

Director's Report

November 17, 2021



Pam Fisher, Psy.D, Interim Director
Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness
(805) 681-5220 ♦ <http://countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness>

DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY NEWS

Appointment Announced for New Behavioral Wellness Director: The County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors has approved the appointment of Antonette “Toni” Navarro, LMFT, as Director of the Behavioral Wellness Department. Navarro will assume the duties from Dr. Pamela Fisher, who was named Interim Director following the departure of Dr. Alice Gleghorn in June 2021. Fisher will return to her previous role as the Assistant Director of Behavioral Wellness and looks forward to her retirement from the County this winter. Navarro’s first day is expected to be December 13, 2021. Navarro has managed mental health programs since 2003, most recently at Tri-City Mental Health in Los Angeles County since 2008. For the past seven years she has served as Tri-City Mental Health Authority’s Executive Director following six years as its Chief Clinical Officer. As Executive Director, she has been responsible for the planning, organizing, and directing of operations of the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to provide outpatient specialty mental health services to the cities of Claremont, La Verne and Pomona, Calif. Her prior experience also includes a focus on youth and family mental health and substance use disorder programming with Hathaway-Sycamores Children and Family Services in Pacoima.

Navarro is deeply committed to behavioral health, public service and collaboration. She is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) with 30 years in clinical outpatient services. She also has extensive experience working at the state level as a Governing Board Member of the California Behavioral Health Directors’ Association. For the past eight years, Navarro has been an Adjunct Faculty Member at the University of La Verne. She currently serves as President of the California Social Work Education Center’s Advisory Board (CalSWEC) hosted by the University of California, Berkeley’s School of Social Welfare. CalSWEC is dedicated to developing a professional social service workforce to effectively serve California’s diverse population with focus on public child welfare, integrated behavioral health, and aging. Navarro received a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from University of California, Los Angeles; and a master’s degree in Education with an emphasis on Marriage and Family Counseling from University of California, Santa Barbara. Navarro grew up in Santa Barbara and attended Santa Barbara High School.

Behavioral Wellness welcomes Toni!

Behavioral Wellness Selected to Serve on the CalMHSa Peer Support Specialist Stakeholder Advisory Council: Congratulations to our Peer Empowerment Manager, [Maria Arteaga](#) who was selected to serve on the Peer Support Specialist Stakeholder Advisory Council at CalMHSa. Maria was

chosen from a sizeable pool of candidates throughout the State. As a council member, she will have an opportunity to provide feedback and insight into the development and implementation of the Peer Support Specialist Certification (PSSC) program currently being developed for the Medi-Cal Peer Certification program. Her participation on this council will help to maintain the values and best practices of peer support throughout the peer certification process, and enhance our mental health and substance use treatment system.

Behavioral Wellness Partnering with Genoa Healthcare to Open a Pharmacy on the Behavioral Wellness Campus in Santa Barbara: Current planning is underway for the opening of a pharmacy on the Behavioral Wellness Campus in South County, near the Calle Real Adult Outpatient Clinic. Genoa Healthcare has opened pharmacies throughout the United States serving consumers with mental health, substance use disorders and other complex, chronic health conditions. More information will be shared on the opening date in the months ahead. You can learn more about Genoa Healthcare on their website [here](#). Also, a video about Genoa Healthcare services can be viewed [here](#).

First 5 Santa Barbara County Releases Funding for Innovation, Capacity Building, and Express Grants in Support of Children Ages Birth-5, their Families and Caregivers: First 5 Santa Barbara is offering grants to community-based organizations such as nonprofits, schools, and institutes of higher learning that serve children birth through five, their families, and those who care for them. Currently, three categories for funding are available, including Innovation, Capacity Building, and Express grants. Five “Look Back” Innovation Grants in the amount of \$1,500 each provide an opportunity for organizations to reflect back and share their innovative COVID-19 strategies developed over the past 18 months that focused on social and racial equity. The Commission will award up to three “Look Ahead” Innovation Grants ranging from \$2,500 - \$3,750 to support “think tank” opportunities that investigate equity and social justice issues and potential to create a change in practice or an operational procedure within an organization or community.

The Commission has set aside \$45,000 for Capacity Building grants that are intended to support short-term organizational-wide change efforts. Grants up to \$15,000 are intended to build the leadership or staff capacity of an organization via some type of professional or leadership development activity, including trainings, conferences, or certifications. These activities must be in the areas of equity and/or social justice and align with the Commission’s Strategic Plan and Social Justice and Racial Equity Statement. Applicants must show proof of a fiscal match. The Commission has budgeted an additional \$105,000 for Express Grants to provide funding for short-term, one-time projects that align with our Result Areas, Outcomes, and Indicators outlined in the [2021-2025 Strategic & Fiscal Plan](#).

The deadline to submit a letter of interest or application for the innovation grants is Monday, November 22, 2021. The deadline to submit a Capacity Building application is Friday, December 3, 2021. The deadline to submit an Express grant application is Wednesday, December 1, 2021. An information session was held for the Innovation and Capacity Building Grants from 10-11 a.m. on Thursday, November 4, 2021. For more information or to download a Letter of Intent or application form, visit the First 5 Santa Barbara website at <http://first5santabarbaracounty.org/>

Behavioral Wellness Launches Jail Discharge Pilot Program: The Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness, in partnership with the Good Samaritan Shelter and the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, are piloting a new Jail Discharge Program. The CREDO47 Stabilization Center, operated by the Good Samaritan Shelter, will have a transportation team member present outside of the jail lobby every Wednesday and Friday from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. through this new pilot program. The goal of the program is to provide basic resources, such as phone charging, water, PPE kits (including masks, hand sanitizer, and more), resource guides, phone calls, and transportation. In addition, the program will provide linkage to services for an individual open to this assistance. Planning for this program began during meetings to discuss State COVID Emergency Supplemental Funding (CSEF), which allowed for the additional staffing, funding for basic needs, and technology. Good Samaritan and Behavioral Wellness are partnering to provide the staffing as well as many of the basic need supplies.

Santa Barbara Regional Partnership Meetings: The **Adult** Regional Partnership meeting took place on Monday, October 18, 2021. Participants had a lively discussion on updates and changes for various programs in the Santa Barbara Community and Behavioral Wellness. **Veronica Heinzelmann, LCSW, South County Regional Manager**, provided several updates including an update on road closures/openings, evacuations, and containment of the Alisal fire to meeting members. Veronica shared regarding Behavioral Wellness staffing updates including **Careena Robb**, Quality Care Management Coordinator having transitioned into the role as the new Crisis Services Manager for the Department. The Behavioral Wellness Patients' Rights team is expanding and additional positions are being developed and will be filled. Various departmental trainings are being offered including Mental Health First Aid's "Train the Trainor" course scheduled for November 16th - 18th, Veronica and two others will be participating in this training and will become certified to then train Behavioral Wellness staff as well as other County staff and Community Based Organizations.

Ramona Winner, Family Advocate with the Mental Wellness Center shared that the Mental Wellness Center Recovery Learning Center re-opened on November 1, 2021. Visitors must be vaccinated to enter; however, unvaccinated guests may gather in the center's courtyard. Shelby Swanson, the Adult Services Director for CADA announced a recent grant awarded which will assist underinsured individuals (using stimulants/opioids) in obtaining residential or outpatient services. This grant is accessible until August 2022. Those who are covered by insurance, but have a share of cost may also be eligible. The grant was created to focus on communities of color (Spanish available). Individuals must be an adult, age 18 or older. For questions or referrals, please contact: Shelby Swanson at sswanson@cadاسب.org.

Emily Allen, Director of Homeless & Veteran Programs at United Way, shared that in collaboration with the Santa Barbara Foundation, SBCO United Way will be hosting a job fair. All are welcome to attend virtually. Federal and state funding available. SBCO United Way is monitoring calls regarding the Rental Relief Program, watching for increased numbers of evictions due to the eviction moratorium. Those who are currently experiencing homelessness should be directed to their local Coordinated Entry Point to be assessed and verified. For location details, visit: www.liveunitedsbc.org/regional-entry-points. She additionally shared that emergency housing vouchers are available to those needing permanent supportive housing with Good Samaritan providing case management services. Rapid rehousing funds are also available for short-term assistance, i.e. deposits, rental assistance, locating housing, and some temporary

case management. New shelters have opened in Isla Vista and Lompoc with small emergency shelters open in Santa Maria. Overall capacity has increased; however, shelters are still impacted by COVID-19.

The Santa Barbara **Children's** Regional Partnership met on October 21. **Christina Lombard, Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) Program Manager**, shared that Behavioral Wellness and the Santa Barbara County Education Office have been awarded a \$4 million grant to implement MHSSA programming for 4 years. With a total of 68,510 students, all school districts within Santa Barbara County have opted to participate. Consultations and data reporting will be directed to the Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission (MHSOAC). Current partnerships include Children & Family Resource Services (CFRS), Mental Wellness Center, and YouthWell. MHSSA's mission is to reduce the need for heightened levels of care amongst youth. Building a strong partnership between SBCEO and Behavioral Wellness will ensure linkage to prevention and early intervention resources. The program focuses on increasing collaboration, communication, awareness, and access to services. MHSSA plans to pursue further collaboration and funding opportunities that will support, expand, and sustain programming within schools. Future collaborations may include community base organizations, private insurance companies, private providers, Juvenile Justice, and CWS.

Santa Maria Regional Partnership Meeting: The Santa Maria Regional Partnership meeting met recently and shared many updates. Of highlight, Good Samaritan Shelter shared about the upcoming Turkey Drive in November and the new expansion of the Fr. Virgin Cordano Center in Santa Barbara which offers the support of a place to rest, spiritual care, laundry, personal care, case management and service linkage, breakfast and lunch. Hours are Monday-Friday 9 a.m -3 p.m. Partnering with the Good Samaritan Shelter, United Way is offering emergency vouchers for permanent supported housing programs and rapid re-housing for rental assistance, case management and deposit assistance. In closing, Fighting Back Santa Maria shared that they are offering free COVID vaccines for the community with a recent clinic having taking place on November 12.

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. **Child Abuse Reporting (Revised)** – This policy provides guidance on mandated reporting requirements for suspected child abuse and neglect.
2. **Data Backup Plan (Revised)** – This policy establishes backup standards and procedures for IT employees to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronic PHI, PII, and PI.
3. **DMC-ODS Outpatient Treatment Services (Revised)** – This policy ensures that the Department and its subcontracted providers implement and provide outpatient treatment services in accordance with the DMC-ODS waiver and all relevant guidelines and laws.
4. **Duty to Protect Against Threats of Violence (Revised)** – This policy establishes practices and standards for LMHPs who have an established relationship with a client who has communicated a serious threat to physically harm a reasonably identifiable victim, and includes reporting and documentation procedures for threats of violence.

5. **Language Services for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (Revised)** – This policy ensures that individuals with LEP receive equitable access to culturally and linguistically competent care.
6. **Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) – Access and Use (Revised)** – This policy establishes standards and procedures for Fiscal staff, Patient Representatives, and designated Quality Care Management staff who access the MEDS LITE system.
7. **Patients’ Rights Advocacy (Revised)** – The policy defines the responsibilities of Patients’ Rights Advocates and ensures that the rights of all clients are protected.
8. **Provider Rate Review (Revised)** – This policy ensures that the provisional rates used for Short Doyle/Medi-Cal claiming are reviewed and adjusted as necessary to align with the actual rates of services providers.
9. **Volunteers and Interns (Revised)** – This policy establishes protocols for the recruitment, onboarding, and orientation training of volunteer interns, extra help interns, and volunteers.

Change Agents: The Change Agents met on October 27. This month’s meeting highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on clinic operations, project successes, and lessons learned on active Behavioral Wellness Change Agent projects. At the **Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic**, **Sheila Lopez**, noted that, although, the project goal to increase client attendance was not fully met, creating short term and closed groups proved to be successful. Also, low group attendance rates, in part, may be explained by COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, transportation issues, and youth feeling “zoomed out”. At the **Lompoc Children’s Clinic**, **Letty Mendoza** described how her clinic project aims to improve client experience by creating a warm and welcoming environment. Currently, survey data to assess client experience before and after the intervention is being collected. At the **Santa Barbara ACT Clinic**, **Robert Gutierrez** noted that their positive messaging intervention has begun and a staff survey will track changes in staff engagement. At **Juvenile Justice**, **Christina Ortiz** shared that the project goal is to improve screening for substance use disorders. Data is being tracked and preliminary results show an increase in client participation with Behavioral Wellness services in and out custody and increased participation in treatment while in custody.

Consumer and Family Member Action Team: The Consumer Family Member Action Team (CFMAT) welcomed **Shereen Khatapoush, PhD, Research and Evaluation Team** at their October 21, 2021 meeting. Shereen gave a presentation on the Consumer Perception Survey required by the California Department of Health Care Services for all Counties. The survey includes measures of general satisfaction, functional status, clinical status, access to, satisfaction with, and benefit from services, perception of cultural competency and adverse events. After Shereen’s presentation, Transitions Mental Health Association Recovery Learning Center shared that they have many monolingual Spanish speakers receiving services and they are working with the Help@Hand team to enroll members to Headspace. The Headspace team then shared that they are working hard on enrolling individuals from the three target populations to headspace and establishing technology and wellness groups. Members were also provided updates on Peer Certification, the development of the Winter newsletter and items the pool of champions are working on. CFMAT meets monthly the third Thursday from 1 p.m.- 2:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Childrens System of Care (CSOC) Action Team: The Children's System of Care Action Team last met on October 28. CSOC members continued to provide updates on the expansion of the COVID vaccine to younger children, increase in youth presenting with behavioral challenges and the increase in referrals seen by community based organizational providers, within Behavioral Wellness as well as an increase in calls to Child Welfare Services for support. Just Communities, a non-profit organization focused on Social Justice, gave a presentation on their work specific to removing barriers and obstacles around equity, healing systemic racism and increasing awareness on creating collaborative, compassionate communities. Members expressed interest in having this content shared with their staff, in the schools and with community based organizational providers.

Cultural Competence and Diversity Action Team: The Cultural Competence and Diversity Team (CCDAT) Action Team met on October 8, 2021 via Zoom. The meeting kicked off with **Shereen Khatapoush, PhD, Research and Evaluation Team** providing a presentation on the Consumer Perception Survey results. She shared that about a quarter of clients chose to take the survey which included a little over 100 questions focusing on eight domains. Overall, 85% of responses were positive and negative comments were reviewed in a subcommittee for future improvement. Subsequently, the Outreach and Engagement group discussed the draft of the Cultural Competency Outreach and Engagement Plan they have been working on. CCDAT members shared more strategies as well as indicators of success. Next, **Carla Cross, Behavioral Wellness Training Manager** shared information on the Early Psychosis grant. Lastly, members shared community events. CCDAT meets the second Friday of each month from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Crisis Action Team: **Careena Robb, Crisis Services Manager** shared that a new supervisor will be starting for South County Crisis Services in December. The committee discussed new regulations for American Medical Response: AMR is now able to provide transports to alternative destinations other than LPS facilities. More information to come. The committee discussed issues when clients on psychiatric holds leave the hospitals. Ongoing problem solving needed. Safety reported 195 crisis calls in September (up from an average of 100-120 a month). Safety is continuing to provide in-person and Telehealth services. The hold rate for Safety is down 6%. **Josh Woody, QCM Manager** reported that Salvation Army is temporarily suspending ADP residential services. Joe Holifield from Tri-Counties Regional Center shared that they were awarded funding to hire mental health workers. Joe also shared training opportunities and information on averting mass shootings and triaging dangerous behavior in therapy.

Forensic Action Team: The Forensic Action Team last met on October 27. Merushka Bisetty, PsyD presented on a new non-profit organization, Santa Barbara Bridges and Links to Integrated Supportive Services (SB BLISS). The goal of SB BLISS is to provide community outreach and wraparound supportive services to mitigate the risk of psychiatric hospitalization, incarceration, and homelessness; this will be done through supplemental support for existing systems of care and for people experiencing difficulty accessing care. Cherylynn Lee, PhD, of the Sheriff's Office Behavioral Sciences Unit presented information similar to the recent Board of Supervisors presentation, on the County's Co-Response Teams. The presentation involved data gathered by Social Finance, noting the fiscal impacts of the teams and consequent recommendations for added coverage. At the meeting's end **Serena Cyr, PsyD** provided an update on the new jail discharge program as part of the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Fund (CESF) grant, administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

UCLA and UC San Francisco Medical Centers Awarded \$41.5 Million to Address the Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences: Medical centers at UCLA and UC San Francisco have been awarded \$41.5 million from the state to create a multi-campus effort to address the impacts of “adverse childhood experiences” and other causes of “toxic stress” on health. According to UCLA Health, researchers have found that 62% of Californians have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience, and the added stress of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to even more ACE exposure for children and youth. Health officials shared that detecting such impacts early and engaging in early intervention efforts can improve long-term health outcomes.

The initiative will work to develop ways of identifying and treating impacts of childhood adversity. Researchers will work in tandem with primary care providers in the state’s Medi-Cal system to expand ACE screening statewide and develop ways of managing the consequences of such stress, according to UCLA Health. According to researchers, childhood adversity such as abuse, neglect or having an incarcerated, addicted or mentally ill parent can lead to toxic stress and raise the risk of chronic health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, depression and asthma.

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 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm; video conferencing is available via Zoom. For questions or Zoom log in information, please contact: Kristine Haugh at khaugh@sbcbswell.org
- **Change Agent Meeting:** Change agents meet the fourth Wednesday of every month 9 am – 11 am except during quarterly in-person meetings, which are 9 am – 12 noon. Video conferencing is available via Zoom. For questions or Zoom log in information, please contact: 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 Heinzlmann, vheinzlmann@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 for zoom info.
- **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