

# Director's Report

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## DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY NEWS

**Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Mental Health Implications:** With the daily rising number of COVID-19 cases in the United States and the potential for a pandemic, it is imperative that we be aware, and make others aware, of the psychological or mental health implications to this public health crisis. Not only is it important to prevent panic from a psychological perspective, but also because panic can interrupt necessary containment and treatment efforts. Being proactive in addressing psychological impact through education, information and tips on coping is critical to prevent longer term psychological harm or post-traumatic stress reactions.

Below are some steps shared by the Kennedy Forum, that can be taken to lessen the psychological impact of the COVID-19 spread:

- Recognize the potential for fear surrounding COVID-19 to transform into widespread panic and hysteria, which in turn may undermine public health authorities' resources and response.
- Communicate clear information based on science and facts to avoid the spreading of misinformation, while recognizing how cultural differences among communities may impact understanding and response to public health messaging.
- Combat efforts to wrongly blame or link COVID-19 to already marginalized groups, which could perpetuate discrimination and deter people from seeking necessary testing or treatment.
- Address the general mental health consequences of COVID-19 during and beyond its tenure. Past studies conducted in Hong Kong following the SARS epidemic found widespread feelings of helplessness, mental health deterioration, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Engagement of community mental health resources in case significant portions of the population are quarantined or isolated and therefore unable to receive in-person services. Special attention should be paid to older populations, those with developmental disabilities, and any other group with limited access to resources.
- Consider the needs of those with existing mental health conditions who may have heightened psychological distress over COVID-19 that can harm their health and well-being.
- If you feel that you or another could use extra mental health support, don't be afraid to ask.

Helpful tools for coping include:

- **Physical Self-Care.** Be attentive to eating, sleeping, exercising and maintaining as normal of a daily routine as possible.
- **Tending to your emotional health.** Know that others are experiencing emotional reactions as well. Be patient with yourself and others. Spend time talking with others. Maintain connections with family and friends. Seek counseling as needed.
- **Limit media exposure.** Though important to stay informed, try to limit TV and print media which can exacerbate stress symptoms.
- **Be attentive to others who may need extra support.** If you are feeling well, pay attention to the needs of others who may need extra support. Signs of distress may show through changes in eating, sleeping, energy level and mood. Connect with others. Help connect others to counseling when needed.

**MHSA Planning Process Gathering Much Community Input:** Behavioral Wellness strongly believes in the value of community input. The recent MHSA Planning Process has been greatly effective in gathering stakeholder and community input. The Department would like to thank everyone for their participation in providing input for MHSA planning. Behavioral Wellness will be posting the Draft 2020-2023 MHSA Plan in April and will be hosting a Behavioral Wellness Commission Public Hearing at the May Behavioral Wellness Commission meeting. Location and date are presently being finalized. The end goal is to have a robust plan to take to the Board of Supervisors in June for approval.

**Support in the Community:** Behavioral Wellness was honored to join the Isla Vista school community in offering support following the death of a parent chaperone on last week's CIMI (Catalina Island) school trip. This was a devastating tragedy for the school and community.

**South County Sobering Center Open:** Through a contract with Behavioral Wellness, Good Samaritan is operating the new Sobering Center in Santa Barbara. The center is open for people 18 years and over who are under the influence of substances, and opens its doors to anyone in need of this service. Sobering Center admissions are coordinated with crisis services and CSU staff. Current Sobering Center hours are Thursday at 4 PM through Sunday at 4 AM. Clients dropped off Sunday night will be able to stay at the Sobering Center through Monday afternoon or as soon as they are sober enough to safely discharge. Individuals who should NOT be brought to the Sobering Center include people who are:

- Under 18 year of age
- Not willing to come to the Sobering Center (it is a voluntary unit)
- Unconscious
- Combative or agitated
- Obviously pregnant

**Lompoc Regional Partnership Meeting:** The next meeting will take place on March 17, 2020 from 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM at the Lompoc Public Health Department.

**Santa Barbara Regional Partnership Meeting:** The **Santa Barbara Children's Regional Partnership** meeting took place with healthy discussion around the Mental Health and other resources in the Santa Barbara and Goleta communities. Some of the highlights brought up included community resources for therapy (Community Counseling Center, New Beginnings, Hosford Clinic, and counseling resources through local school districts). Patti Sanderson from Probation shared her experience of connecting families of youth on probation to mental health services. If they are not amenable to services, Patti shared that as a probation officer she can use her position to motivate them to engage. There was also discussion of the Access Line screening process and questions regarding expected length of screening process and ways to expedite screening time for a crisis or urgent need. Also discussed were SAFTY crisis services for children and youth with the current schedule being 8 AM – 8 PM 7 days/week.

**Santa Barbara's Adult Regional Partnership** meeting took place on February 24, 2020. Hannah Grey from Family Service Agency (FSA) shared about a new program which includes collaboration between FSA and the Housing Authority of Santa Barbara. This program serves a wide range of residents on housing retention, housing support, and stability. Ms. Grey works in a leadership role and works directly out of the Housing Authority office. Presently there are 3,600 residents being served by Housing Authority with all eligible for services through Behavioral Wellness with exception of a minimal number of residents. A new senior housing program, similar to Garden Court, which will be open in March. It is called "Gardens on Hope."

Behavioral Wellness staff shared a recent client success story. The Calle Real Outpatient Clinic had a client who was residing at the People Assisting the Homeless ("PATH") shelter for 3.5 years and recently housed at Garden Court. In needing support as a person receiving housing for the first time, the Calle Real team referred him to Family Service Agency's Housing Services program. He has been meeting with FSA regularly and has been successful in his new placement. This is a result of the collaborative efforts between Behavioral Wellness Homeless Services, the Housing Authority of Santa Barbara, Calle Real Adult Outpatient Clinic, and Family Service Agency.

**Santa Maria Regional Partnership Meeting:** The next meetings are planned for Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM -11 AM (children's/TAY) and 11 AM - Noon (adult).

**Children System of Care (CSOC) Action Team:** The most recent CSOC meeting was held on February 27, 2020 and focused on generating ideas of ways to support children and families through the use of MHSA funds. Pam Fisher and Lindsay Walter facilitated a discussion which invited community based organizational providers and other participants to share ideas on how to effectively support children and families with mental health needs, identify "gaps" in services and ways to address them. The next CSOC meeting will be held on March 26 and will feature a training led by the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) program which will discuss impacted clients, tools for engagement and effective strategies for intervention.

**Change Agents Update:** Change Agents met this month to review current process improvement processes in clinics and programs and receive feedback and support from the team. The team discussed the finalization of a flow chart for Behavioral Wellness Administrative Office Professionals to better triage

crisis calls in the clinic and to improve decision making and referral time of crisis calls to the Crisis Team. In addition, a staff “wellness” project was discussed and will focus on how healthy choices impact overall stress levels, and ideas were brainstormed on how to encourage newcomers of Behavioral Wellness services to better engage in the support of group services.

**Cultural Competence and Diversity Action Team (CCDAT) Update:** During February’s meeting, members discussed and analyzed information regarding CCDAT goals, Language Access Services, and Community Outreach/Engagement. One of the main focuses of this meeting was to open up a collaborative effort to establish CCDAT 2020 goals – to which members had many suggestions. Members discussed potential goals such as narrating and translating recordings for language English proficiency individuals (instead of using brochures) for those who speak Spanish, Mixteco and American Sign Language. Each of these initiatives promote inclusive access to reduce mental health disparities by appealing to a broader audience in a more engaging manner. Another CCDAT proposed goal was centered on the access and clarity of informing materials such as brochures and signage – to which multilingual members were invited to join the Translation Review Committee. Members are hoping to solidify goals in the upcoming meetings. Additionally, the first Quarterly Meeting will take place on March 13<sup>th</sup> at Pea Soup Anderson restaurant in Buellton.

**Consumer Family Member Action Team (CFMAT):** During the February meeting, members received updates regarding Help@Hand, subcommittee progress, CFMAT Spring newsletter, MHSA Community Planning goals and scheduled, and Behavioral Wellness trainings. Upcoming community events, and departmental updates were discussed. Members were provided with information on the upcoming MHSA Community Planning stakeholder sessions and MHSA funded programs available. The meeting concluded with an in-depth discussion regarding “Whole Person Care” and “Peer Support Services.”

**Crisis Action Team Update:** Due to the recent State Triennial System review, the most recent Crisis Action Team was cancelled, however, lots is still happening! Additional Co-Response teams have begun in both the North and South parts of the County. All Behavioral Wellness, Sheriff and Santa Barbara Police Department staff who are participating in the Co-Response program recently attended a two-day Co-Response training which was led by the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Department.

**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. The Forensic Action Team Meeting met on February 26<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM – 3:30 PM. Topics of discussion included updates regarding Behavioral Wellness’ grand opening in February of the Santa Barbara Sobering Center in partnership with Good Sam as part of the Prop 47 grant offering law enforcement and/or providers the option to divert intoxicated individuals from incarceration to a safe and therapeutic setting where they may be linked to substance abuse and/or mental health services in the community. The group also discussed jail discharge planning process improvements and involuntary medications for continuity of care. While the Forensic Action Team has been meeting every-other-month, it was determined that the group will begin meeting monthly to expand the group’s membership and promote momentum for action items identified. Meetings will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays at 1:30 PM – 3 PM (note the time change); however, due to annual department EQRO

review, the group will not meet in March. The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1:30 PM – 3 PM**. The email invite list continues to be updated. Please contact Shana Burns, LMFT, Forensics Services Manager, at (805) 335-4263 if you would like to be added to the invite list and/or for assistance with attending the meeting via video-conference from Lompoc or Santa Maria.

## **NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS**

**Homelessness and Behavioral Health:** Governor Newsom recently delivered his 2020 State of the State Address on Homelessness. Whereas he called out the need to spend \$160 million in unspent MHSA funds by June of 2020. The California Behavioral Health Director's Association (CBHDA) heard this call to action and is actively working to help counties do the same. Among other helpful summaries of information provided, CBHDA will continue their work on MHSA reform concepts and revisiting homelessness proposals. Among a strong speech, there were many highlights. Newsom focused on the present strength of California's economy and solid financial footing which holds the largest "rainy day fund" in the State's history. The near entirety of Newsom's speech was dedicated to homelessness, with an emphasis on behavioral health. Newsom stated, "The problem has persisted for decades – caused by massive failures in our mental health system and disinvestment in our social safety net – exacerbated by widening income inequality and California's housing shortage." He concluded his speech with a challenge in stating that this crisis is everyone's responsibility that was not created overnight, and won't be solved overnight, or even in a year. "I don't think homelessness can be solved. I know homelessness can be solved. This is our cause. This is our calling" were the final words of Newsom's address.

This State of the State Address clearly **called to action** the following concepts:

- Coordinated crisis response
- Emergency action to end street homelessness
- Get mentally ill, "out of tents and into treatment"
- Sustainable funding for sustainable results
- Tackle underproduction of affordable housing
- Focus on accountability for results
- The State is making available 286 state properties—vacant lots, fairgrounds, armories and other state buildings—to be used by local governments, for free, for homelessness solutions.
- Directed Caltrans to make vacant properties available
- Establishment of administration strike team across HHS, Caltrans and CHP to cut through bureaucratic barriers
- Need to tackle chronic homelessness

### **Call to reform LPS Act and Laura's Law/AOT**

- Need better tools to get people the treatment they need
- Some people are treatment resistant
- AOT is too hard to use
  - *"We need to remove some of the conditions imposed on counties trying to implement the law, so we can expand who benefits."*

### Call to reform MHSA

- *“That said, we know that the most urgent issue is not the legal inability to conserve people but the unavailability of housing and care for those who most need it. Policy is an empty promise without creating more placements. One clear opportunity to do this is by reforming Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act. As written, its resources too often don’t reach the people who need it the most.”*
- Must focus funding on street homeless, at-risk and foster youth, and those involved in the criminal justice system.
- Expressed desire to pay for addiction treatment with statement, *“we need to stop tolerating open drug use on our streets.”*
- Call to reduce the maximum reserve level from 33% to 20%

### California Access to Housing Fund Proposal

- Cited California Access to Housing Fund proposed in this year’s January Budget - \$750 million for New unites, Board and Care facilities and Rental subsidies
- Opportunity to braid private and public dollars and create accountability for metrics

### Call for exploration of a new, sustainable investment in homelessness:

- Instead, proposing a “use it or lose it” approach to funding allocations to local government with comprehensive audits
- Announced that the State will establish a unified homelessness data tracking system

### Need to boost housing production

- Last year invested \$1.75 billion toward \$7 billion housing package
- Expressed desire for further reform efforts to cut red tape to building more multifamily units near public transit

The full text of the speech can be found [here](#) or <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/02/19/governor-newsom-delivers-state-of-the-state-address-on-homelessness/>

The video of the speech can be found [here](#) or <https://kesq.com/news/top-stories/2020/02/19/gov-newsom-to-deliver-state-of-the-state-address-at-1030-a-m/>

## SYSTEMS CHANGE CALENDAR

- **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: Jacob Ibrahim at [jibrahim@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:jibrahim@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)

- **Change Agent Meeting:** Change agents meet the fourth Wednesday of every month 9 – 11 am except during quarterly in-person meetings, which are 9 am – 12 noon. Video conferencing is available at the Santa Barbara Children’s Clinic, Small conference room; and the Santa Maria Adult Clinic large conference room located at 500 West Foster Road, Santa Maria. Questions: Janal Lopez, [janlopez@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:janlopez@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- **Lompoc Regional Partnership Meeting:** Meetings occur every other month on the third Tuesday at 301 N. R Street. The next meeting will take place on January 21<sup>st</sup>. Questions: Anthony Hollenback, [ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:vheinzelmann@co.santa-barbara.ca.us).
- **Santa Maria Children’s Regional Partnership Meeting** is held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 10 am in the large meeting room at the Foster Road Clinic. Due to the Martin Luther King Holiday, the next meeting will take place on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Questions: Roberto Rodriguez at [robertor@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:robertor@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- **Santa Maria Adult Regional Partnership** occurs every 3rd Monday of the month at 11 am in the large meeting room at the Foster Road Clinic. Questions: Questions: John Winckler at [jwinckler@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:jwinckler@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- **The Housing, Empowerment, Action and Recovery Team (HEART)** meets the second Wednesday of every other month, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Locations: Behavioral Wellness Conference Room 261 and Santa Maria Annex via videoconference. Contact Laura Zeitz, [lazeitz@sbcwv.org](mailto:lazeitz@sbcwv.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](mailto:marteaga@co.santa-barbara.ca.us) or Anthony Hollenback at 805-737-6610 or [ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- **The Peer Action Team** meets the second Thursday of the Month from 2 – 4:00 pm. 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](mailto: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 119. Contact John Winckler, [jwinckler@sbcwell.org](mailto:jwinckler@sbcwell.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. The next meeting will take place on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Contact Anthony Hollenback at [ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:ahollenback@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- **Forensic Action Team** will be meeting every other month on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday from 2:00 – 3:30. The next meeting will take place on February 26<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will be 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, please contact [sburns@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:sburns@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)