plans in place to continue services through CenCal and The Holman Group being able to assist. Behavioral Wellness will continue to support clients served through Medication Assisted Treatment as well as linkage for other service as necessary. The collaboration between the Department of Social Services and Casa Pacifica to provide the Family Urgent Response Services (FURS) 24-

hour hotline for foster youth, beginning July 1, was shared. Staffing changes at Behavioral Wellness were also shared.

Lompoc Regional Partnership Meeting: The most recent meeting took place on May 18th, 2021. Updates were shared on the distribution of the COVID vaccine, adhering to new guidance from the state on re-opening, and how this is impacted services with other Santa Barbara County departments and organizational providers. Those in attendance provided updates on a reported increase of in-person services being provided with continued use of safety protocols. The next meeting is scheduled for July 20 via Zoom.

Santa Maria Regional Partnership Meeting: The Santa Maria Regional Partnership meeting for **Children's Services** met in May and included several announcements as well as discussion. The meeting date marked the first day of work for **Danielle Martinez**, the new **North County Regional Manager** for Behavioral Wellness. Additional discussion included the countywide closing of LAGS, new social workers joining the Dignity Health Emergency Room, the new inclusion of autism as covered diagnosis and the impact this will have on Behavioral Wellness, and the soon opening of the Depot street apartments. The meeting closed with a presentation from Fighting Back.

The **Adult Services** Regional Partnership meeting provided many of the same discussion topics and updates as the Children's Regional Partnership meeting as noted above. In addition, Emily Allen gave an update on the Santa Maria regional housing programs and the Coordinated Entry System for programs.

Childrens System of Care (CSOC) Action Team: The Children's System of Care met on May 27, 2021. Updates were provided from community partners on COVID vaccine distribution and availability in schools for youth 12 and over as well as the anticipation for more summer activities becoming available for youth in Santa Barbara County. Jordan Killebrew, a community advocate, joined the meeting to share his story as a member of the LGBTQ community and his personal lived experience with mental health, both in his life and in that of his family. Jordan's presentation created a lively discussion on how we, as service providers, can be more inclusive and supportive of our youth and families of color, and the language we use in our services. Our next meeting will be held on 6/24/21.

Consumer and Family Member Action Team (CFMAT): The Consumer Family Member Action Team met on May 20, 2021 via Zoom. **Vanessa Ramos, MHSAs Innovations: Help@Hand Project Manager**, gave an update on the Headspace Mindfulness electronic application. **Carla Cross, Manager of Clinical Training and Special Projects**, presented on the Early Psychosis Grant, explaining that it is a grant focused on Transitional Age Youth (TAY). Peer support specialists and Peer supervisory roles will be introduced through this program. **Maria Arteaga, Cultural Competency/Ethnic Services/Peer Empowerment Manager** discussed Legislation SB 803. SB 803 establishes statewide training standards for peer support specialist, requires the Department of Health Care Services to designate billing codes for peer services in Medi-Cal, and participating counties to receive matching federal funds. An update was provided on the CFMAT summer newsletter preview will be shared at the next CFMAT meeting on June 17, 2021. Lastly, information on MHSAs's 1st Peer Empowerment Conference was shared and discussed. The conference will take place on

May 27th from 9:00 A.M.- 12:30 P.M. CFMAT meets monthly on the third Thursday of each month, from 1PM to 2:30PM.

Crisis Action Team: The Crisis Action introduced the new **Santa Barbara ACT/Homeless Services Manager, Christopher Lee**. **John Winckler, Division Chief of Clinical Operations**, provided updates on the closure of LAGS, our new hospital Liaison position, the Family Urgent Response System, the protocol for closing the CSU when needed, and the Lompoc ACT transition from TMHA to Merakey. **Vanessa Ramos, MHSAs Innovations: Help@Hand Project Manager**, gave a presentation on the Help@Hand Project: Psychiatric Health Facility & Crisis Residential Treatment, and lastly, the group discussed updates on hospital emergency departments and data review of 5150/5585 holds in hospital emergency departments.

Cultural Competency and Diversity Action Team (CCDAT): The Cultural Competency Action Team met on May, 14 2021. The meeting was facilitated by **Tony Hollenback, Lompoc Regional Manager**. An update was provided on the Asian and Pacific Islander (AAPI) subcommittee who shared their subcommittee charter and their plans to start meetings every other Friday. The primary goals of this subcommittee are to support local AAPI community members by promoting mental wellness and focusing on outreach. Tony then presented on cultural empathy where he emphasized nurturing empathy in the workplace. **Vanessa Ramos, MHSAs Innovations: Help@Hand Project Manager**, gave an update on Help@Hand. Help@Hand has collaborated with Painted Brian, Transitions Mental Health Association and Casa De La Raza to host the final regional listening session that will be held in Spanish. Feedback received will be used by Painted Brain to build a transition age youth led curriculum focusing on Basic Computer Skills, On-Line Safety Practices and Recovery and Resiliency. Next, the various work groups within the CCDAT reported out on updates. The Language Access workgroup shared on update on their work with a survey to gather clients' experience in utilizing an interpreter. The Outreach and Engagement work group is currently working on developing their feedback with the Outreach Plan including strategies such as revamping old outreach materials and create more events once the COVID restrictions lift. **Carla Cross, Manager of Clinical Training and Special Projects**, provided updates on possible new trainings relating to autism, individuals with cognitive disabilities, cultural formulation interviews, the Mixteco culture, and the elderly population. CCDAT meets monthly the second Fridays from 10AM to 11:30AM.

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

Psychological Impacts of the Pandemic in Young People: The California Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) recently shared an article on the psychological effects of the pandemic which may be felt in young people for a long time to come. CBHDA explains that the pandemic has taken a toll on the mental wellness of many people around the world, and some experts are concerned about the lasting effects it could have on adolescents and young adults especially. "The risk for the future is that we have a group who have spent almost a year and a half of their early life in a total blackout, gaining no experience or human capital," Massimiliano Mascherini, the head of social policy at the EU's foundation for living and working, told The Guardian. "They may represent a part of the workforce that will suffer throughout their lives." The full referenced article 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: Kristine Haugh at khaugh@sbcbswell.org
- **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
- **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
- **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: Roberto Rodriguez at 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: John Winckler at 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
- **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

or Anthony Hollenback at 805-737-6610 or 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
- **The Crisis Action Team** meets the second Thursday of the month, 2:30 – 4:00 pm, Santa Barbara Children’s large conference room. Questions: John Winckler at jwinckler@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
- **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
- **Forensic Action Team** will be meeting every other month on the 4th 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 or Celeste Andersen at candersen@sbcbswell.org