
Director's Report

December 21, 2016



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DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY NEWS

Mental Health Commission and Advisory Board on Alcohol and Other Drug Problems to Merge:

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors is expected to approve the merger of the Mental Health Commission (MHC) and the Advisory Board on Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) Problems on January 10, 2017. The MHC and AOD Advisory Board have indicated that a Behavioral Wellness Commission better reflects the structure of the Behavioral Wellness Department, which offers an integrated continuum of prevention, intervention and treatment services for substance abuse, mental health and co-occurring disorders.

The new Behavioral Wellness Commission (BWC) will also mirror the integration that has occurred at the state level, as the California Mental Health Directors Association and the County Alcohol Drug Program Administrators Association of California have merged into a single association. Moreover, a number of California counties, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles and Ventura, have also combined their commissions and boards to reduce duplication of efforts, reduce costs, streamline administration and promote integrated care and decision-making.

December 27 is the deadline for applications for persons interested as serving as BWC Commissioners. Consumers, family members and public members are encouraged to apply; current Behavioral Wellness Department staff members are ineligible to serve. You may apply online [here](#) or email your application to sbcbcc@countyofsb.org or drop off your application at the Clerk of the Board Offices located at 105 E. Anapamu Street, fourth floor. Applications may be downloaded in [Microsoft Word](#) or in [PDF](#).

Major PHF Renovations Completed: Gerardo Puga-Cervantes, LMFT, Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) Program manager, reports that the PHF has undergone major renovations and the facility looks amazing. New flooring has been installed throughout, and there is a new ceiling in the nurse's station and fresh paint. In addition, patient safety has been enhanced by the installation of new anti-ligature door handles on every patient door and new faucets. The patio room was recoated, along with a clean and well-organized laundry room. Social Services Director Jennifer Hidrobo, LCSW, has been working hard to revamp and add additional therapeutic groups to current clinical programming, which promotes recovery and wellness. Many performance projects have been undertaken in the nursing department, including monitoring of pharmacy, a revision of policies and a review of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) standards with staff. Mr. Puga-Cervantes reports that it is exciting to see many positive changes; most importantly, the excellent patient care and safety PHF staff members provide.

Behavioral Wellness Staff Honored by Board of Supervisors: On December 6th Behavioral Wellness staff members Kathleen Mansell, Financial Office Professional Senior and Katarina Zamora, Health Care Program Coordinator were recognized by the Board of Supervisors as Employees of the Month. A resolution commended Kathleen and Katarina for “exceptional performance, initiative and dedication” and for serving as positive forces in the department who enthusiastically contributed to the development of the Employee Engagement & Appreciation Committee at Behavioral Wellness.” Congratulations, Kathleen and Katarina!

New Jail Mental Health Provider Selected: On December 13 the Board of Supervisors approved the Sheriff’s Office and Probation Department to enter into contract negotiations with the California Forensics Medical Group (CFMG) to provide inmate/youth medical services at the Jail and Juvenile Facilities and Mental Health Services at the Jail. Selection of CFMG followed a request for proposals (RFP) process. Founded in 1983, CFMG describes itself as “the first west coast based, privately owned company designed to provide quality healthcare for correctional medical, mental health and dental services.”

Casa Pacifica Assists Troubled Youth: Behavioral Wellness contract provider Casa Pacifica was recently highlighted for its work assisting troubled youth struggling with substance abuse in Ventura County. Details are [here](#).

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

21st Century Cures Act Boosts Behavioral Health Care: Mental health advocates are describing the new 21st Century Cures law as the most significant federal legislation since the passage of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act in 2008. It was signed into law on December 13th. Among its provisions are:

- Allotting \$1 billion over two years for states to fight the opioid epidemic by including fund treatment facilities and research.
- Increasing Medicaid (in California, Medi-Cal) funding to hospitals for psychiatric care
- Strengthening parity between mental and physical health care
- Promoting early intervention for psychosis
- Setting aside \$5 million in grants for assertive community treatment (ACT)
- Establishing a Minority Fellowship Program budgeted at \$12.7 million to train culturally competent minority mental health professionals.

According to [HealthCatalyst](#), the 21st Century Cures Act is “perhaps the most significant federal legislation as it relates to health information technology (HIT) in years. What the Cures Act means for HIT companies and providers is two key things:

1. Health information interoperability will be strongly promoted (involves the development of a “trusted exchange framework” which is expected to facilitate the exchange of health information nationally and locally).

2. Information blocking practices will be strongly prohibited (e.g., Implementing HIT in nonstandard ways likely to increase the complexity or burden of accessing, exchanging, or using electronic health information—with fines as much as \$1,000,000).”

For more information on the new law, see [this National Public Radio article](#) and [commentary from the American Psychological Association](#).

Potential Affordable Care Act Repeal: The National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors reports that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said that the Senate will move to repeal President Obama's healthcare law as soon as they return from their year-end recess. He did not offer a timeline for a replacement plan, which could take up to three years, according to the Associated Press.

SYSTEMS CHANGE CALENDAR

- **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; Lompoc Conference Room, ACT, upstairs, 401 E. Cypress and Large conference room, 500 West Foster Road, Santa Maria. Questions: Nathan Post, npost@sbcbswell.org. **There is no meeting scheduled in December.**
- **Lompoc Regional Partnership Meeting:** The next meeting is January 17, 3:30-4:30, 301 N. R Street and every other month on the third Tuesday thereafter. If you are interested in participating please contact Jeanie Sleigh Jeanie.Sleigh@sbcphd.org or Sandy Fahey sfahey@sbcbswell.org.
- **Santa Barbara Adult Regional Partnership:** meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at 2:15 pm at the Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic, large conference room. Questions: Amanda Pyper, ampyper@co.santa-barbara.ca.us.
- **Santa Barbara Children’s Regional Partnership:** 3rd Thursday of the month at 1:00 pm at the Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic, large conference room. Questions: Amanda Pyper, ampyper@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: Amanda Pyper, ampyper@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: Amanda Pyper, ampyper@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 Action Team** meets the second Friday of each month, 9:30-11:00 am, Locations: Behavioral Wellness Conference Room and Santa Maria Annex via videoconference. Contact Yaneris Muñiz, ymuniz@sbcbswell.org.
- **The Peer Action Team** meets the third Thursday of the Month from 2 – 4:30 pm. Contact Tina Wooton, twooton@sbcbswell.org, regarding the location.
- **The Crisis Action Team** meets the second Thursday of the month, 2:30 – 4:00 pm, Santa Barbara Children’s large conference room 119. Contact Jonathan Eymann, jeymann@sbcbswell.org.
- **The Children’s System of Care Action Team** meets the 4th Thursday of the month, 10:30 am - 12:00 noon. SELPA Conference Room, 240 E. Hwy. 246, Suite 200, Buellton CA 93127. Contact Ana Vicuña, avicuna@sbcbswell.org. May be cancelled in December.