

Director's Report

July 21, 2021



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DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY NEWS

Long Time Behavioral Wellness Partner, Tom Sodergren passed Away on June 28, 2021:

Many in the Behavioral Wellness system knows Tom Sodergren, who served on the leadership team of Casa Pacifica and carried a strong relationship with Behavioral Wellness, for the last 20 years. On Monday, June 28th, Tom lost his battle with cancer. He was surrounded by his family and their love.

Tom began his work with Casa Pacifica 20 years ago and began working collaboratively with Behavioral Wellness (formerly ADMHS) shortly thereafter. Tom helped to begin many of the Behavioral Wellness programs which remain active today including Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS), SAFTY, SB163 and Wraparound. In 2011, both Tom and Senator Darrel Steinberg were the recipients of the Mental Health Advocacy Services Advocates Award. Tom was recognized as a pioneer for the use of TBS in California. Tom was a key expert on the settlement team in the Emily Q. lawsuit which resulted in the provision of TBS be ensured throughout California. Tom spent decades not only collaborating on programs within Behavioral Wellness but giving 110% to this collaboration. He will be missed by many.

Behavioral Wellness Supporting Community Recovery from COVID and Preparation for

Wildfire Events: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Now, as we start to return to previous activities in a safe way, many are feeling mixed emotions. Our department has been at the forefront in assisting the community with recovery from COVID stress and have participated in numerous speaking engagements. Recent events include the Hospice of Santa Barbara Re-entry Town Hall, Community Matters Radio Show, and KEYT. In addition to the focus on the pandemic, this is the time of year when our communities prepare for wildfire season. Given the unique events in our community, we have been able to share experiences and learnings on the psychological impact of smoke and wildfires with other organizations, as they prepare their communities. Speaking engagements by the department over the past month have included the Smoke Impacts California Wildfire Smoke Conference, California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, Air and Waste Management Association, and SCALE (Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement).

Mental Wellness Center Partners with PBS to Host a Virtual Event for Mysteries of Mental Illness Docuseries: The Mental Wellness Center, in partnership with PBS, hosted a free virtual event and live panel discussion on Tuesday, July 13, 2021 from 6:00-7:30 PM via zoom. The virtual event included exclusive preview clips of and conversation about the new PBS documentary series, Mysteries of Mental Illness.

[Mysteries of Mental Illness](#) explores dramatic attempts across generations to unravel the mysteries of mental illness and give voice to contemporary Americans across a spectrum of experiences. The four-hour documentary series, released in late June on PBS, explores the story of mental illness in science and society and serves as an anchor for an ambitious national initiative focused on destigmatizing mental illness in America. Cutting-edge science and current thinking around mental illness are presented within a historical framework. And each of the episodes contain portraits of individuals, filmed up-close and personal, illustrating the respective themes.

The Mental Wellness Center and the Santa Barbara community joined by zoom to watch highlights of the docuseries and then share in a rich live discussion. A panel of local mental health professionals and advocates joined the conversation to aid in discussions. Panel participants included: [Suzanne Grimmersey, MFT – PIO/Chief Quality Care and Strategy Officer at Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness](#), Dr. Paul Erickson - Medical Director for Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital, Dr. Edwin Feliciano - Behavioral Health Director at UCSB Student Health, and George Kaufmann - President of NAMI Santa Barbara County.

Behavioral Wellness Supports Housing Options Made Available for People Experiencing Homelessness in Isla Vista: In August 2020, A Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) was developed consisting of staff from Behavioral Wellness, Public Defender's Office and the Public Health Department. The mission of the MDT is to identify individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, who are identified as high risk in regards to legal issues, mental health and physical health. The community of Isla Vista recently expressed safety concerns with the homeless encampments located at People's Park in Isla Vista. The Santa Barbara County Executive Office tasked the MDT to work with the Isla Vista Parks and Recreation Department to offer people living in People's Park, alternative housing options and assist with eligibility for housing opportunities in addition to supporting linkage to mental health and substance use treatment. The results included 31 individuals connected to temporary housing and 17 of these referred to Behavioral Wellness for services and support. People's Park was cleared in mid-June with no incidents of arrests. Supervisor Joan Hartman, Third District Supervisor, was a tremendous support and extended her thanks to the Behavioral Wellness staff who supported this effort.

The 2021-2022 Mental Health Services Act One Year Plan Update is Posted Online and Behavioral Wellness is Seeking Feedback: The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) passed by California voters in 2004, created a 1% tax on annual incomes over \$1 Million to increase funding for mental health services. MHSA funds are distributed to counties upon State approval of the County MHSA Plan. The Department of Behavioral Wellness would like to invite all stakeholders to read the [FY 2021-2022 MHSA One Year Plan Update](#) and provide feedback during this 30 day posting period!



Various stakeholder meetings have occurred countywide in creation of this draft plan. Thank you for all those who attended our gatherings, asked questions, and shared your views during our MHSA Stakeholder Forums. The planning group hosted over 17 meetings and coordinated two surveys!

Highlights in the draft 2021-2022 Mental Health Services Act One Year Plan Update include:

- ❖ Extensive data reporting on program outcomes;
- ❖ A synopsis on MHSA Housing developments and impacts from No Place Like Home legislation; and
- ❖ Updates on key proposals including initiatives for youth, housing, peers, and whole person care philosophies.

Please submit feedback from July 16 to August 16, 2021 at our online form at the: [Feedback Form Link](#)

In addition, the Behavioral Wellness Commission will be hosting a public hearing to support this draft plan on August 18, 2021 from 3-5 pm. Public input is welcome and we would like to invite you to attend.

The Zoom information to attend is:

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| Meeting Online URL Link: | https://sbcbswell.zoom.us/j/92429933545?pwd=TVMyNFhvNGtJQTIUbKfoaVVnVFZpQT09 |
| Phone Number to US: | +1213 338 8477 or +1 301 715 8592 |
| Dial: | |
| Meeting ID: | 924 2993 3545 |
| Passcode: | 90712649 |

For more information, please contact Lindsay Walter at lwalter@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

Youth Opioid Response (YOR) Grant Launched: The Youth Opioid Response (YOR) grant has begun. *YOR Place* is a drop-in center in Lompoc that provides Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Services (SBIRT) to youth ages 12-24 who either have an opioid use disorder (OUD), a stimulant use disorder (StUD), or a combination of both. *YOR Place* is primarily a treatment-based program. Treatment services are provided on-site in the Lompoc Behavioral Wellness substance use disorder (SUD) system of care. Per SBIRT protocols, YOR also provides intervention services for clients, and their families, who are at risk of either an opioid or stimulant disorder. *YOR Place* is expected to be operational this month.

New and Revised Approved Policies: 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 <https://www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness/policies-procedures.sbc>.

1. **Consent for the Treatment of Minors (Revised)** – This policy establishes procedures to ensure that staff obtain the appropriate consents for outpatient behavioral health services for minors.

2. **Electronic Signature for Electronic Health Record Use (Revised)** – This policy ensures that employees who access the EHR are advised of the Department’s Electronic Signature Agreement, are aware that their login and password information serve as an electronic signature to authenticate information entered in the EHR, that they update their password when required, and that they protect their login and password information.
3. **Mental Health Client Treatment Plans (Revised)** – This policy ensures that Long-Term clients are involved in the development and implementation of a comprehensive client treatment plan for outpatient specialty mental health services.
4. **OSHPD Discharge Data Reports/Reporting (Revised)** – The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper submission of the PHF discharge data to the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.
5. **System Risk Assessment/Security Review (Revised)** – The purpose of this policy is to implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronic PHI, PII, and PI that the Department creates, accesses, receives, stores, or transmits.

Santa Barbara Regional Partnership Meetings: The **Children’s** Regional Partnership meeting took place on June 17th. A presentation was provided by Alisa Eschenbach of Tri-Counties Regional Center and included an overview on their Early Intervention Services and Children’s Services. Early Start is a Federal and State program serving ages 0-3 years old. The program consists of in-home parent training sessions, concentrating on helping infants reach their highest level of potential. Additional services may also be needed, i.e. case management, physical, occupational, and speech therapy. Rather than diagnosis, the team focuses on identifying developmental delays and the probability of delays. Upon receipt of referral, the infant is entitled to an assessment. Assessment areas include motor, communication, cognitive, social, emotional, and adaptive skills. An infant with a delay of 33% or more, is accepted to services. Those who do not meet these criteria may be eligible under the high-risk (occurrence(s) during pregnancy/birth) or established risk (child with a genetic syndrome) categories. Infants presenting with early signs of autism can also be assessed by TCRC and referred to applied behavioral analysis (ABA) services. When a child approaches age 3, TCRC begins to determine the next course of action. Children will either be closed out of Early Start services or moved to Status 2 (permanent eligibility). Status 2 requires a substantially handicapping condition that will remain throughout the individual’s life. Conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, intellectual disability, or 5th category (condition closely related to intellectual disability or requires similar treatment) must be deemed substantially handicapping. The intake team can, and will, reconsider new case information at any time.

The TCRC children’s team offers respite, childcare resources, behavioral services, placement, and any additional service related to developmental disability. Any person may submit a referral to children’s services. Consent must be obtained in order for TCRC to share referral status with any outside party. Referrals can be made by calling the nearest TCRC office. TCRC has 15 days, after making successful contact with the child’s family, to determine eligibility. If the child meets criteria, the intake process will begin. Individuals deemed ineligible will receive a Notice of Action, detailing the right to an appeal. Lastly, while children are still in the transitional age group, TCRC begins to consider adult services and prioritizes planning as key to supporting family members and ensuring youth are prepared for adult living.

The **Adult** Regional Partnership meeting took place on June 21st with a presentation from **Vanessa Ramos, MHSA Innovations/Help@Hand Program Manager**. She reported that current efforts of her Help@Hand team are focused on gaging the significance of technology within the public mental health system. Santa Barbara County believes technology is important and access to smart phones should be provided to the community. As we get ready to launch our Headspace app initiative, the team has worked hard connect the California LifeLine Program to the RLC programs/clients throughout the county. Furthermore, in an effort to assist clients in their ability to continue to engage in telehealth services, Tracphones are being provided to Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) patients upon discharge who require them to continue their mental health treatment.

Santa Maria Regional Partnership Meeting: The Santa Maria Regional Partnership meeting occurred in June and covered many areas. Balance Treatment Center joined the meeting to provide a report on their program and services. Balance Treatment Center operates mental health programs in Santa Maria and San Luis Obispo for adolescents, families and military. Services include intensive outpatient individual, group and family therapy and case management. Specialties include mood disorders, behavioral disorders, grief and loss, trauma, high functioning autism, personality disorders and suicide prevention and recovery. Departmental updates included the new homeless services vans (one located in south county and one in north/west county), also referred to as “Scooby Vans.” These vans are equipped with mobile offices, telehealth, med support and charging stations. Two new grants were overviewed including the MHSOAC Early Psychosis Intervention Plus program for Transition Age Youth and the Mental Health Student Services Act Grant for school age youth and works collaboratively with SBCEO. Lastly, an update was provided on the CSU within Marian Medical Center which is expected to receive licensure in the Fall.

Childrens System of Care (CSOC) Action Team: The Children’s System of Care met on June 24 with participants providing updates on a return to in person activities and services. Engagement continues with eligible youth and families on receiving the COVID vaccine. **Josh Woody, QCM Program Manager**, presented on the system of care for youth/adolescents in need of substance abuse services and support. During the next meeting, in July, this team will complete a year-end review of the priorities identified from this past year to implement in the upcoming fiscal year.

Change Agents: **John Winckler, Division Chief of Clinical Operations**, is providing leadership and oversight to the Change Agent meeting. **Patricia Gonzalez, Quality Measurement and Improvement Manager**, will provide evaluation support for the PDSA’s and **Natalia Alamilla, AOP** has begun supporting the Change Agent meeting. Currently, Smartsheet is being considered to track and monitor the Change Agent projects.

Several Behavioral Wellness programs that have active PDSA’s, highlighted their efforts on improving clinic operations, client outcomes, and staff wellness. For example, the Santa Barbara Adult Calle Real is focused on creating a welcoming and engaging lobby by displaying client art and introducing more plants. Some new PDSA projects were also introduced including the following: 1) The Santa Maria Adult clinic, is considering implementing a PDSA increase the number of Advance Directives we have on file with clients, specifically targeting their medically integrated other adults (MIOA) population; and the 2) The Lompoc Adult Clinic team are exploring implementing a PDSA related to increasing staff engagement and staff wellness.

Consumer and Family Member Action Team (CFMAT): The Consumer Family Member Action Team met on June 17th, 2021 over Zoom. **Enrique Bautista, Patients' Rights Advocate Assistant** provided a presentation on Patients' Rights. Enrique discussed the origins of Patient Rights passage of legislation, and provided great detail on what the rights are of patients served in the Behavioral Health system. **Vanessa Ramos, MHSA Innovations: Help@Hand Project Manager** gave an update on Help@Hand. Currently, efforts are being made to implement technology that decreases anxiety, loneliness, and more. Digital Literacy sessions are being hosted at the PHF and Crisis Residential Program in Santa Maria and will be beginning in Santa Barbara at the South County Crisis Residential Program, soon. Subcommittee updates were also provided during this meeting. Bridget Hochman, CFMAT member shared that the Summer 2021 Newsletter "Together in Our Journey" is complete and gave details on its contents. The newsletter has since been printed and sent to all RLCs and Project Heal. Lastly, members were able to provide community updates. CFMAT meets the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1PM to 2:30PM on Zoom platform.

Crisis Action Team: The Crisis Action Team met on June 10th. The team introduced **Jessica Korsan, QCM Coordinator** as the department's new Hospital Liaison. Jessica will be available to assist out of county psychiatric hospitals and local emergency departments with coordinating linkage of clients between these facilities and Behavioral Wellness for aftercare. The team discussed a few updates that have impacts on the crisis system including the closing of LAGs Medical Center which was a provider of both mental health for individuals with mild to moderate needs and Substance Use Disorder outpatient services. Behavioral Wellness anticipates absorbing some of the clients who were receiving services through LAGs. The Crisis Services program continues to recruit to fill the vacant Team Supervisor position in the south county, and the countywide Manager position. **John Winckler, Division Chief of Clinical Operations** continues as interim Crisis Services Manager. The group discussed ongoing issues regarding individuals with an Autism diagnosis in the crisis system and the difficulty faced with conducting crisis evaluations, stays in the emergency departments and placing these individuals in inpatient psychiatric facilities. The State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) recently added Autism to the list of included Medi-Cal diagnoses. Now, individuals with this primary diagnosis are eligible for specialty mental health services through Behavioral Wellness. However, the LPS Act and 5150/5585 Welfare and Institution codes are not clear regarding whether a 5150/5585 hold can be written on someone exhibiting only symptoms of autism and not mental health.

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 4th Wednesdays @ 1:30-3:00 pm (via Zoom).

For the June meeting, presentations and a roundtable discussion continued, highlighting the prevalent intersection of homelessness and criminal justice involvement. Guest presenters included Chris Lee, LCSW, Behavioral Wellness ACT/Homeless Services Manager, and Luis Alvarado, Behavioral Wellness Homeless Services, Outreach Worker. Both presenters shared the boots-on-ground outreach and engagement approaches and outcomes to serving individuals experiencing homeless countywide. The focus will circle back to jail discharges and treatment warm hand-offs for July's meeting. Please contact **Shana Burns, LMFT, Forensics Services Manager**, and **Celeste Andersen, Chief of Compliance**, with any questions, agenda suggestions, and/or if you would like to be added to the action team invite list.

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

State Updates Flexibilities for MHRCs and PHFs Allowable During the Pandemic: The Department of Health Care Services recently issued an Information Notice (20-015) surrounding guidance which had been set forth to allow flexibilities for Mental Health Rehabilitation Centers (MHRCs) and Psychiatric Health Facilities (PHFs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. This info notice rescinded all flexibilities as of June 30, 2021, with exception of telehealth, for the purpose of ensuring ongoing access to mental health treatment services throughout the pandemic. Specific to telehealth and telephone counseling, if a patient requires isolation in a room due to illness, telephone or telehealth mental health services will continue to be reimbursable in community and residential settings. Telehealth and telephone services remain allowable and covered under Medi-Cal, after the public health emergency of COVID-19 pending legislative decisions.

Behavioral Health Leaders Applaud Governor Newsom's Historic Investment in Behavioral Health with 2021-22 Budget: The California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA) and the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) applaud the Legislature and the Governor for prioritizing the state's recovery from a tsunami of behavioral health needs coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic with a spending plan that dedicates more than \$5 billion of new investments in behavioral health.

The 2021-22 budget provides a multi-billion-dollar investment in the state's behavioral health safety net through the Governor's Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiatives, Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure, Foster Care & Child Welfare, and Social Services Housing and Homelessness Programs.

Specifically, the Administration is funding the following for FY 21-22:

- More than \$2.2 billion for grants to construct, acquire, and rehabilitate new facilities to expand the community continuum of behavioral health treatment resources.
- More than \$4.4 billion over five years to create a new and innovative behavioral health system for youth ages 0 to 25.
- Almost \$800 million to expand the behavioral health workforce.
- \$205 million in state and federal funds for the Mental Health Student Services Act program.
- \$429 million in federal funding to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for evidence-based behavioral health programs.
- \$222 million in one-time funding to strengthen county prevention efforts to avoid youth entering the foster care system and \$138 million in one-time funding to help address the complex needs of foster youth as an alternative to out-of-state placements.
- \$805 million for the Community Care Expansion program under the Department of Social Services to address the lack of board and cares for individuals living on Social Security Income, including those with mental illnesses.
- \$63.1 million in one-time funding to support the California Reducing Disparities Project under the California Department of Public Health.

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: Natalia Alamilla, nalamilla@sbcbswell.org
- **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: Danielle Martinez at dmartinez@sbcbswell.org
- **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: Danielle Martinez at dmartinez@sbcbswell.org
- **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