

Director's Report

October 20, 2021



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DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY NEWS

National Emotional Wellness Month: Since 2004, Mental Health advocates across the nation have been celebrating October as National Emotional Wellness Month. Our emotional well being has a direct correlation to our overall health. Emotional stress can impact our immune systems and physical health as well. “Emotional wellness” does not necessarily mean we are happy all the time, but refers to our ability to process feelings in a healthy and positive way and to manage the stress which everyday life brings. It means we are adaptable which also contributes to our overall resiliency. Emotional Wellness Month reminds us to disconnect and take time out for our brain. Many use this month to take a break from hectic schedules, less screen time on devices, finding time to take for activities that are relaxing, and taking time to breathe. Being mindful of the importance of our emotional well-being helps us to make healthy choices, have good relationships, and to achieve our personal goals. Mindfulness is a simple but powerful tool. Headspace is one example of a technology application which applies mindfulness. Read more about Headspace further in this report.

Emotional Wellness Month began in 2004 but shares an interesting timeline which began much before this point.

- **2011 - A Harvard Study Showed Mindfulness Works:** According to the study, meditation and mindfulness can help create new grey matter in the brain, which improves memory, learning abilities, compassion, and self-awareness.
- **1990 - Americans With Disabilities Act Passes:** The ADA includes protections from discrimination for Americans with mental and physical disabilities. These protections extend to employment, public transportation, accommodations, and government agencies.
- **1963 - Congress Funds Mental Health Centers:** Congress authorizes funding and construction grants for community mental health centers. The legislation is signed and enacted by President Kennedy.
- **1946 - National Institute of Mental Health Established:** The National Mental Health Act creates the National Institute of Mental Health to promote emotional wellbeing on a national level.
- **1883 - Birth of Psychiatry:** German psychiatrist Emil Kräpelin becomes the first to publish a comprehensive system of psychological disorders centering around a pattern of symptoms and potential underlying physiological cause.

Behavioral Wellness Launches New Headspace Project: The Behavioral Wellness Help@Hand team joins a statewide collaborative project administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority to launch Headspace throughout the county. Headspace is a technology application created with one mission in mind: to improve the health and happiness of the world. Reaching 70 million users in 190 countries, Headspace was one of the first meditation apps in the world and remains a leader in mindfulness and mental training. Within Behavioral Wellness, this is a five-year project funded by Mental Health Services Act Innovations funding. The primary purpose of the project is to increase access to mental health care, support wellness, promote the early detection of mental illness and allow early intervention.

The Headspace launch will be led by consumers within the Behavioral Wellness Help@Hand team and will offer licenses at no cost to key identified populations throughout the county. Help@Hand team members will assist with providing education on using Headspace and how to enroll in the application. The team's focus is to help provide whole person care within a digital platform to empower individuals; and to provide support for wellness and recovery efforts through technology. For more information on the Help@Hand Headspace project, please contact Maria Arteaga at marteaga@sbcbswell.org

Community Mental Health Assessment to Address Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic: In order to ascertain and respond to the needs of our local community, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the County of Santa Barbara and Department of Behavioral Wellness, in partnership with 35 community mental health and wellness partners and stakeholders, invited the whole community to respond to a survey during the month of September. Data gathered through the survey will be used to identify and tailor services to meet the needs of community members. With tremendous thanks to all who took their time to take this survey, close to 5,000 surveys were collected. Data analysis is currently taking place and will be shared broadly, once complete.

Alcohol and Drug Program Update: The Behavioral Wellness Alcohol and Drug Program (ADP) continues to address the opioid epidemic by expanding medication assisted treatment options (MAT). The SUD Wellness and Recovery (MAT) Access Point has seen an increase in referrals and MAT initiations. YOR Place, a drop-in treatment center for youth and TAY clients ages 12-24 who have opioid and or associated stimulant use disorders, is up and running on H Street in Lompoc. [The Santa Barbara Opioid Safety website](#) provides a wealth of local treatment options as well as local, state and national data and information regarding the opioid epidemic.

ADP is collaborating with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department to address youth cannabis (marijuana) use with its Proposition 64 Public Safety and Health grant to provide outreach, education and intervention services, for high school youth either involved in or at risk of developing, cannabis use problems. The Prop 64 grant will begin in the Santa Maria Joint Unified School District (SMJUHS) to intervene and divert cannabis using students away from the criminal justice system.

Due to extreme staffing shortages, the Salvation Army residential substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and withdrawal management services have been suspended until further notice.

New Behavioral Wellness Assistant Human Resource Manager: On Monday, September 20, Jeffrey Mariano joined as the new Assistant Human Resources Manager for Behavioral Wellness. Since beginning his career as a Residence Director and faculty member at Colorado State University, Jeff has been a noteworthy leader in cultivating culturally engaging environments. You may know him from his work for the past two years as a Senior Employment Analyst with the County's Human Resources Department where part of his responsibilities included assisting with Behavioral Wellness' recruitment efforts.

Jeff is a certified coach with Gallup StrengthFinder and brings experience facilitating workshops and presentations for teams of up to 300 employees. Jeffrey holds Bachelor's degrees in Public Policy and Intercultural Communications and a Master's degree in Higher Education from the University of Denver. On his free time, Jeffrey likes to travel, spend time outdoors with family, friends, and his puppy Nova, and plays on the Los Angeles Rebellion Rugby Team. Welcome, Jeffrey!

New Behavioral Wellness Patients' Rights Advocate: On October 4, Monica Ruiz joined the Patients Rights' team after spending almost 5 years with the Lompoc Adult Clinic as a Case Worker. Prior to joining Behavioral Wellness, Monica worked for our Community Based Organization partner, Transitions Mental Health Association in the Lompoc ACT program. With this prior work experience, Monica brings a keen knowledge and understanding of our Behavioral Health system of care to her new role. Monica received her Bachelor Degree in Psychology from Brandman University. She also is certified by the Trauma Resiliency Institute as a Trauma Resiliency Model - Level 1 Trainer. In her free time, Monica enjoys walking, listening to music, meditating and reading. Monica's upbeat and caring nature will be an asset to the team.

Kay Thomas and Enrique Bautista will provide support and training to Monica as she learns the duties of her new position. Please welcome Monica as she visits new facilities and begins participating in organizational and client meetings.

Acknowledgement of Behavioral Wellness and Sheriff's Office Co-Response Teams: It is not uncommon that appreciation of our Co-Response Teams is mentioned in passing, however, a written message to acknowledge the team's work was recently received by Dr. Cherylynn Lee, with the Sheriff's Behavioral Science Unit:

I had a recent encounter with two of the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Crisis Intervention team members (Deputy Plett and Missy Miller/Behavioral Wellness). There are no words to express how thankful I am that this program/team exists. There's no doubt in my mind these two were angels sent by God to find my daughter and rescue her from self-harm. Their responsiveness, commitment, kindness, and care blew me away! I never knew a team like this existed; partnering law enforcement and mental health - what a dynamic duo. I'm not sure how this program receives funding, but I wanted whoever the higher ups are to know the value of this program is inestimable and needs to continue being funded.

Blessings, Grateful Mom

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office and the Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness are excited to share a new video highlighting the Co-Response teams. In 2018, the Sheriff's Office Behavioral Sciences Unit, along with the Behavioral Wellness Mobile Crisis team, partnered up to pilot a program wherein a crisis intervention trained deputy and a mental health clinician respond together as a team to mental health crisis calls that come through 911.

In 2020, this pilot program expanded to three full-time, grant funded Co-Response teams that respond to calls throughout Santa Barbara County. The mission of these Co-Response teams is to de-escalate crisis situations and divert persons with mental illness and persons with co-occurring substance use disorders, from the criminal justice system when safe and appropriate to do so. In the 2020, our three Co-Response teams handled 1,606 calls. Of those 1,606 calls, only 11 arrests were made.

The Sheriff's Office and the Department of Behavioral Wellness are excited to share an updated overview of the services that are provided by our Co-Response teams. Please visit the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office YouTube channel, [SBSheriffs](#), to meet the Co-Response teams.

Santa Barbara Police Department Author Thanks Local Law Enforcement Officers Recognizing the Importance of Mental Health: On Tuesday, September 14, 2021, author Sonja Wasden came to the Santa Barbara Police Department to express her gratitude to law enforcement officers for the positive role they have played in her life. She acknowledges the stressors and mental health strain of the career. She is an adamant supporter of mental health services for officers as well as members of the community who are suffering from mental health conditions. Mrs. Wasden is on a tour of 50 states, visiting law enforcement agencies and local libraries throughout the country, discussing her struggles with depression, mania, and suicide.

Mrs. Wasden said, "We are here at the police department to thank law enforcement officers for all that they do, because they have been a support for my family, and to let them know their mental health matters also. Officers put their lives on the line, their mental health on the line, and I just want officers and all first responders to know we appreciate all that they do for us." Officer Craig Burleigh, a member of the Joint Co-Response Team, partnered with a clinician from Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness, welcomed Mrs. Wasden on the front steps of the Police Department. Officer Burleigh has been a member of the Co-Response team for the last year and works with members of the community who are in crisis or suffering from mental health issues. This team focuses on providing mental health services for those in need or in crisis, prior to law enforcement interaction.

Santa Barbara Regional Partnership Meetings: The Santa Barbara **Children's** Regional Partnership met on September 16th. A presentation was provided by CommUnify, formerly known as the Community Action Commission. CommUnify provides education and supportive services to the residents of Santa Barbara County, concentrating on improving economic security and self-sufficiency while also retaining one's dignity. Community, stability, service, and education are CommUnify's key pillars. Updates were provided on a variety of Youth and Family Services Programs in which CommUnify is connected, including Adolescent Family Life Planning (AFLP), Los Compadres, California Personal Responsibility Program (Cal

PREP), Behavioral Wellness' Transition Age Youth Program, Family Wellness Program for families enrolled in Head Start, and the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP).

The Santa Barbara **Adult** Regional Partnership meeting took place on September 20th. A presentation was provided by the Tri-Counties Regional Center. The regional center system was established in 1969, via the Lanterman Act, to support those living with developmental disabilities. As a result of parent advocacy, a total of 21 independent, non-profit regional centers were established throughout California. To be eligible for services, a person must be living with a condition such as Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, an intellectual disability, or Fifth Category (condition closely related to intellectual disability or requires similar treatment). Additionally, the individual must have evidence that the disability was present prior to age 18 and will remain throughout their lifetime. Once deemed eligible, services continue throughout the person's life span. Services are voluntary and clients can choose to close and/or reopen their case at any time. Tri-Counties Regional Center (TCRC) provides voluntary person and family centered supports for individuals with developmental disabilities, to maximize opportunities and choices for living, working, learning, and recreating in the community.

Lompoc Regional Partnership Meeting: The Lompoc Regional Partnership meeting occurred on September 21 with a continued focus on increasing vaccine utilization, supporting youth and families with the return to in person learning in school and maintaining services with significant shortages reported by all organizations present. The next meeting will be held on November 16.

Santa Maria Regional Partnership Meeting: The Santa Maria Regional Partnership met on September 20th. Behavioral Wellness outpatient clinics shared about the THMA grants (internships for peers) that will focus on helping peers to obtain, and retain, employment (more info coming soon!), emergency housing vouchers (EHV). On January 1, 2022, CenCal's ABA benefits will be managed through CenCal directly, rather than through The Holman Group. The Santa Maria TAY clinic open house is coming soon and will announce a date soon. An announcement was made on the upcoming youth empowerment summit, taking place on October 27th. More information can be found at www.SBCEO.org/YouthSummit. Lastly, several upcoming trainings have been given by Family Service Agency (FSA) related to healthy relationships and nurturing skills for families. A Presentation was given by Casa Pacifica's Meghann Torres, Program Manager, on the Safe Alternative for Treating Youth (SAFTY) Program.

Change Agents: The Change Agent meeting was held on September 23. This month's meeting included updates on active Behavioral Wellness Change Agent projects, new project ideas and ideas for increasing collaboration across projects and clinics. At the Santa Maria Adult Clinic (*Geoff Bernard & Denisse Gonzalez*), since implementing their PDSA, 3 Advanced Directives have been initiated. At the Santa Barbara ACT Clinic (*Chris Lee & Robert Gutierrez*), the team is on target to begin their positive messaging project by October 1. A staff survey will be administered before and after the intervention to assess improved change with staff satisfaction and perceived quality of life. At Santa Barbara Children's Clinic (*Sheila Lopez*), the support group data is being examined and results will be presented at next scheduled meeting. However, preliminary data show an increase in client attendance and have been well received by clients. A new caseworker has joined the team and based on client feedback, a new young men's group is being considered and may be added.

Childrens System of Care (CSOC) Action Team: The Children’s System of Care Action Team last met on September 23. Christina Lombard presented the new MHSA School Navigation grant and the collaboration with schools in Santa Barbara County for the implementation of services within this funding. Dialogue continued on the increase in mental health needs among children and families within the community and the increase in crisis services since youth have returned to in person learning in school. The CSOC Action Team will continue to refine goals identified in this past year as their areas of focus for the current fiscal year. The next CSOC meeting will be held on October 28.

Consumer and Family Member Action Team (CFMAT): The Consumer Family Member Action Team met via Zoom on September 16. The meeting started with a presentation on a Process Improvement Project focusing on Psychiatric Health Facility discharges, by Dr. Patricia Gonzalez. Various members provided project feedback to Dr. Gonzalez, and were encouraged to email her with any additional questions. Next, members were provided information regarding the digital literacy sessions Transition Mental Health Association have started providing. Maria Arteaga, Peer Empowerment Manager provided an update on the Peer Support Specialist Certification and the grandfathering process for those who currently work as Peer Support Specialists, and would like to become certified. She encouraged members to participate on the various stakeholder sessions that are hosted by peer run organizations. Lastly, the Fall CFMAT Newsletter - “Together in Our Journey,” was shared. CFMAT meets on the third Thursday of each month from 1PM to 2:30PM.

Crisis Action Team: The Crisis Action Team met on September 9th. John Winckler, LMFT, Division Chief of Clinical Operations, facilitated the meeting and introduced Careena Robb, LMFT as the new Crisis Services Manager. John provided some general Behavioral Wellness updates including the department plan to follow state Public Health Officer orders regarding mandatory COVID vaccine requirements for staff. The MOU between Behavioral Wellness and the Santa Maria Police Department is getting closer to final approval by the Board of Supervisors, which will allow the program to begin. Behavioral Wellness continues to recruit for a Team Supervisor at South County Crisis Services. John provided updates on two new grants the department is in the process of implementing. The Early Psychosis Intervention grant program is in the process of onboarding new staff and going through the evidenced based trainings and will begin accepting referrals soon. The Mental Health Schools Support Act grant program (a joint program between Behavioral Wellness and the County Education Office) is currently meeting with local school districts to plan implementation and will begin taking referrals around the end of October. John shared some Crisis Services data that will be presented to the Behavioral Wellness Commission as part of an overall presentation on all Behavioral Wellness programs. Casa Pacifica’s SAFTY program shared their monthly data, and then local hospital Emergency Department data was shared and discussed.

Cultural Competency and Diversity Action Team (CCDAT): The Cultural Competency and Diversity Action Team convened on September 10 via Zoom. Members continued to work on four areas: Language Access, Outreach and Engagement, American Asian Pacific Islander population (AAPI) and Alcohol and Drug Program (ADP) services. The Language Access workgroup developed an interpretation survey and a translation policy and procedure. The Outreach and Engagement workgroup worked on developing an outreach and engagement plan. The AAPI workgroup worked on developing a trauma brochure for the AAPI community. Lastly, the ADP workgroup is considering the integration of the Cultural Formulation

Interview to be part of the assessment process. ADP is hoping to start a pilot with a treatment provider who may be willing to participate in this role. CCDAT meets the second Friday of each month from 10AM to 11:30AM.

Forensic Action Team: The Forensic Action Team Meeting last met on September 22. **Maria Arteaga, Cultural Competency Manager** and **Enrique Bautista, Patients Rights' Advocate** shared a newly developed handout containing information about language interpretation services, particularly Mixteco dialects. The handout includes the list of vendors who Behavioral Wellness contracts with and descriptions of their services provided. **Josh Woody, QCM Manager**, provided an update on the Access Line protocol in respect to screenings for substance use disorder outpatient services and the practice now of clients being able to access services directly from organizational providers rather than needing Access Line authorization. Sylvia Bernard from Good Samaritan joined the meeting and provided updates on the different ways in which clients transitioning from jail are being supported, as well as shared new programs available. **Deepak Budwani, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer** and the Public Defender Code Team presented on Thrive SBC as a client resource smartphone app now available on mobile, table and desktop devices as a rich resource for clients and the community. Lastly, **John Doyel, ADP Division Chief**, shared of the cannabis school grants and the launch of new substance use and prevention programs within the community.

HEART Action Team: The HEART Action Team was instrumental in providing input on the Capital Facilities Report which lays the groundwork for the next 5 years of planning and was presented to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors recently. An example of the work of this group, as outlined in the plan includes the goals for Residential Services Housing 5 years ago being that of over 160 beds. At present, the needs for Alcohol and Other Drug Residential has been met, Adult Residential/Board and Care 75% met, Mental Health Rehabilitation Center beds nearly 70% met and Supportive Housing needs 65% met. Crisis Stabilization bed goals have been nearly fully attained. This shows tremendous progress and much hard work. Much thanks to the HEART Action Team for their steadfast work and dedication.

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

Senate Bill 170 Supports Foster Youth in Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs with Designation as an Institute for Mental Disease (IMD): On September 23, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 170, supporting additional funding for counties and Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) designated as Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) by the State, through June of 2022. IMDs have over 16 beds which make them eligible for Federal Financial Participation (FFP) funding. Resources made available through this funding ensure that youth placed in these programs will have access to Medi-Cal services and will help organizations make the necessary organizational changes to transition their service array to provide a continuum of care that includes family-based care and behavioral health services that address the needs of foster youth. Funding is given to county behavioral health departments so that Medi-Cal specialty mental health services provided to foster and probation youth in STRTPs, deemed IMDs, can continue. How these funds will be allocated remains to be determined. Stay tuned for more information.

Meth Overdose Deaths In the U.S. Almost Tripled From 2015-2019: The Washington Post recently published an article sharing that methamphetamine overdoses are on the rise, according to a [study](#) published in JAMA Psychiatry says. When the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analyzed data from 2015 to 2019, they found that meth overdose deaths in the United States had almost tripled. During this period of time, meth-related overdoses rose from 5,526 to 15,489. This was accompanied by a 43 percent increase in people reporting meth use. Researchers believe over 2 million adults used meth during the period, up from 1.4 million.

People reported more frequent meth use and more frequent use of methamphetamine and cocaine together. Those who inject meth were more likely to report that they used the drug more than 100 days per year. Riskier behavior might have been one reason that overdoses increased so sharply despite the number of users rising at a slower rate. The people at greatest risk were those who experience other disparities linked to race, socioeconomic status and the criminal justice system.

Better prevention and treatment are needed, the researchers conclude. “What makes these data even more devastating is that currently, there are no approved medications to treat methamphetamine use disorder,” said Emily Einstein, NIDA science policy branch chief and co-author. Read more [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: 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 Celeste Andersen at candersen@sbcbswell.org