

2021



# Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services

2021-22 UPDATE



COVER SHEET

Document Revision Date: December 2021

Submit update to: [MCBHD.CCPR@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:MCBHD.CCPR@dhcs.ca.gov)

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## INTRODUCTION

The County of Santa Cruz Health Service Agency's integrated Behavioral Health Services Division and its community-based providers seek to continuously improve the delivery of a broad range of behavioral health services including prevention and early intervention and mental health and/or substance use disorders treatment, which are based in cultural humility, are culturally responsive and appropriate for the communities that make up Santa Cruz County. Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) comprises of the Mental Health Plan (MHP) for Specialty Mental Health Services, Serious Emotional Disturbance and the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) pilot initiated in January 2018. The DMC-ODS pilot aims to demonstrate how organized substance use disorder care increases the success of DMC beneficiaries while decreasing other system healthcare costs.

The State of California requires each County Mental Health and Drug Medi-Cal system to have a Cultural Competence Plan. This 2021 Cultural Compliance Plan is an update to earlier plans developed by Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services and shall focus on the eight criterions of the State's proposed Cultural Competence Plan Requirement (CCPR).

BHS developed a Cultural Awareness Mission Statement which demonstrates the values of our division. It states:

Our goal of Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services is to support our consumers, youth, and family members with culturally appropriate resources, encouragement, tools and skills so they may achieve the quality of life they desire.

As an agency we challenge ourselves to develop ever-greater cultural awareness and sensitivity to acknowledge and embrace individual differences, including language, beliefs, values, attitudes, healing practices, sexual orientation, gender, physical and mental abilities.

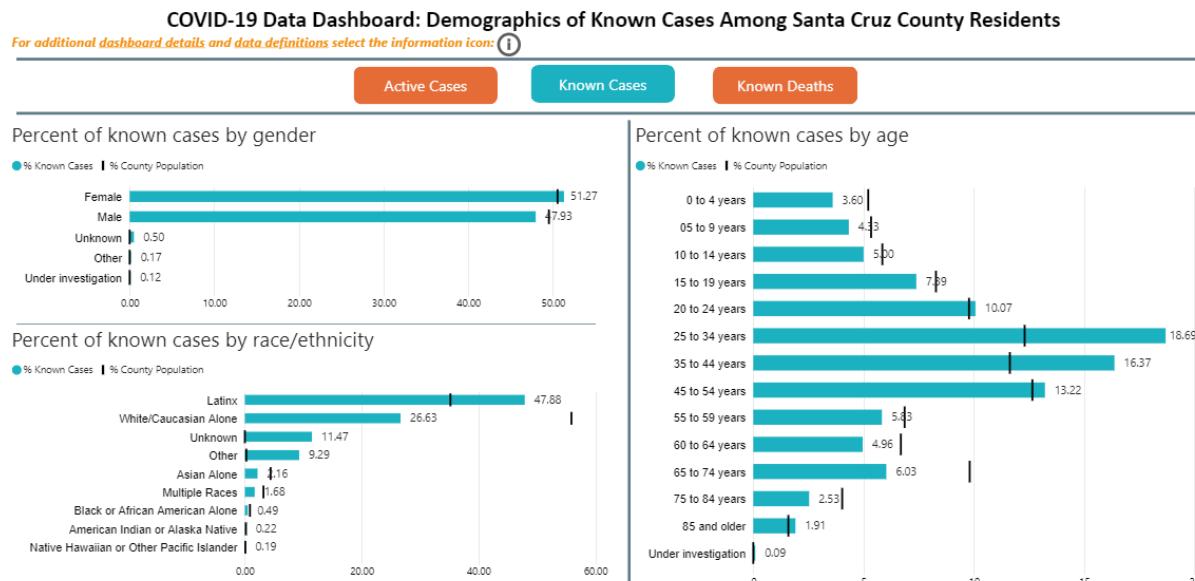
We endeavor to build on existing strengths, develop new skills and maximize the opportunity for recovery and optimal health of our community.

The County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services values providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The criterion and questions (**in bold**) are those previously set forth by the State. Santa Cruz County has adopted the term "Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services", or CLAS.

In the development of our Cultural Competency Plan, Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services has incorporated language that expands on the importance of diversity and inclusion. The terms “cultural humility” and “culturally responsive” have been included in this report to represent the Cultural Competency Plan. BHS values the increased development of staff cultural humility and delivery of culturally responsive services. Cultural humility involves an ongoing process of self-exploration and self-critique combined with a willingness to learn from others. It centers the relationship with client with the intention of honoring their beliefs, customs, and values; acknowledging differences, and accepting others for who they are. “Culture” refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. “Responsive” centers client care with the capacity to respond to the needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds to improve health outcomes. This includes the increased awareness of the client’s cultural factors and how these impact behavioral health needs, recognition of the providers own culture, and how both affect the patient-provider relationship. These commitments are reflected in day-to-day practice, in policies, procedures, and in the Quality Improvement workplan.

## COVID-19 IMPACT on Santa Cruz County residents

On March 17, 2020, Santa Cruz County began Shelter in Place orders due to COVID-19. Since Santa Cruz County Public Health began the tracking of first COVID + cases, the Hispanic/Latinx community has been impacted the greatest. At the time of writing, there have been 10,437 known Latinx COVID cases, which is 47.88% of all cases and 35.17% of the community populations. Below data shows county-wide demographics.

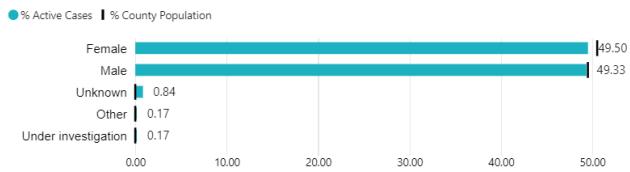


Data represents Known Cases of COVID-19 among residents of Santa Cruz County, by date reported to the Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) from health providers or electronic lab reporting. Data for the last seven days are preliminary, and all data should be considered provisional and subject to change. It is important to look at trends over time when reviewing these data rather than drawing conclusions from any individual data points, as data can change based on additional reporting and case investigation. Data was extracted from the California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (CalREDIE). Dashboard was developed by the Epidemiology & Surveillance Division of the CDU for Santa Cruz County.

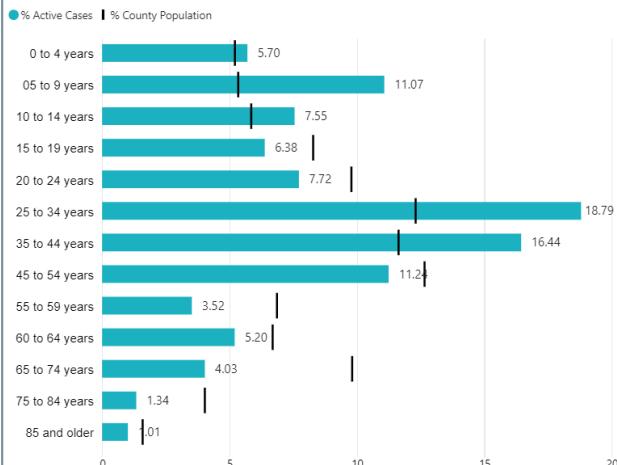
Last refreshed 12/16/2021, 13:05; updated with data entered into CalREDIE as of 12/15/2021, 17:00

[Active Cases](#)[Known Cases](#)[Known Deaths](#)

### Percent of active cases by gender



### Percent of active cases by age



Data represents Known Cases of COVID-19 among residents of Santa Cruz County, by date reported to the Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) from health providers or electronic lab reporting. Data for the last seven days are preliminary, and all data should be considered provisional and subject to change. It is important to look at trends over time when reviewing these data rather than drawing conclusions from any individual data points, as data can change based on additional reporting and case investigation. Data was extracted from the California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (CalREDIE). Dashboard was developed by the Epidemiology & Surveillance Division of the CDU for Santa Cruz County.

Last refreshed 12/16/2021, 13:05; updated with data entered into CalREDIE as of 12/15/2021, 17:00

BHS quickly prioritized the safety of staff and beneficiaries by providing telehealth (phone and video) services and modifying office spaces with safety protocols for those in need of in-person services. This includes the creation of designated computer rooms for those with limited access to technology. To help the transition to telehealth services and become familiar with online platforms, providers offered support to beneficiaries through video and print tutorials, and in collaboration with county IT.

Essential services were kept open to the public with safety protocols in place as well. Although traditional approaches to increasing cultural competency and CLAS services through training, outreach and collaboration continue to be impacted, this report will identify how BHS addresses community need and the reduction of health disparity by transitioning to online formats when possible, modifying office spaces with safety protocols, and collaboration with local agencies to increase technological equity to under resourced communities. In addition to COVID's ongoing safety concerns with in-person community outreach activities, BHS' CLAS/ESM Coordinator position has been vacant for the majority of calendar year 2021, which has impacted the implementation of newly identified cultural/ethnic specific outreach, information sharing and engagement initiatives.

## CRITERION 1.

### COMMITMENT TO CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES

#### I. County Behavioral Health system commitment to Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services

- A. Policies, procedures, or practices that reflect steps taken to fully incorporate recognition and value of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity within the County Behavioral Health System.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) has made an intentional effort to reach underserved, unserved, and inappropriately served communities in equitable, new and innovative ways. BHS intends to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities. BHS' efforts are guided by The Enhanced National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (National CLAS Standards).

Santa Cruz County follows Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) principals and standards throughout County Behavioral Health Services. The Behavioral Health Director works closely with the management team to ensure that all services and programs continue to integrate the values and standards of providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services throughout the County Behavioral Health System.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services developed specific CLAS standards and enacted policies that include the following:

- Program policies and administrative practices that reflect the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the Medi-Cal beneficiary population to be served.
- Integrating the value of cultural diversity throughout the Division and to provide the most culturally and linguistically appropriate services possible to beneficiaries.
- Provide services to beneficiaries at locations within the county, and through telehealth to increase accessibility to the populations we serve.
- Utilization of Human Resources to develop policies that enable managers to specify bilingual staff recruitment in positions and advertisements.
- Expansion of training policies to increase staff access to training in cultural & linguistic issues. The expectation is for all staff to complete these trainings on a yearly basis. Current policy identifies staff training to be 7 CLAS course credits annually.
- Every employee in the Division is responsible for ensuring that CLAS issues are addressed in all programs, proposals, and descriptions.

Related policies and procedures include:

- ⇒ Behavioral Health Network Adequacy, Policy 2107, Section 9.e & f
- ⇒ Implementing Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services, Policy 3101
- ⇒ Linguistically Appropriate Services, Policy 3105
- ⇒ Service Access for Visually or Hearing Impaired, Policy 3108
- ⇒ Contract Requirements for Cultural Competence Standards, Policy 3111
- ⇒ Outreach to Medi-Cal Beneficiaries, Policy 3113
- ⇒ Availability of Culturally Competent Staff, Policy 3115
- ⇒ Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services Education Plan, Policy 3116

**B. Copies of the following documents to ensure the commitment to cultural and linguistic competence services are reflected throughout the entire system.**

**The vision of the County is....**

*Santa Cruz County is healthy, safe and more affordable community that is culturally diverse, economically inclusive and environmentally vibrant.*

**Mission:** An open and responsive government, the County of Santa Cruz delivers quality, data-driven services that strengthen our community and enhance opportunity.

**Values:** The County of Santa Cruz provides services and supports partnerships built on: Accountability, Collaboration, Compassion, Effectiveness, Innovation, Respect, Support, Transparency, and Trust.

**HSA Values:** BHS is a department of Health Services Agency (HSA), with the departmental mission to promote and ensure a healthy community and environment by providing education, outreach and comprehensive health services in an inclusive and accessible manner. The values of the HSA department are: Integrity, Quality, Compassion and Respect, Equity and Justice, Collective Impact, Capacity Building and Positivity.

**BHS Values:** In 2020, BHS identifies key values for our particular division by conducting surveying of current MHP and DMC-ODS providers and active clients to prioritize key BH-specific values based on foundational work done by both County, HSA and Trauma-Informed Principles. These values shall drive our MHP and DMC-ODS focus areas and be included in operational decisions and quality improvement work plans.

The values of the BHS division are:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Inclusion &amp; Engagement</b>                       | Cultural humility & responsiveness • Human connection and relationship • Universal dignity, respect, kindness, and compassion • Offerings of support and gratitude • Transparency and collective communication • Timely accessibility • Inclusion of client voice/choice • Dependability |
| <b>Operational Excellence &amp; Service Stewardship</b> | Excellent effective care and customer service delivery • Adaptability • Ethics • Responsibility • Accountability • Innovation • Utilize outcomes to improve care, support program decisions and share with other healthcare providers and the greater community.                         |
| <b>Targeted Treatment &amp; Evidence-Based Services</b> | Trauma-informed care • Individualized “Voice & Choice” care • Targeted Health • Clinical quality & fidelity to EB practices • Utilize data outcome to inform decisions • Workforce Training  |
| <b>Equity &amp; Sustainability</b>                      | Promote resiliency and recovery (personal/social/environmental/economic) • Collective impact • Equity for All • Justice • Integrity • Collaboration • Holding hope & Eliminating stigma • Positivity • Capacity building   |
| <b>Safety</b>   | For all who provide and receive services from SCCBHS, including staff, clients, contractors, partners, stakeholders, and our community at large. Safety includes physical, emotional and self-care when at county facilities, remote work setting and/or in community                    |

Copies of the following are available:

- Health Service Agency's Strategic Plan
- BHS QI Work Plan 2020-21 Evaluation and ongoing fiscal year Work Plans
- Policy and Procedures
- Contract Requirements

## **County Recognition, value, and inclusion of racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity within the system**

- A. A description of practices and activities that demonstrate community outreach, engagement, and involvement efforts with identified racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic communities with mental health and substance use disorder disparities; including recognition and value of racial ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity within the system.

The County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services (BHS) recognizes the value of racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity within our system. Through the existing programs and support of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), BHS can do outreach and establish cultural and linguistically appropriate practices, activities, and programs that are tailored to our diverse community.

South Santa Cruz county remains a focus of outreach efforts due to their large Spanish speaking, immigrant, and Mexican and South American indigenous populations. These communities include the city of Watsonville and Pajaro and often face extra challenges in accessing mental health services due to stigma, language and literacy needs, fear of deportation, impacts of structural racism in education, employment, and criminal justice systems, and limited financial resources.

### **County Engagement Initiatives:**

#### **211 – Community 24-hour helpline Engagement**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health and SUD and MH partners are incorporated into the local 211santacruzcounty.org information system which is a resource sharing phone call, text and web-based resource hosted by United Way. United Way, Behavioral Health and other local providers have distributed 211 informational materials across the county north and south regions to inform the community of direct contract & description information for various services, including but not limited to, SUD and MH treatment, housing, children and family services, senior services, healthcare services, transportation, legal services and reentry support services.

#### **BHS' Recovery Wave Internet Substance Use Disorder Recovery Resources**

The Recovery Wave internet page is available in English and Spanish. Here is the link to the Spanish page: [http://www.recoverywave.org/LA\\_OLA/index.html](http://www.recoverywave.org/LA_OLA/index.html) and English: <http://www.recoverywave.org/>

The listed community and treatment provider services offer services in Spanish, such as 12-Step programs, Refuge Recovery and DMC-ODS treatment providers.

#### **Santa Cruz County Latino Affairs Commission**

The Latino Affairs Commission, [scclatinoaffairs.org](http://scclatinoaffairs.org), works as an advisory board to the County Board of Supervisors to review and provide recommendations that are in the best interest of the County's Latinx population including, but not limited to, review of County Operational Plan for Equity and Inclusion, bring voice to community challenges and identify

and prioritize areas of focus, proposed improvement goals, monitor community activities and multi-stakeholder collaborations for greater effectiveness and ensure of State, Federal and private community interests. The commission meets virtually now on a monthly basis. A Partner of the Commission is the Pajaro Valley Arts, [Pajaro Valley Arts pvarts.org](http://Pajaro Valley Arts pvarts.org), who's mission is to bring people together through art. Here's an example: [Regeneración: Women, Girls + Climate Justice, Climate of Hope Forum – Pajaro Valley Arts \(pvarts.org\)](#)

### **County Behavioral Health Mobile Emergency Response Team for Youth (MERTY):**

MERTY is a County crisis outreach program, targeting our south county partners including (but not limited to): Salud Para La Gente, Doctors on Duty, PVPSA, Watsonville Hospital, PVUSD, and Kaiser. MERTY expands the mobile emergency response team to serve south Santa Cruz county youth (5-21 years old) and includes a Behavioral Health mobile office van and bilingual clinician and family specialist. MERTY staff are trained in MH crisis, screening for SUD treatment needs via the ASAM Brief Screening tool, and linking the youth to the appropriate MH or SUD referral.

### **Community Partners:**

#### **NAMI-SCC**

The Santa Cruz County chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) continues to offer support groups and classes in English and Spanish, and speaker events during the pandemic through online platforms, as well continuing to offer their emotional support and resource (phone) line for those with mental health conditions and their family members. BHS continues to work collaboratively with NAMI-SCC as through our Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention Team and share resource information to all teams to encourage beneficiaries and their family members to seek support. This year NAMI-SCC shared their list serve to help BHS promote the Stakeholders events mentioned above. NAMI-SCC also offers Provider Trainings for BHS, which helps to expand clinician's awareness of the experiences, challenges, and strengths of mental health beneficiaries and their families as they navigate the mental health system, and how to increase support and collaboration with client wellness teams.

### **Substance Use Disorder Commission (SUDC)**

The Substance Use Disorder Commission (SUDC) purpose is to advise and report directly to the County Board of Supervisors and the County Substance Use Disorder Services (SUDS) Program Director on the program's policies and goals, on any matters concerning the development, administration, funding and review of county programs and services, or any other related matters as required from [County Code Chapter 2.84.020](#). The SUDC meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday each month at 5:30pm which now is via Zoom teleconferencing. This change is a positive towards increasing community engagement. In 2021, the SUDC was successful at obtaining a Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisor Proclamation that acknowledges September as National Recovery Month to promote the social benefits of prevention, treatment and recovery for mental and substance use disorders, to celebrate people in recovery, and to applaud the contributions of the community service providers in helping people to recover.

## **Community Action Board (CAB).**

CAB is a community-based program which strives to eliminate poverty through collaboration, social change, advocacy, and connection to essential services. They offer whole-person services throughout Santa Cruz County to underserved communities, including at-risk youth and immigrants. Workgroups were planned in 2020 to continue the connection and dialogue with the focus groups, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these workshops were postponed to explore considerations options for safe and equitable participation. Technological means, such as Zoom were considered, however, based on the challenges facing many of our populations, the current pandemic, and available support/resources; the decision was made to move forward in the planning process with the data available from the previous 2019 community stakeholders' meetings.

## **Parent Support Group:**

BHS's collaboration with the Community Action Board (CAB) expanded this year to include the development of a parent support group for parents with youth on probation. The parent support group curriculum is provided in Spanish as parents attending are primarily monolingual Spanish speaking. The curriculum is developed and facilitated by two Childrens Behavioral health staff and two CAB staff members. Curriculum topics include: self-esteem, safety, COVID-19 impacts on community, sex education, positive parenting skills, MH and SUD prevention and early support, reproductive health, and healthy relationships. The parent support group was transitioned to a virtual (on-line) meeting space due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Facilitators provided technical support to attendees to help with access and education on utilizing laptops, computers, tablets, and smart phones as well as on-line meeting platforms. Referrals to the parent support group are currently placed through Santa Cruz County Juvenile Probation.

## **COE Student Success:**

On September 30, 2020 Childrens Behavioral Health hosted, in collaboration with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, the Student Success Project Family Focus Forum. This online focus forum centered the needs of Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) families (an under-resourced, primarily Spanish speaking community in south Santa Cruz County), and included breakout groups in English and Spanish to focus on tools for success in distance learning and an opportunity to voice parent and student needs. Participants received certificates of participation/recognition and a \$20 Gift Card.

## **County Presentations:**

Behavioral Health Staff, both involved in mental health and SUD services provided presentations at events hosted by various community partners, including but not limited to Santa Cruz County Health Integrative Partnership (HIP), the Diversity Center, NAMI, Santa Cruz County Immigration Project (SCCIP), Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA), Calciano Youth Symposium, Harm Reduction Coalition, and the Santa Cruz Libraries. These presentations focused on behavioral health services for adults and children, distance learning support, youth empowerment, and the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and substance use disorder challenges.

### **County Provider Partnerships:**

#### **The Mariposa Wellness Center (MHP Contractor):**

Our Wellness Centers are a prime example. The Mariposa Wellness Center is located in Watsonville, which is largely a Latinx community. This Wellness Center promotes consumer-operated services to support recovery, and strives to reflect the cultural, ethnic and racial diversity of mental health consumers. The center is a place for families and adult consumers to share information, learn about services and get support for engaging in wellness and educational activities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic modifications to in-person services were made by providing limited in-person mental health groups at the center with safety protocols in place, as well as mental health zoom groups and individual sessions both via telephone and in-person. The Mariposa Wellness Center continues to collaborate with Second Harvest by providing food distribution and delivery to their clientele during the Shelter-in-Place order to those in need. They have also collaborated with the Santa Cruz Warriors to provide care packages for Thanksgiving for the most in need clientele in Watsonville. Health literacy around Covid and Mental Health was made to Spanish and Mixtec speaking communities. This effort was made in collaboration with the LISTOS program, and information was provided in both English, Spanish, and Mixtec as well as bags of groceries that were delivered. Programs such as Mariposa are part of a national movement to promote recovery.

#### **Mental Health Client Action Network (MHCAN) (MHP Contractor):**

Another successful program is the (MHCAN), located in Santa Cruz. MHCAN is a peer run, self-help, drop-in center where people with psychiatric disabilities can congregate and socialize in a safe place, free from the stigma of mental illness imposed by society. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, MHCAN shifted their services from in-person to online by providing virtual 1:1 peer support, classes, and support groups such as: physical fitness, 12-step groups, self-care, relapse prevention, substance use, mental wellness, and recreational opportunities such as role-playing games, poetry, chess. MHCAN's peer-based model helps clients reclaim their dignity through self-help.

### **Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA) (MH and DMC-ODS Contractor):**

BHS regularly collaborated with PVPSA, a local agency in Watsonville which focuses on serving students and families of the Pajaro Valley by providing health education, mental health counseling, substance abuse and prevention services, as well as community policy advocacy. In March 2020, PVPSA became a DMC-ODS provider to focus on serving south county Hispanic/Latinx youth. In addition to Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health staff presenting and participating at events hosted by PVPSA, PVPSA regularly sends newsletters, and promotion of events that focus on parent information, advocating for

student equity, and youth empowerment. These materials are shared with beneficiaries as many receive services through Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health and PVPSA.

**Encompass Community Services (MHP and DMC-ODS Contractor):**

Encompass Community Services is a large community partner who provide a variety of mental health and substance use disorder services within our Santa Cruz County and works tirelessly at providing translated material in our County's Spanish threshold language. Encompass has an active Health Equity Committee that focuses on outreach access with special attention to hard-to-reach populations. Specific to substance use disorder treatment and access outreach, Prior to the pandemic, Encompass DMC-ODS staff participated in local events in Watsonville area such as graffiti clean-up, health fairs, social diversity events and marches, outreach to health clinics, and participation in the local Harm Reduction Coalition and Probation Service Center outreach efforts. Their DUI program specifically does outreach to Watsonville residents through print material and law enforcement partnership. For youth outreach, focus involves creating engaging materials for school distribution and reaching parents within Watsonville as well as north county through targeting English Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) groups specifically (Spanish-speaking parents). Outreach to LBGTQ youth includes joining the Santa Cruz Diversity Center's 2021 Instagram livestream event to outreach youth, as well as staff participating of the Gay Straight Alliance group (GSA) at a local Santa Cruz high school.

Encompass mental health outreach materials are also available at these outreach events to have access available for whole person wellness. Additional mental health outreach focus includes Transitional Age Youth (TAY). Program staff conduct outreach weekly downtown and participate in youth homeless outreach efforts/YHDP meetings, that focus on preventing/ending human trafficking. Program staff regularly attend meetings with COE, probation, CFS and other community partners to advertise services.

**Janus of Santa Cruz (DMC-ODS Contractor):**

Janus of Santa Cruz is a large community partner within our Santa Cruz County who provide a variety of substance use disorder services meeting the ASAM level of care spectrum and works tirelessly at providing equitable and inclusive services. They continue to conduct community outreach to those most vulnerable, via the hospital for alcohol withdrawal, perinatal care setting and houselessness resource centers for potential clients of all diversity. They continue to work towards hiring a diverse workforce within management and treatment counselors. Their peri-residential program includes bi-lingual/bi-cultural staff who outreach women in the community, especially Latinx women who need SUD treatment services.

- B. A narrative description, not to exceed two pages, addressing the county's current relationship with engagement with, and involvement of racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistically diverse clients, family members, advisory committees, local mental health

**boards and alcohol and drug BH commissions, and community organizations in the behavioral health system's planning process for services.**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) staff and contract providers engage with the diverse clienteles and family members who reside within the community. We provide Prevention and Early Intervention programs to persons across the lifespan, including culturally and linguistically appropriate services to infants, preschoolers, teenagers, adults, older adults and parents. The Behavioral Health Director attends the Local Behavioral Health Board monthly, and other staff and managers attend upon request. The Behavioral Health Department Directors facilitate bi-weekly to monthly Contractor & Partner meetings where updates on services are provided. County staff participate in a variety of boards and commissions, such as the Santa Cruz Community Foundation Diversity Partnership Advisory Board, the Queer Youth Task Force, Trauma-Informed Consortium, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), Harm Reduction Coalition and Justice Council. We have close partnerships with law enforcement, county jail, juvenile hall, probation, child welfare, schools, health clinics, local shelter facilities, food pantry service providers and community-based agencies. Santa Cruz County is geographically small, and staff are able to have close working relationships with a variety of service providers, which enhances our ability to engage and coordinate services for consumers in a variety of locations. Due to the close partnership between Behavioral Health, Santa Cruz County Office of Education, and School Districts throughout Santa Cruz county, both students and their families have been able to receive referrals to needed services, and creative efforts have been made to meet the mental health and substance use disorder needs of undocumented students and their families.

**C. A narrative, not to exceed two pages, discussing how the county is working on skills development and strengthening of community organization involved in providing essential services.**

Substance Use Disorders Services (SUDS) has a robust Spanish speaking team which providers SUDS client's greater choice in providers. With the increased number of bilingual providers, SUDS now offers outpatient group services in Spanish. SUDS provides presentations to county Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) on their Spanish speaking substance use services, and outreaches to local substance use treatment programs such as Janus and New Life, as well as at monthly network provider meetings. Additionally, BHS has MHP Spanish speaking staff members who are dedicated to meeting the culturally appropriate needs of their clients and offer input and suggestion on how to increase such services across the division.

All proposed education, training and workforce development programs and activities contribute to developing and maintaining a culturally appropriate workforce, and to include individuals with client and family member experience who can provide client- and family-driven services, that promote wellness, recovery, and resiliency, leading to measurable, values-driven outcomes.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person trainings were not available for the majority of 2020, therefore access to culturally responsive education, training and workforce

development was expanded to include webinars, videos, on-line trainings and conferences, and book club discussion groups. This expansion facilitated the creation of a CLAS Education Plan Policy which was implemented on 12/7/2020. Topics offered through this education plan include:

Cultural & Linguistic Appropriate Services trainings, such as:

- Effects of implicit bias in the workplace, community, client-care, and organization.
- LGBTQIA Voices of Color
- Cultural Case Formulation and Assessment
- Barriers in Mental Health Services for Trans, Queer and Non-binary Latinx Communities
- The mental health impacts of COVID-19 on Latinx, immigrant, LGBTQ+, elder communities.
- Suicide prevention for those struggling with substances
- Racial injustice and trauma in mental health settings and in client experiences.
- Delayed due to COVID and reallocated resources.
  - Culturally sensitive ASAM Assessments
  - Providing Trans-Affirming Care
  - Communicating Effectively through an Interpreter
  - Triangle Speakers – Queer diversity training
  - Trauma-Informed Systems

NAMI (Peer to Peer, Family to Family)2021 Calciano Event (Local Community training) focused on ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and treatment. 2022 training will be focusing on Resilience – Lessons learned from Pandemic.

#### Additional CLAS Training Opportunities:

The Cultural COMPASS newsletter is distributed by the Behavioral Health Cultural Humility Sub-Committee (a sub-committee under Trauma-Informed System Committee), and includes current culturally responsive topics impacting clients and staff, and offers education, clinical considerations, and resources to help increase staff cultural humility and quality of CLAS. Each newsletter contains a set of discussion question that supervisors facilitate at weekly team meetings.

Topics covered by the Cultural COMPASS include:

- Systemic Racism
- Provide culturally sensitive and appropriate services during pandemic
- White Supremacy
- White Fragility
- Indigenous Perspectives
- Neurodiversity

- Affinity Groups

BH management established follow up process discussion groups on the White Fragility and White Supremacy topics, using the COMPASS and related books to explore and address personal and professional paradigm shifts for increased diversity, equity and inclusion practices.

BH leadership and the Cultural Humility Sub-Committee are working towards a Committee restructuring and redesign that expands the governance of the Cultural Humility Committee to be inclusive of Behavioral Health Staff, community partners and consumer representation, and continuing the current committee's focuses of enhancing workforce CLAS knowledge across all BH staff.

### **III. Each county has a designated Cultural Competence/Ethnic Services Manager (CC/ESM) person responsible for cultural competence**

- A. Evidence that the County Behavioral Health has a designated CC/ESM who is responsible for cultural competence and who promotes the development of appropriate mental health services that will meet the diverse needs of the county's racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic populations.

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) has designated a bi-lingual designated QI staff person who is identified as the Cultural Competence/CLAS Coordinator. BHS has had a vacant CLAS Coordinator position for half this year with a new staff beginning in December 2021 who is tri-lingual tri-cultural Brazilian-Mexican-American ethnicity. The CLAS Coordinator collaborates with other department staff, behavioral health committees, contracting agencies, and assigned managers to spear the BHS' efforts to increase culturally responsive services. Related staff development trainings and other educational opportunities are provided so that the diverse needs of the county's racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic populations are being met. However, the responsibility for ensuring the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate services is not the sole responsibility of one person. We believe that these standards need to be infused throughout our division, and therefore is the responsibility of every staff person.

#### **B. Written description of the cultural competence responsibilities of the designated CC/ESM.**

The CLAS Coordinator reviews CLAS-related policy, in accordance with State and Federal Regulations, and along with the core leadership team evaluates the competencies of staff in providing culturally competent services. The CLAS Coordinator is a vital member of the Quality Improvement Steering Committee. Other responsibilities include:

- Identify needed CLAS trainings and coordinating trainings with the training team
- Evaluate Cultural Competence educational opportunities outside of our own offerings
- Update to the CLAS Plan
- Support in updating CLAS policies and procedures

- Data analysis of workforce completed CLAS hours
- Provide support to staff and management in matters related to acquiring and tracking CLAS hours.
- Attend Quality Improvement Steering Committee meetings
- Enhance outreach, coordination and facilitation of multi-stakeholder Cultural Competency Committee activities, including contributing in the agency's adoption of a Cultural Humility model
- Facilitate and manage Cultural Humility Steering Committee meetings
- Attend EQRO audit meetings and other DHCS audit sessions
- Attend Cultural Competency, Equity and Social Justice (CCESJC) monthly State and Regional Meetings

#### **IV. Identify budget resources targeted for culturally competent activities**

##### **A. Evidence of a budget dedicated to cultural competence activities.**

The Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services (BHS) pays a differential for bilingual staff that provide bilingual services. In addition, BHS has designated funding to support community meetings, public forums, focus group meetings, which may require translation and/or interpretation services. BHS has a budget to pay for translation and interpretation needs of non-threshold language needs. There is also a budget for workshops, community meetings, trainings, and staff development needs as they relate to CLAS and assuring that these standards are adhered to throughout the division's organization as well as its contractors.

##### **B. A discussion of funding allocations included in the identified budget above in Section A., also including, but not limited to, the following:**

###### **1. Interpreter and translation services;**

BHS has a designated budget to cover costs for translation and interpretation needs of threshold language needs, including ASL. BHS pays a differential hourly rate for bilingual staff who are required to provide bilingual services to their monolingual Spanish-speaking clients. Santa Cruz County provides funding to support community meetings, public forums, focus group meetings, which may require translation and/or interpretation services in the threshold language.

###### **2. Reduction of racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic behavioral health disparities;**

BHS statistics confirm that there is a disparity in access and service delivery to the Latinx community and to persons speaking the threshold language (Spanish). BHS' mental health services penetration rate (CY2019 3.10%) is lower than the state average 4.08% but higher than other medium counties rate average of 3.04% (CY2019 claims EQRO data). DMC-ODS penetration rate (1.24% from FY18-19 claims EQRO data) is higher than the state average (0.66%) and other medium counties avg rates (0.55%), but service utilization is low for the number of enrolled Latinx beneficiaries in the MCP. Regardless to the state comparison data, we realize that these numbers are quite low for our mission and community needs. As such, increasing access to services for Latinx was established as an

overall goal for the Mental Health Services Act and DMC-ODS. Our BHS QI work plan includes an increased focus on addressing disparities.

BHS continues to provide South County services in our larger facility to provide increased access to behavioral health services in a welcoming environment, including substance use disorder services and psychiatric services. In addition, the new behavioral health clinic remains on the same campus as the county medical clinic, to promote access to holistic culturally and linguistically appropriate medical services. One particularly successful strategy to address disparities in access among underserved populations includes the early decision to locate BHS' second Wellness Center program, Mariposa, in the heart of downtown Watsonville, a community which houses a large number of Latinx Medi-Cal beneficiaries and their families.

Although the BHS MHSA Coordinator reports that there are no longer specific Workforce Education and Training funds available; BHS is able to allocate needed funds to develop behavioral health materials, in English and Spanish, which are used to provide awareness and education for consumers, youth and family members of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic populations in the county. BHS is committed to ensuring that client forms are published in English and Spanish and distributed simultaneously to avoid language disparity and use of outdated forms. Worksheets and Safety Plans are encouraged to be reviewed for linguistic and cultural relevancy.

The BHS Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI) Plan also focuses on addressing the existing disparities in every project.

### **3. Outreach to racial and ethnic county-identified target populations;**

The funding for this comes primarily from the Community Services and Supports and the Prevention & Early Intervention components of the Mental Health Service Act; and SABG prevention funding.

The Community Services and Supports (CSS) plan and funds are organized around 4 population groups defined by age: children, transition age youth (16-25), adults, and older adults. We consider the needs of individuals who are currently unserved by the behavioral health system and the needs of those who are under-served or inappropriately served in each of the four groups. Increasing access to services to Latinx and Mixteco bajo speaking communities was established as an overarching goal for the plan.

Our outreach efforts in the Prevention Early Intervention (PEI) Plan are focused on engaging persons prior to the development of serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbances, or in the case of early intervention, to alleviate the need for additional mental health treatment and/or to transition to extended mental health services. Each project in this plan also addresses disparities in access to services by including a focus on the needs of Latinx children/families, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and questioning (LGBT) youth and their families.

Examples of our outreach efforts include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Coordination of services with county primary care clinics with a focus on predominantly Spanish speaking community in Watsonville.
- Veteran Advocate to engage, support and link to services in the community.
- High school outreach to inform, educate, and dispel myths about mental illness, and encourage students to consider public sector careers in behavioral health.
- Establishment online and print materials describing signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance use disorder to provide awareness, education and direction for consumers, community partners and family members.
- Community presentations at non-profit agencies, NAMI, MHAB, SUDC, local high schools, community colleges and universities.
- Sheriff and Police Liaisons. Mental Health clinicians respond with law enforcement to assess mental health issues and engage individuals in services. Currently we are partnered with the Santa Cruz Police Department, the County of Santa Cruz Sheriff Department, and the Watsonville Police Department.
- Local school district presentations
- County SUDS program's collaboration with Diversion Court, DMC-ODS provider jail ASAM assessments and Family Preservation Court education collaboration to increase awareness of SUD challenges on family stability.
- 

#### **4. Culturally appropriate behavioral health services;**

Currently the Behavioral Health Director works closely with the MHSA Coordinator, Quality Improvement Director, CLAS Coordinator, and all management staff to ensure that all services/programs continue to integrate CLAS values and standards throughout the County Behavioral Health System.

We offer trainings with the overarching goal of increasing culturally appropriate skills in order to improve behavioral health services. Trainings reflect the core values of consumer and family driven services, community collaboration, recovery/resilience strength-based services, integrated services, and increasing cultural awareness and skills.

#### **5. If applicable, financial incentives for culturally and linguistically competent providers, non-traditional providers, and/or natural healers.**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) designates some positions as bilingual only and encourages bilingual/bicultural persons to apply for all positions. Santa Cruz County Personnel Department evaluates and certifies staff in their ability to use Spanish (our threshold language). Staff passing level one (1) are able to communicate orally. Staff passing level two (2) are also able to read and write in another language. Staff that are certified as being bilingual receive a differential in pay. The current CLAS Coordinator is certified as bilingual level 2 as well as other Quality Improvement staff.

## **CRITERION 2 UPDATED ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES NEEDS**

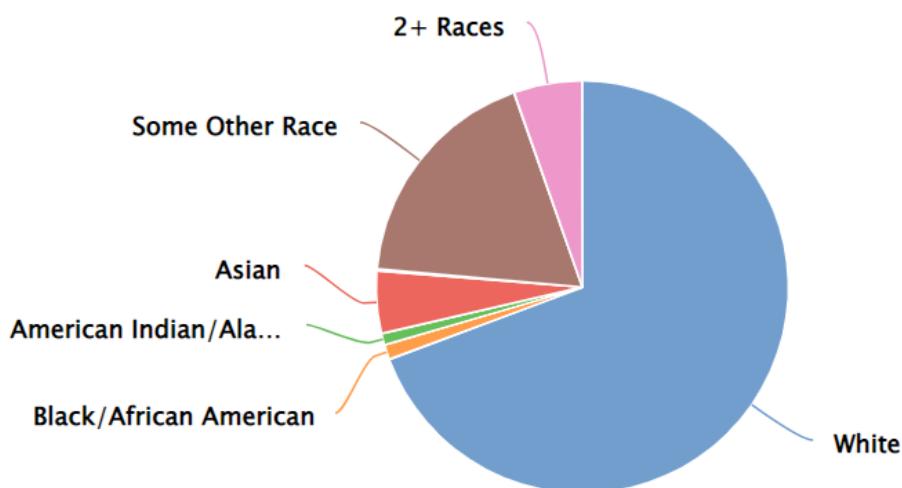
## I. General Population

Santa Cruz County's estimated 2021 population is 273,123, a 4.09% increase from 2010 to 2021, according to our county Data Share Dashboard. Santa Cruz County has only one region. [Source: [datasharescc.org](http://datasharescc.org)] The US Census 2019 report identifies 262, 244 Santa Cruz Residents, which is a difference of 10,879-, or 0.04%-point margin of error difference. [[Census - Table Results](#)]

Below graphs show that the overall summary of the population: Ethnic majority groups are White/Caucasian at 69.3% with Hispanic/Latinx next at 35.3%, and gender at 51/49% female/male. Regarding age, 19% persons under 18 years, 18-64 years old equals 63%, and 18% of the population is over 65 years old. The primary language in Santa Cruz County is English, with 67.87% of residents speaking only English, 25.95% on non-English language spoken group is Spanish 31.9% of residents. The threshold language in Santa Cruz is Spanish.

## Population by Race

County: Santa Cruz



| Population by Race               | County: Santa Cruz |                 | State: California |                 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
|                                  | Persons            | % of Population | Persons           | % of Population |
| White                            | 189,310            | 69.31%          | 21,425,746        | 53.91%          |
| Black/African American           | 3,197              | 1.17%           | 2,306,037         | 5.80%           |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native   | 2,477              | 0.91%           | 388,851           | 0.98%           |
| Asian                            | 13,351             | 4.89%           | 6,027,456         | 15.17%          |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 397                | 0.15%           | 159,486           | 0.40%           |
| Some Other Race                  | 49,670             | 18.19%          | 7,253,067         | 18.25%          |
| 2+ Races                         | 14,721             | 5.39%           | 2,179,403         | 5.48%           |

Male Age Breakdown:

Female Age Breakdown:

| Population by Age Group | Santa Cruz |        | California |        |
|-------------------------|------------|--------|------------|--------|
|                         | Persons    | %      | Persons    | %      |
| 0-4                     | 13,631     | 4.99%  | 2,432,198  | 6.12%  |
| 5-9                     | 14,044     | 5.14%  | 2,458,414  | 6.19%  |
| 10-14                   | 14,655     | 5.37%  | 2,508,393  | 6.31%  |
| 15-17                   | 10,424     | 3.82%  | 1,555,311  | 3.91%  |
| 18-20                   | 17,533     | 6.42%  | 1,581,510  | 3.98%  |
| 21-24                   | 20,318     | 7.44%  | 2,100,337  | 5.29%  |
| 25-34                   | 35,609     | 13.04% | 5,876,455  | 14.79% |
| 35-44                   | 31,266     | 11.45% | 5,370,684  | 13.51% |
| 45-54                   | 32,252     | 11.81% | 5,003,232  | 12.59% |
| 55-64                   | 35,087     | 12.85% | 4,799,544  | 12.08% |
| 65-74                   | 31,178     | 11.42% | 3,555,807  | 8.95%  |
| 75-84                   | 12,141     | 4.45%  | 1,760,129  | 4.43%  |
| 85+                     | 4,985      | 1.83%  | 738,032    | 1.86%  |

# Population by Sex

| Population by Sex | Santa Cruz |        | California |        |
|-------------------|------------|--------|------------|--------|
|                   | Persons    | %      | Persons    | %      |
| Male              | 135,168    | 49.49% | 19,743,779 | 49.68% |
| Female            | 137,955    | 50.51% | 19,996,267 | 50.32% |

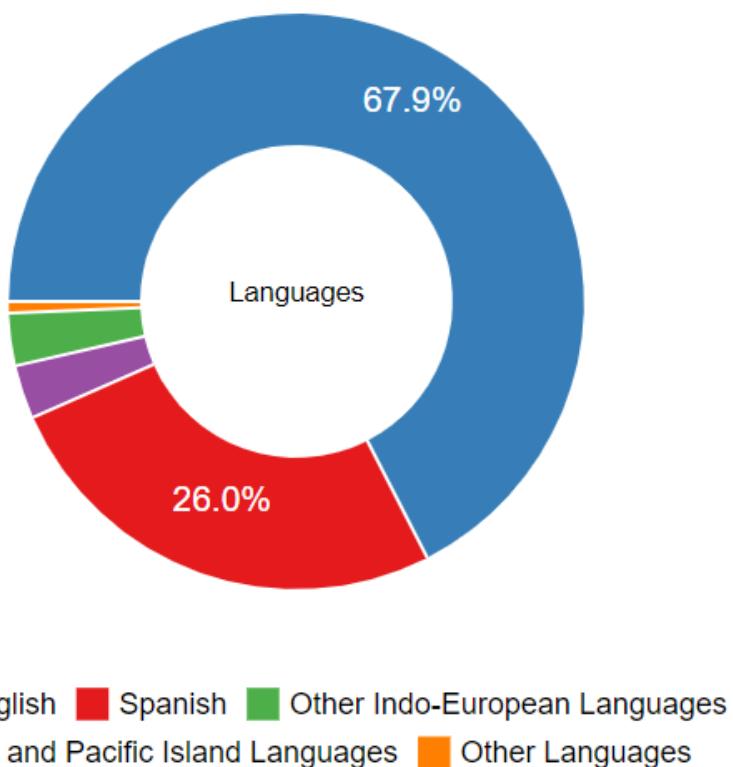
## Santa Cruz County, California Language by Age

All Ages

5-17

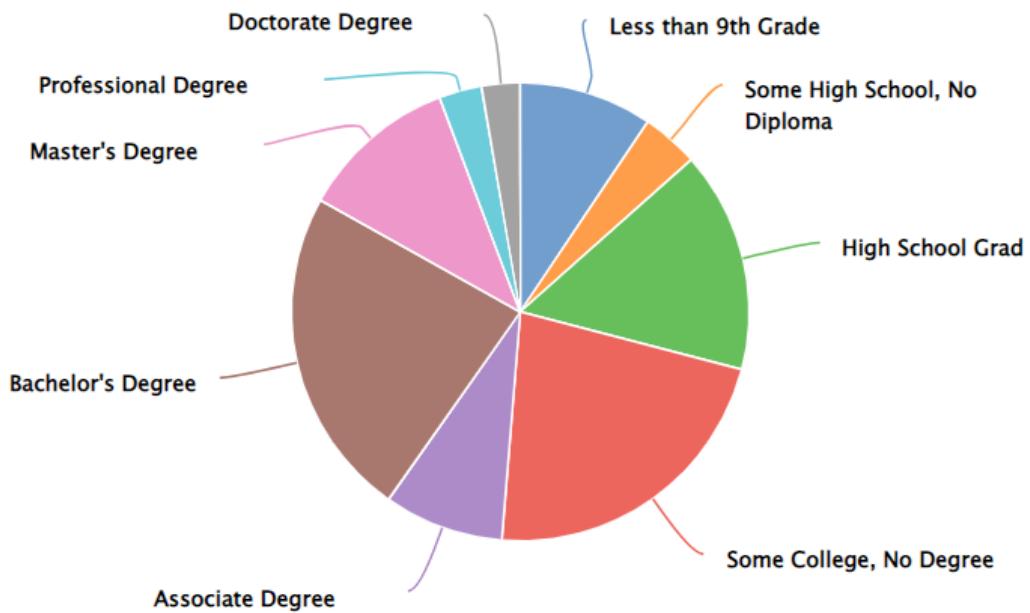
18-64

65+



## Population 25+ by Educational Attainment

County: Santa Cruz



## Population 16+: Unemployed

County: Santa Cruz

**6.59%**

State: California 5.76%

## Families Below Poverty with Children

County: Santa Cruz

**3,189** Families  
(5.31% of Families)

State: California 629,258 Families (6.85% of Families)

## Families Below Poverty

County: Santa Cruz

**4,362** Families  
(7.26% of Families)

State: California 863,311 Families (9.39% of Families)

## II. Medi-Cal population service needs

The average monthly Medi-Cal enrollment is 75, 291 beneficiaries indicated in available 2021 MCP (Central California Alliance for Health) data.

The Medi-Cal population and client utilization rate by race, ethnicity, age, and gender, are as shown below. In Santa Cruz the breakdown of the Medi-Cal monthly population served for mental health needs by race in CY 2019 is 37.6% White (Not of Latinx origin), Latinx make up 37.0% of the county served population, 1.6% African-Americans, 1.2% Asian/Pacific Islander and 0.9% American Indian and Alaskan Native persons served. 21.6% identify as Other, which includes multiple races.

**Table 1: County Medi-Cal Beneficiaries and Those Served by the MHP in CY 2019 by Race/Ethnicity**

| Santa Cruz MHP         |   |                                      |  |   |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Race/Ethnicity         | Average Monthly Unduplicated Medi-Cal Beneficiaries | Percentage of Medi-Cal Beneficiaries | Unduplicated Annual Count of Beneficiaries Served by the MHP | Percentage of Beneficiaries Served by the MHP |
| White                  | 19,862  | 26.6%                                | 1,268  | 37.6%   |
| Latino/Hispanic        | 40,250  | 54.0%                                | 1,247  | 37.0%   |
| African-American       | 659   | 0.9%                                 | 55   | 1.6%  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 1,468   | 2.0%                                 | 42   | 1.2%  |
| Native American        | 290   | 0.4%                                 | 30   | 0.9%  |
| Other                  | 12,055  | 16.2%                                | 726  | 21.6%   |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>74,582</b>                                       | <b>100%</b>                          | <b>3,368</b>   | <b>100%</b>                                   |

The total for Average Monthly Unduplicated Medi-Cal Enrollees is not a direct sum of the averages above it.  
The averages are calculated independently.

**Source of data:** FY 2019-20 Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health External Quality Review

**Table 2: Beneficiaries Served by the MHP in CY 2019 by Threshold Language**

| Santa Cruz MHP     |  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Threshold Language | Unduplicated Annual Count of Beneficiaries Served by the MHP | Percentage of Beneficiaries Served by the MHP |
| Spanish            | 684  | 20.3%   |
| Other Languages    | 2,684  | 79.7%   |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>3,368</b>   | <b>100%</b>                                   |

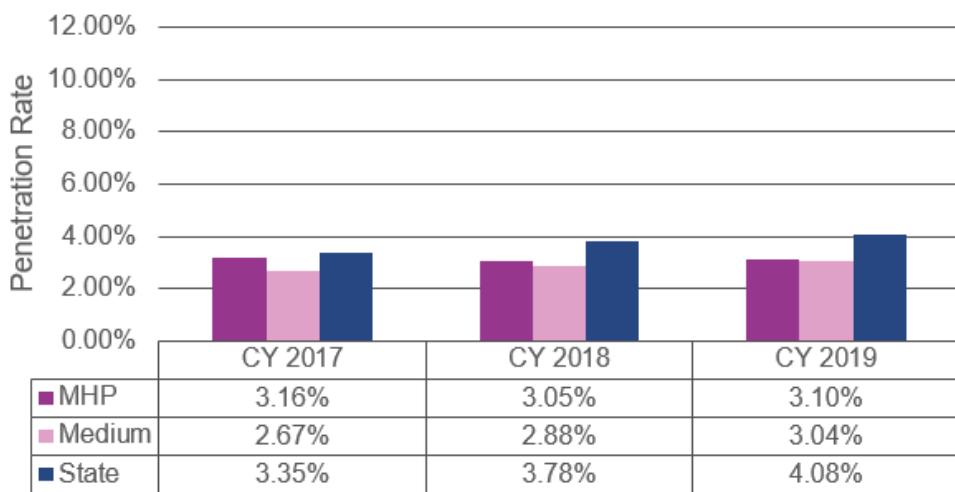
Threshold language source: DHCS BHIN 20-070.  
Other Languages include English

#### MHP Beneficiaries Latinx/Hispanic Penetration Rates in CY 2019

The primary language in Santa Cruz County is English, and threshold language is Spanish. Santa Cruz County is a Medium sized MHP. Figures 2 shows that 20.3% of MHP served beneficiaries spoke Spanish as primary language. Table 3 show a three-year (CY 2017-19) trends of the MHP's Latinx/Hispanic penetration rates and annual average approved claims per beneficiary (ACB), compared to both the statewide and medium MHPs average. Santa Cruz MHP has a greater penetration than other medium size counties, yet falls below the overall state average.

**Figure 3: Latino/Hispanic Penetration Rates CY 2017-19**

#### Santa Cruz MHP



**Source of data:** FY 2020-21 Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health External Quality Review

#### DMC-ODS Beneficiaries Served by Race/Ethnicity in FY 2019-20

The primary language in Santa Cruz County is English, and threshold language is Spanish. Santa Cruz County is a Medium sized DMC-ODS and began implementing service January 2019. BHS Substance Use Disorder DMC-ODS services network-wide

include 49.4% White, 24.3% Latinx, 1.4% Native American, 1.4% African-Americans, and 0.8% Asian/Pacific Islander for FY18-19.

### **DMC-ODS, Penetration Rates, by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2019-20**

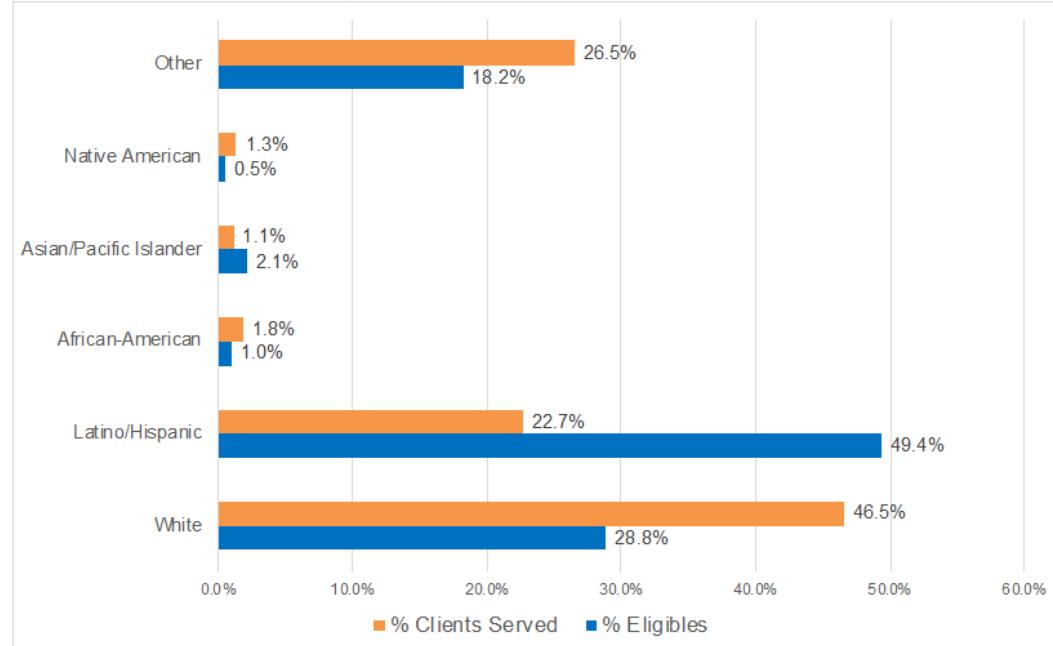
Table 3 that follows shows the DMC-ODS penetration rates by race/ethnicity compared to medium counties and statewide rates based on claims data. White clients had the highest penetration rate at 4.01%, followed by African Americans at 4.61%. The Latinx/ Hispanic population's penetration rate was relatively low compared to other race/ethnicity groups at 1.14 percent, but still higher than other medium counties (0.79%) and the statewide average of 0.77%.

Table 3: Penetration Rates by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2019-20

| <b>Santa Cruz</b>            |   |                            |                         | <b>Medium Counties</b>  | <b>Statewide</b>        |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Race/Ethnicity Groups</b> | <b>Average # of Eligibles per Month</b> | <b># of Clients Served</b> | <b>Penetration Rate</b> | <b>Penetration Rate</b> | <b>Penetration Rate</b> |
| White                        | 16,454                                  | 659                        | 4.01%                   | 2.43%                   | 2.09%                   |
| Latino/Hispanic              | 28,169                                  | 321                        | 1.14%                   | 0.79%                   | 0.77%                   |
| African American             | 564                                     | 26                         | 4.61%                   | 1.65%                   | 1.46%                   |
| Asian/Pacific Islander       | 1,224                                   | 16                         | 1.31%                   | 0.34%                   | 0.19%                   |
| Native American              | 265                                     | 19                         | 7.17%                   | 2.22%                   | 1.91%                   |
| Other                        | 10,384                                  | 375                        | 3.61%                   | 1.69%                   | 1.38%                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>57,060</b>                           | <b>1,416</b>               | <b>2.48%</b>            | <b>1.35%</b>            | <b>1.10%</b>            |

**Source of data:** FY 2020-21 Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System External Quality Review

Figure 1: Percentage of Eligibles and Clients Served by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2019-20



**Source of data:** FY 2020-21 Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System External Quality Review

#### B. Provide an analysis of disparities as identified in the above summary.

Overall penetration rates have been low, which is in alignment with statewide average and that of similar sized MHPs. Latinx penetration rates have consistently been higher than statewide and similar sized MHP averages. Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health continues to investigate and address the underlying reasons for low Latinx/Hispanic penetration rates, including obtaining a community perspective, expanding outreach efforts, and meeting the linguistic needs of the community.

The penetration rate is calculated by dividing the number of unduplicated beneficiaries served by the monthly average Medi-Cal enrollee count. The annual average approved claims per beneficiary (ACB) served is calculated by dividing the total annual Medi-Cal approved claim dollars by the unduplicated number of Medi-Cal beneficiaries served during the corresponding year. Regarding the calculation of penetration rates, the Santa Cruz MHP uses the same method used by CalEQRO.

The race/ethnicity results in the DMC-ODS table can be interpreted to determine how readily the listed race/ethnicity subgroups access treatment through the DMC-ODS. If they all had similar patterns, one would expect the proportions they constitute of the total population of DMC-ODS enrollees to match the proportions they constitute of the total beneficiaries served as clients. As the table shows, there are distinct differences. Those persons who are White accessed DMC-ODS services more readily than others, at a rate of more than twice their proportions of enrollees. In contrast, persons who are Latinx/Hispanic were less likely to access treatment. Data for other ethnic groups is

limited, with the exception of the “Other” race/ethnicity, who appear to be accessing services proportionately. Santa Cruz is exploring the reasons for low utilization by some subgroups and what can be done to increase it, especially within the Hispanic/Latinx community.

### III. 200% of Poverty (minus Medi-Cal) population and service needs

#### A. Summarize the 200 % of poverty

Population and poverty estimates may not comparable to other geographic levels due to methodology differences that exist between different data sources.

The 2019 US Census Bureau ACE 5-year Survey (Table S1701) is the source for the Santa Cruz Poverty Data described below. Santa Cruz County population is estimated at 262,224 residents with an estimate of 34,419 residents classified as below poverty level, roughly 13.1% (+/-0.9 margin of error). The poverty line for California in 2019 is based on the federal guidelines, which begins at \$12,140 for a single person, adding \$4,320 for each additional person. , This data includes all races, sexes and incomes.

#### Santa Cruz Poverty 2019 Data

##### S1701 | POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

[2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables](#)

| Notes  | 2 Geos | Years | Topics                        | Surveys | Codes | Hide     | Transpose | +/- Margin of Error | Restore             | Excel  | Download                    | Print    | Map  |
|--|--------|-------|-------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------|-----------------------------|----------|------|
| California   |        |       | Santa Cruz County, California |         |       |          |           |                     |                     |        |                             |          |      |
|  |        | To... | Be...                         | Pe...   | Total |          |           |                     | Below poverty level |        | Percent below poverty level |          |      |
| Label  |        |       |                               |         |       | Estimate |           |                     | Estimate            |        |                             | Estimate |      |
| ▼ Population for whom poverty status is determined | 38     | ±3    | 5,                            | ±3      | 13    | ±0       |           | 262,224             | ±...                | 34,419 | ±...                        | 13.1%    | ±... |
| ▼ AGE  |        |       |                               |         |       |          |           |                     |                     |        |                             |          |      |
| ▼ Under 18 years                                   | 8,     | ±3    | 1,                            | ±1      | 18    | ±0       |           | 51,829              | ±...                | 7,272  | ±...                        | 14.0%    | ±... |
| Under 5 years                                      | 2,     | ±1    | 44                            | ±6      | 18    | ±0       |           | 13,792              | ±...                | 1,973  | ±...                        | 14.3%    | ±... |
| 5 to 17 years                                      | 6,     | ±2    | 1,                            | ±1      | 18    | ±0       |           | 38,037              | ±...                | 5,299  | ±...                        | 13.9%    | ±... |
| Related children of householder under 18 ...       | 8,     | ±4    | 1,                            | ±1      | 17    | ±0       |           | 51,408              | ±...                | 6,860  | ±...                        | 13.3%    |      |
| ▼ 18 to 64 years                                   | 24     | ±1    | 2,                            | ±2      | 12    | ±0       |           | 167,747             | ±...                | 23,880 | ±...                        | 14.2%    |      |
| 18 to 34 years                                     | 9,     | ±1    | 1,                            | ±1      | 14    | ±0       |           | 65,014              | ±...                | 14,100 | ±...                        | 21.7%    |      |
| 35 to 64 years                                     | 14     | ±1    | 1,                            | ±1      | 10    | ±0       |           | 102,733             | ±...                | 9,780  | ±...                        | 9.5%     |      |
| 60 years and over                                  | 7,     | ±7    | 79                            | ±7      | 10    | ±0       |           | 60,975              | ±...                | 5,182  | ±...                        | 8.5%     |      |
| 65 years and over                                  | 5,     | ±1    | 55                            | ±6      | 10    | ±0       |           | 42,648              | ±...                | 3,267  | ±...                        | 7.7%     |      |

| ▼ SEX  |    |    |     |    |    |    |         |      |        |      |       |
|--------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|---------|------|--------|------|-------|
| Male   | 19 | ±3 | 2,3 | ±2 | 12 | ±0 | 129,928 | ±... | 15,726 | ±... | 12.1% |
| Female | 19 | ±3 | 2,3 | ±2 | 14 | ±0 | 132,296 | ±... | 18,693 | ±... | 14.1% |

| ▼ RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN            |     |    |     |    |    |    |         |      |        |      |       |
|---|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|---------|------|--------|------|-------|
| White alone                                     | 23  | ±3 | 2,8 | ±2 | 12 | ±0 | 198,559 | ±... | 24,342 | ±... | 12.3% |
| Black or African American alone                 | 2,1 | ±7 | 44  | ±7 | 20 | ±0 | 2,553   | ±... | 524    | ±... | 20.5% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native alone         | 29  | ±6 | 57  | ±3 | 19 | ±0 | 1,466   | ±... | 242    | ±... | 16.5% |
| Asian alone                                     | 5,0 | ±9 | 57  | ±9 | 10 | ±0 | 10,298  | ±... | 2,002  | ±... | 19.4% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander a... | 15  | ±2 | 20  | ±1 | 13 | ±1 | 314     | ±... | 64     | ±... | 20.4% |

|   |     |    |     |    |    |    |         |      |        |      |       |
|---|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|---------|------|--------|------|-------|
| Some other race alone                   | 5,2 | ±3 | 1,0 | ±1 | 18 | ±0 | 36,939  | ±... | 6,009  | ±... | 16.3% |
| Two or more races                       | 1,4 | ±2 | 23  | ±5 | 12 | ±0 | 12,095  | ±... | 1,236  | ±... | 10.2% |
| Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) | 15  | ±3 | 2,4 | ±2 | 17 | ±0 | 88,298  | ±... | 14,762 | ±... | 16.7% |
| White alone, not Hispanic or Latino     | 14  | ±4 | 1,2 | ±1 | 9. | ±0 | 152,753 | ±... | 16,242 | ±... | 10.6% |

| Label  | To... | Be... | Pe... | California |                     | Santa Cruz County, California |          |     |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-----|-------|
|  |       |       |       | Total      | Below poverty level | Estimate                      | Estimate |     |       |
| ▼ ALL INDIVIDUALS WITH INCOME BELOW THE FOLLOWING POVERTY RATIOS |       |       |       |            |                     |                               |          |     |       |
| 50 percent of poverty level                                      | 2,1   | ±2    | (X)   | (X)        | (X)                 | 16,507                        | ±1       | (X) | (...) |
| 125 percent of poverty level                                     | 6,1   | ±4    | (X)   | (X)        | (X)                 | 45,670                        | ±3       | (X) | (...) |
| 150 percent of poverty level                                     | 8,1   | ±5    | (X)   | (X)        | (X)                 | 56,115                        | ±3       | (X) | (...) |
| 185 percent of poverty level                                     | 10    | ±5    | (X)   | (X)        | (X)                 | 70,270                        | ±2       | (X) | (...) |
| 200 percent of poverty level                                     | 11    | ±6    | (X)   | (X)        | (X)                 | 76,621                        | ±2       | (X) |       |
| 300 percent of poverty level                                     | 17    | ±7    | (X)   | (X)        | (X)                 | 108,424                       | ±3       | (X) |       |
| 400 percent of poverty level                                     | 22    | ±7    | (X)   | (X)        | (X)                 | 139,859                       | ±2       | (X) |       |
| 500 percent of poverty level                                     | 26    | ±6    | (X)   | (X)        | (X)                 | 161,483                       | ±2       | (X) |       |

Provide an analysis of disparities as identified in the above summary.

Santa Cruz County is identified as having a 13.13% overall Poverty Rate, with 12.10% Male and 14.13% Female. Ethnic filtering identifies Santa Cruz Black residents to have the

highest poverty rate at 20.52%, Hispanic/Latinx at 12.2% and White residents to have the lowest poverty rate at 10.63%. Of those individuals classified as impoverished, 19.45% have less than a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade education and an equal 26.13% rate for unemployed men and women. There are several disparities identified on this poverty and utilization data. Using the US Census Santa Cruz County population estimate of 262,224 residents, approximately 34,419, 13.1% of Santa Cruz County residents are below the poverty level. Data indicates that there are 563,008 residents also identified as below the 200% poverty threshold. Age group percentages are 14% of minors under the age of 18 years old; Adults 18-64 year old age group with approximately 14.2% meeting the poverty threshold; and 7.7% over 65 years of age. Hispanic individuals have a greater rate of poverty when compared to White, non-Hispanic individuals within those groups: approximately 16.7% of Hispanic individuals meet the poverty criteria, vs. 12.3% of white, non-Hispanic individuals. Black Santa Cruz County residents have the highest rate at 20.5%. Slightly more females (14.1%) meet the poverty levels compared to males (12.1%).

#### **IV. MHSA Community Services and Supports**

- A. From the county approved CSS plan, extract a copy of the population assessment. If updates have been made to this assessment, please include the updates. Summarize population and client utilization data by race, ethnicity, language, age, and gender (other social/cultural groups may be addressed as data is available and collected locally).**

##### **Population Assessment:**

The population in Santa Cruz County is estimated to be around 262,224 for 2019. As mentioned above, the overall breakdown of the population is: Ethnic majority groups are White/Caucasian at 69.3% with Hispanic/Latinx next at 35.3%, and gender at 51/49% female/male. Regarding age, 19% persons under 18 years, 18-64 years old equals 63%, and 18% of the population is over 65 years old. The primary language in Santa Cruz County is English, with 67.87% of residents speaking only English, 25.95% on non-English language spoken group is Spanish 31.9% of residents. The threshold language in Santa Cruz is Spanish.

##### **B. Provide an analysis of disparities as identified in the above summary.**

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health, which comprises of the Mental Health Plan (MHP) and Drug Medi-Cal-Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS), is serving ethnic groups at comparable rates as reflected in the overall population. However, when comparing the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) consumers against the Medi-Cal enrollment population the MHP and DMC-ODS utilization data shows that the Latinx population has a low rate of engaging in Specialty MH or SUD treatment services. The MHP appears to be serving Black and Asian consumers at comparable rates to their representation among Medi-Cal beneficiaries. White consumers are over-represented in both SMHS and SUD treatment services.

#### **V. Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Plan: The process used to identify the PEI priority populations**

**A. Which PEI priority population(s) did the county identify in their PEI plan?**

The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability passed new regulations concerning PEI in October 2015. The updated requirements do not require “priority populations”. The DMC-ODS pilot also includes PEI services for residents under the age of 21 years of age.

**B. Describe the process and rationale used by the county in selecting their PEI priority population(s).**

No longer applicable.

**CRITERION 3**

**STRATEGIES AND EFFORTS FOR REDUCING RACIAL, ETHNIC, CULTURAL, AND LINGUISTIC MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES**

**I. Identified unserved/underserved target populations (with disparities)**

**A. List identified target populations, with disparities, within each of the above selected populations (Medi-Cal, CSS, WET, and PEI priority populations).**

As the above data indicates, the Santa Cruz County Latinx/Hispanic population experiences a higher level of housing, educational, economic and social disparities/barriers to accessing and engaging in behavioral healthcare services. As a result, our priority target population is Latinx residents, all ages, gender expressions and marital status, and Spanish speaking consumers for outreach and educating of access to Medi-Cal, PEI and other funding sources for Specialty MH and SUD treatment services.

Psychiatrists (adult and child) and Bilingual mental health and/or substance use disorder providers (psychiatrist, therapists, and case managers) are the top two “hard to fill” positions.

In early Spring 2020, Santa Cruz conducted a Community Program Planning (CPP) process (MHSA activity) that included community stakeholder meetings including workgroup meetings and focus groups with Latinx, consumers, family members, homeless,

veterans, youth and the LGBTQ populations. Prior CPPs established the priority population from the information gathered in these groups, and through workgroup discussions the stakeholders selected the priority populations. However, based on the regulations passed in October 2015, PEI does not have the Counties identify “priority populations”.

## **II. Identified disparities (within the target populations)**

### **A. List disparities from the above identified populations with disparities.**

Disparities exist in the Latinx and Spanish speaking populations, including youth. We also note disparities in the LGBTQQ population, based on hearing from constituents.

## **III. Identified strategies/objectives/actions/timelines**

### **A. List the strategies for reducing the disparities identified.**

One critical strategy is to continue hiring bilingual bicultural staff, and work with contractors to increase our ability to serve Latinx clients. We have continuous recruitment of bilingual clinicians. A significant cultural competency improvement this year for BHS’ workforce is that Quality Improvement department has hired two bilingual bicultural staff to better serve clients with quality-of-care concerns, service verification practices and service satisfaction surveying. In addition, BHS has enhanced the access to interpretive services to include phone and video tele-interpretive services. Another strategy is to require trainings designed to educate staff (county and contractor) on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Due to COBID, in 2020 BHS began to transition trainings from in-person trainings model to on-line video trainings that are now able to be recorded and saved for future resources, which allows more staff scheduling flexibility to complete training sessions. See below for additional strategies.

### **B. List the strategies identified for each targeted area as noted in Criterion 2 in the following sections:**

#### **a. Medi-Cal population**

We looked at the Medi-Cal data and conclude that there are some disparities in the breakdown of the unserved, underserved populations. We need to do a better job of serving Latinx who identify Spanish as their primary language. We are working on breaking down language barriers, myths about mental illness and substance use disorder, and have developed informational and educational brochures to inform, educate and provide resources to potential Medi-Cal clients and their families.

#### **b. 200% of poverty population**

We looked at the Medi-Cal data and conclude that there are some disparities in the breakdown of the unserved, underserved populations. The data available to us did not

include language and this is an important factor to measure. The other disparity shown by this data is the need for services for older adults.

**c. MHSA/CSS population**

No full-service partnerships were selected for the Children's programs. However, the general strategy to reduce disparities (for all CSS children and adult programs) was to increase bilingual and bicultural staff to be able to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to Latinx and Spanish speaking individuals.

**d. PEI priority population(s) selected by the county, from the six PEI priority populations.**

The new PEI regulations do not require priority populations.

## **IV. Additional strategies/objectives/actions/timelines and lessons learned**

**A. List any new strategies not included in Medi-Cal, CSS, WET, and PEI. Note: New strategies must be related to the analysis completed in Criterion 2.**

Additional strategies to address language and access disparities include developing different outreach activities to inform, educate, diffuse myths about mental illness and/or SUD and seeking consumer feedback in Spanish threshold language. We developed a substance use disorder brochure, modeled after the mental health brochure (which is in both English and Spanish), which informs the reader about how to cope and where to access services for them or a loved one. This is one way to provide resources and direction for consumers, family members, service providers, and community members. We also installed immediate feedback kiosks in the reception areas that are available in both Spanish and English languages to encourage consumers and family members to provide feedback on the services received.

The following strategies are carried out throughout the year to engage a wide range of different sectors of the community in Santa Cruz County. These are some of our efforts:

- Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) is committed to acknowledge and address the impact of Stress and Trauma in our community and in our organizational systems. To this end BHS has trained a core team of certified Trauma Informed System trainers. BHS has offered this curriculum to over 700 individuals from diverse settings, including the City of Santa Cruz administrative staff, parks and recreation, public works, justice department court staff, Head Start, Behavioral Health staff, Community Action Board community agency.
- We provide numerous workshop topics across the three school districts within Santa Cruz County (PVUSD, Live Oak School District, and Santa Cruz City Schools) to create awareness about mental health and SUD challenges; mental health and SUD impacts of COVID-19 and distance learning, like depression, anxiety, suicide, stress disorder, panic attacks, eating disorders, bullying and cyberbullying, as well as drug and alcohol abuse, gang involvement, the impact of acculturation and immigration.

- We provide a culturally specific family strengthening curriculums for youth, family members and the community at elementary, middle schools and high schools, shelters, community-based organizations, apartment complexes, Santa Cruz County medium security inmate facilities, detox and recovery centers. The purpose is to create awareness, education, and guidance in how individuals, families and the community may begin to process and heal their emotional pain. This model has been developed to work with Latinx, including Indigenous communities. The parent classes are offered in English and Spanish.
- We provide MHFA (Mental Health First Aid) to develop more awareness, education about what is mental health, the high incidence of persons who may be experiencing mental health challenges, living with depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, panic attacks, psychosis, substance abuse, and other crises. Through these efforts we educate the community to be able to see the signs, notify someone who can help, or provide resources and information. We have been able to provide these classes to the local agencies who interact with the homeless every day, students at three local high schools, and several recovery centers.
- We participate in several school and community annual parent conferences, where we present workshops on how to re-introduce, reconnect, and/or maintain family and cultural values to engage youth, families, local organization consumers and providers.
- We participate in health fairs throughout the community providing information and education about mental health, and our services. When we see that people are reluctant to come to the table, we mingle with the crowd, and find that they are more accepting of the information we have to offer.
- The LGBTQQ community deals with different forms of discrimination, stigma, marginalization, and often feel that they are not being acknowledged. BHS continues to partner with the local Diversity Center, a LGBTQQ center, to strengthen how the county supports the LGBTQQ community and LGBTQQ appropriate services. This partnership contributed to positive changes to the signage throughout the county buildings, making our environment more welcoming, embracing, and a safe place for everyone to seek services.
- We attended consumer advocacy organizational meetings/events hosted by NAMI, MHAB, SUDC and MHCAN, to offer presentations and trainings on various topics that address the diverse needs of our community, and to describe our “no-wrong door” approach to accessing and engaging in BHS’ mental health and substance use disorder services.

### **Related Programs and Strategies**

- Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) participates in the various annual school and community parent conferences to engage, strengthen our relationship and commitment with youth, families, organizations and the community at large.
- Health fairs to provide awareness and education about the stigma of mental illness, how to help someone who may be struggling with depression, anxiety or other

emotional challenges, what resources and services the county offers and where one can go for help.

- BHS plans to offer monthly workshops, seminars, presentations, and/or trainings in different topic areas addressing the diverse needs of our communities. We plan to offer a menu of trainings, workshop topics, presentations for staff to select from and this requirement, and when available, this will be included in the staff's yearly evaluation.

**1. Share what has been working well and lessons learned through the process of the county's development strategies, objectives, actions, and timelines that work to reduce disparities in the county's identified populations within the target populations of Medi-Cal, CSS, WET, and PEI.**

Our planning and implementation process through MHSA, CLAS/ESM Coordinator and our SUDS & MHP service division leaderships has helped us strengthen our community involvement and stakeholder's participation, including consumer and family voices in our efforts to reduce disparities in the county's identified populations.

We work with county personnel to make continuous recruitment efforts for bilingual clinical positions.

Santa Cruz County has effectively made efforts to involve consumers and advocates in trainings, planning process, steering committees, and our Local Mental Health Advisory Board and SUD Commission. We are making ongoing efforts to improve our ability to increase more consumer and family participation.

**V. Planning and monitoring of identified strategies/objectives/actions/timelines to reduce mental health disparities**

**A. List the strategies/objectives/action/timelines provided in Section III and IV above and provide the status of the county's implementation efforts (i.e. timelines, milestones, etc.).**

Strategies and status:

- Hiring bilingual staff: we find having continuous recruitment for bilingual clinical positions is an effective tool.
- QI reviews: this is an effective way to engage management in reviewing disparities, monitoring penetrations rates, and brainstorm ways to improve services.
- Training staff on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Staff carries out survey evaluations for all trainings with Continuing Education.
- The various workshops, community trainings, presentations, groups and other outreach activities are ongoing. BHS carries out survey evaluations for workshops, and community presentations, educational trainings for youth, parents and community stakeholders.

BHS receives positive feedback from various consumer/family groups, including consumers who receive MH and SUD treatment services through annual perception surveys, local agency providers who also work with MHP and DMC-ODS youth/families and adult populations , as well as from consumer &family advocacy organizations. Additionally, BHS receives positive feedback from community providers such as probation officers, probation supervisors, managers, non-profit managers, professional colleagues and/or organizational administrators who report a positive change in behavior attitude, emotional health of to the youth, adults, families they serve, who also participate or have participated in our educational workshop series, presentations or support groups.

- B. Discuss the mechanism(s) the county will have or has in place to measure and monitor the effect of the identified strategies, objectives, actions, and timelines on reducing disparities identified in Section II of Criterion 3. Discuss what measures and activities the county uses to monitor the reduction of elimination of disparities.**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) utilizes the Quality Improvement (QI) Steering Committee to measure and monitor the effect of the identified strategies, objectives, actions and timelines in reducing disparities. This QI Steering Committee monitors the QI Work Plan progress and reports service utilization rates on a quarterly basis, tracks services and populations and identifies disparities in access to services. The QI Steering Committee has grown in membership to be inclusive of both MH and SUD services, including providers, consumers with lived experience representation, local advocacy groups and the CLAS/ESM Coordinator.

**C. Identify county technical assistance needs.**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) was able to hire bilingual clinicians through our MHSA plans. With a continuous recruitment model for bilingual staff, recent clinical hires tend to be bilingual in our threshold language (Spanish). We would like to know how other counties address the issue of retaining bilingual staff, even when there are layoffs due to economic hardships.

## **CRITERION 4**

### **CLIENT/FAMILY MEMBER/COMMUNITY COMMITTEE: INTEGRATION OF THE COMMITTEE WITHIN COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

- I. The county has a Cultural Competence Committee, or other group that addresses cultural issues and has participation from cultural groups, that is reflective of the community.**

- A. Brief description of the Cultural Competence Committee or other similar group (organizational structure, frequency of meetings, functions, and role).**

The BHS Quality Improvement (QI) Steering Committee, Trauma-Informed Systems (TIS) Steering Committee and Cultural Humility Committee have played a key role in establishing a solid foundation for integrating “Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services” (CLAS) principals and standards throughout Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services. The CLAS/ESM Coordinator designated staff is a member of Quality Improvement division and member of these committees. Quality Improvement also aims to support the development and implementation of culturally inclusive policies, procedures and standards to care. Quality Improvement staff reviews cultural issues, including penetration rates, documentation equity and outreach to diverse communities to identify improvement initiative or projects.

The Behavioral Health Director works closely with Behavioral Health Management to ensure that all services/programs continue to integrate cultural values and standards throughout the County Behavioral Health System. Management meets on a weekly basis.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services has a Cultural Humility Sub-Committee of the Trauma Informed Systems Initiative, with the overarching goals to create a safe and supportive client-care environment that promotes healing, and to create a safe and supportive workplace with staff who are able to promote healing. With the upcoming hire of a CLAS/ESM Coordinator, our 2022 goal is to expand our Cultural Humility & Equity Committee to be a multi-stakeholder MH/SUD steering committee to oversee and prioritize our multiple CLAS enhancement initiatives, such as policy revisions, outreach & survey activity planning, data collection and analysis, staff training scheduling, for BHS and our provider partnerships. We are committed to continual Cultural Humility practices throughout BHS and contracted providers to ensure service delivery aligns with the core principles.

**B. Policies, procedures, and practices that assure members of the Cultural Competence Committee will be reflective of the community, including county management level and line staff, clients and family members from ethnic, racial, and cultural groups, providers, community partners, contractors, and other members as necessary;**

These Committee are consistently making efforts to establish a workforce which is reflective of the community. Committee members consist of BHS' licensed and unlicensed BH staff from north and south county, supervisors, and directors of diverse divisions, as well as community providers, advocates and consumers. .

**C. Organizational chart**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) is the largest division of the Health Services Agency. The Director oversees all operations, including, Quality Improvement, Adult Mental Health, Children Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder Services and South County (Watsonville parallel services). There are Senior Behavioral Health Managers that oversee Managers, Supervisors, and clinical line staff, as well as Interns, peers, and family providers.

**D. Committee membership roster listing member affiliation if any.**

The management team consists of:

- Erik Riera, Behavioral Health Director
- Dr. Alex Threlfall Chief of Psychiatry & DMC-ODS Medical Director
- Cybele Lolley, Quality Improvement Director
- Anthony Jordan, Substance Use Disorder Services Director
- Lisa Gutierrez Wang, Director of Children's Services
- Karen Kern, Director of Adult Services
- Cassandra Eslami, Chief of South County Behavioral Health Services and Community Engagement /MHSA Coordinator
- Adriana Bare, Senior Health Manager for Administrative Services
- Subé Robertson, Program Manager, QI Division (Expected start in January 2022)
- Andrea Turnbull, Program Manager, Acute Services
- Eli Chance, BH Program Manager, Adult Outpatient
- James Russell, Behavioral Health Manager, Adult Forensic Services
- Stan Einhorn, Behavioral Health Program Manager, Children's
- Lauren Fein, Behavioral Health Program Manager, Children's Services
- Meg Yarnell, Behavioral Health Program Manager, Children's Services
- Barbara Lehman, Chief Public Guardian
- Claudette DeGodoy, CLAS/ESM Coordinator (Expected start in mid-December 2021)
- Janus of Santa Cruz, Executive Director
- Volunteer Center, Director
- Telecare, Regional Operations Manager
- Encompass, Director of Quality Improvement
- NAMI representation
- SUDC representation (ongoing open recruitment)
- Consumer representation (ongoing open recruitment)

The membership individuals may change during the year, but the functions and organizations shall continue to be represented. We increased committee participation of direct service provider organizations who serve the key disparity/underserved populations, and also increased representation from the local community and underserved populations. The community has been underrepresented in previous year.

**II. The Cultural Competence Committee, or other group with responsibility for cultural competence, is integrated within the County Mental Health System.**

**A. Evidence of policies, procedures, and practices that demonstrate the Cultural Competence Committee's activities including the following:**

1. **Reviews of all services/programs/cultural competence plans with respect to cultural competence issues at the county;**

Behavioral Health Management has the primary responsibility for ensuring the inclusion of cultural and linguistic services and programs.

Behavioral Health has a Cultural Humility Sub-Committee of the Trauma Informed Systems Initiative, with the overarching goals to create a safe and supportive client-care environment that promotes healing, and to create a safe and supportive workplace with staff who are able to promote healing.

The Quality Improvement (QI) staff has played a key role in establishing a solid foundation for integrating “Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services” (CLAS) principals and standards throughout County Behavioral Health. This included developing and implementing policies, procedures and standards, providing CLAS education opportunities, and processing completed staff CLAS hours; and completing a Spanish audit of Behavioral Health charts to ensure clients who prefer services in Spanish are receiving service in alignment with this preference.

The Behavioral Health Director works closely with the Management team to ensure that all services and programs continue to integrate CLAS values and standards throughout the Behavioral Health System.

The Local Mental Health Advisory Board serves to advise the Behavioral Health Department on current and ongoing issues as they relate to the effectiveness and quality of the mental health services for the county. It also serves to increase community awareness on issues related to mental health to ensure inclusion and dissemination of information. The QI Director has outreached SUD Commission Board with an invitation to join any or all BHS committees described above.

**2. Provides reports to Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Program in the county;**

The CLAS Coordinator participates in and attends the Quality Improvement Steering Committee, Cultural Humility and TIS Steering Committee, which monitors workforce CLAS enhancement activities, as well as culturally appropriate service delivery, capacity and accessibility, and monitor beneficiary satisfaction. CLAS/Cultural Competency goals continue to be established within the fiscal year QI Work Plan and monitored on a quarterly basis, as well as expected to be captured in the pending Cultural Humility and Equity Steering Committee Charter (upcoming 2022 project).

**3. Participates in overall planning and implementation of services at the county;**

The Behavioral Health Director works closely with the QI Director, Senior Leadership and Management Staff to ensure that all services/programs continue to integrate cultural values and standards throughout the County Behavioral Health System

**4. Reporting requirements include directly transmitting recommendations to executive level and transmitting concerns to the Mental Health Director;**

The CLAS Coordinator is an integral member of the Quality Improvement (QI) Steering Committee and the other listed committees. QI is responsible for oversight of the quality of

care, grievances, and a regular review of the penetration data. QI informs and makes recommendations to the executive level. The Behavioral Health Director meets regularly with the Local Mental Health Advisory Board.

**5. Participates in and reviews county MHSA planning process;**

The CLAS Coordinator works with BHS Management. The MHSA Coordinator works with community and staff in development of MHSA plans. Stakeholder Engagement Sessions are held at various parts of the County to provide MHSA Updates.

**6. Participates in and reviews county MHSA stakeholder process;**

Santa Cruz County Health Service Agency and BHS convenes different stakeholder meetings, which include consumers, families, community members, agency representatives, county staff, service providers, and contractors. This process is utilized to gather stakeholder input, ideas and recommendations.

**7. Participates in and reviews county MHSA plans for all MHSA components**

The CLAS Coordinator participates in the county development of the MHSA plans.

**8. Participates in and reviews client development programs (wellness, recovery, and peer support programs); and**

Santa Cruz County has two Wellness centers in Santa Cruz County: Mental Health Client Action Network (MHCAN) in Santa Cruz, and Mariposa in Watsonville.

MHCAN is a consumer owned and operated program that provides a safe space for persons with psychiatric disabilities, as well as co-occurring MH-SUD recovery, to congregate and socialize. They also offer a variety of programs, including MH/SUD groups, classes, and alternative treatments like acupuncture. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, MHCAN shifted their services from in-person to online by providing virtual 1:1 peer support, classes, and support groups such as: services physical fitness, 12-step groups, self-care, relapse prevention, substance use, mental wellness, and recreational opportunities such as role-playing games, poetry, chess. MHCAN also includes co-occurring physical and substance use disorder supports through offering an acupuncture clinic and 12-step meetings. MHCAN's peer-based model helps clients reclaim their dignity through self-help.

Mariposa is located in the heart of downtown Watsonville, a community that houses many Anglo/Caucasian consumers as well as many underserved Latinx consumers and their families. The Mariposa Wellness Center program quickly became a hub for engaging in wellness and educational activities and support services, sharing information, and outreach activities for families and adult consumers.

The Mariposa Wellness Center promotes consumer-operated services to support recovery, and strives to reflect the cultural, ethnic and racial diversity of mental health consumers. Due to the covid-19 pandemic modifications to in-person services were made by providing

limited in-person mental health groups at the center with safety protocols in place, as well as mental health zoom groups and individual sessions both via telephone and in-person.

### **9. Participates in revised CCPR development.**

The CLAS Coordinator works with the QI Director to discuss, review and develop updates to the CLAS Plan. The plan is then distributed to the QIC for review.

#### **B. Provide evidence that the Cultural Competence Committee participates in the above review process.**

The Quality Improvement committee meets quarterly. We aim to expand the Cultural Humility committee into BHS to support the identification of CLAS needs, recommendations, strategic planning and implementation workgroup focuses. The CLAS Coordinator will facilitate this oversight steering committee and will provide outcome reports to the QI Steering Committee.

#### **C. Annual Report of the Cultural Competence Committee's activities including:**

##### **1. Detailed discussion of the goals and objectives of the committee;**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) developed a Cultural Awareness Mission Statement which demonstrates the values of our division. It reads as follows:

- Our goal is to support our consumers, youth, and family members with culturally appropriate resources, encouragement, tools and skills so they may achieve the quality of life they desire.
- As an agency we challenge ourselves to develop ever-greater cultural awareness and sensitivity to acknowledge and embrace individual differences, including language, beliefs, values, attitudes, healing practices, sexual orientation, gender, physical and mental abilities.
- We endeavor to build on existing strengths, develop new skills and maximize the opportunity for recovery and optimal health of our community.

The Cultural Humility Sub-Committee of the Trauma Informed Systems Initiative has the overarching goals to create a safe and supportive client-care environment that promotes healing, and to create a safe and supportive workplace with staff who are able to promote healing.

##### **a. Were the goals and objectives met?**

We have institutionalized the value of cultural diversity throughout the organization beyond trainings. We have also developed a standard in supporting all staff, to have a minimum of seven CLAS training hours every year. BHS developed a new two-part CLAS training venues in partnership with the BH Trainer staff, a local CBO and the Cultural Humility Committee that focused on highlighting local cultural/ethnic disparities in our local probation, educational and housing sectors. The first training part was a Speaker Series with a keynote presenter from the specific sector that highlighted data inequities and shared current challenges and improvement initiatives to address inequities. The second training part was a Cultural Café for workforce staff that established focused discussion topic across multi-division staff break-out groups to raise individual and collective

consciousness and dialogue of inequities and identification of obtainable action steps. Additionally, a Staff of Color Gathering was developed to support staff's experiences of the racially charged socio-political climate and how these experiences impact their client's and their work with the community.

We have improved our ability to serve clients and their families at various county locations where such services are more accessible. We are continuously addressing the issue of underutilization and/or overrepresentation of the target population being served to make sure that we are serving the right populations.

## **2. Reviews and recommendations to county programs and services;**

BHS Management, as a result of data analysis and CLAS Coordinator and Committee recommendations input, is responsible for reviewing and recommending county and contract provider services delivery program and service delivery changes. QI regularly reviews issues of disparity and access of services, as well as grievances and client satisfaction.

## **3. Goals of cultural competence plans;**

The goals of the CLAS plan are embraced, reviewed, and continually improved to meet the cultural diversity needs of our population.

## **4. HSA EEOC Occupational Category report (2021 data not yet available)**

| Health Services Agency Staff |         |         |         |       |      |         |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|------|---------|
| Ethnicity                    | 2002    | 2003    | 2010    | 2016  | 2019 | 2020    |
| Caucasian                    | 72%     | 61%     | 61%     | 59.5% | 53%  | 52%     |
| Latinx                       | 21%     | 18%     | 22%     | 29.3% | 36%  | 37%     |
| Asian                        | 2%-     | 3%      | 3%      | 3%    | 5.6% | 7%      |
| Black                        | 1%      | 1%      | 1%      | 1.3%  | 1%   | 1%      |
| Native American              | No Info | No Info | No Info | .4%   | 1%   | 1%      |
| Mix                          | No Info | No Info | No Info | 1.7%  | 2%   | 2%      |
| Other                        | 2%      | 7%      | 9%      | 1.7%  | .4%  | No Info |
| Unknown                      | 1%      | 9%      | 4%      | 3%    | 1%   | No Info |
| Gender                       | 2002    | 2003    | 2010    | 2016  | 2019 |         |
| Male                         | No Info | No Info | No Info | 35%   | 27%  | 27%     |
| Female                       | No Info | No Info | No Info | 65%   | 73%  | 73%     |
| Other                        | No Info | No Info | No Info | 0%    | *    | No Info |

35% of Behavioral health staff are bilingual. Staff are primarily bilingual in English and Spanish, with a small number of staff also speaking Portuguese.

## **5. County organizational assessment;**

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) recognizes the value of cultural diversity. This value is reflected in everyday practice, in policies and procedures, in our Quality Improvement work plan, in our contracts, and in acknowledging staff that participate in raising their own and others cultural knowledge.

The MHP and DMC-ODS works closely with consumer groups and advocates, including the Mental Health Client Action Network (MHCAN), Mariposa Wellness Center, SUD Commission (SUDC) and Community Action Board (CAB). Additionally, we have a close working relationship with the local NAMI, as well as community-based agencies, probation, law enforcement, child welfare, schools and school districts. The MHP and DMC-ODS interfaces with these groups to solicit input, share community resources and events, and to strengthen our services.

A historical challenge for our County is finding qualified personnel that are bilingual in our threshold language (Spanish). In order to address this matter, we have designated some positions as bilingual only, and have encouraged bilingual, bicultural persons to apply for all positions.

## **6 Staff Trainings**

| Trainings  | Example of Trainings  |
|--|---|
| New Employee<br>Volunteer  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• County BH Orientation</li><li>• Confidentiality/HIPAA</li><li>• Mandated Reporting</li><li>• Human Trafficking Protection</li><li>• Trauma Informed Systems</li><li>• Treatment Plans, Assessments &amp; Progress Notes in support of client services documentation and billing</li></ul> |
| Required Annual<br>Trainings   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Law &amp; Ethics</li><li>• Sexual Harassment</li><li>• HIPAA</li><li>• Culturally &amp; Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)</li><li>• Compliance/FWA Prevention</li><li>• </li></ul>   |
| Advanced<br>Specialized Mental<br>Health and<br>Substance Abuse<br>Trainings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CBT</li><li>• DBT</li><li>• IMMR</li><li>• CANS/ANSA</li><li>• ASAM</li><li>• Mindfulness</li><li>• Supervisor training</li><li>• Motivational Interviewing</li><li>• Mental Health First Aid</li><li>• Suicide Prevention</li></ul>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Provision of Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Humility training &amp; panel presentation (CLAS, SOGIE and DEI inequity)</li> <li>• Implicit Bias</li> <li>• Gang Dynamics training</li> <li>• VA training</li> <li>• Consumer Experience Presentations</li> <li>• Communicating Effectively through an Interpreter</li> </ul> |
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## **CRITERION 5 CLAS TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

**I. The county system shall require all staff and stakeholders to receive annual cultural competence training.**

**A. The county shall develop a three-year training plan.**

BHS has a three-year training plan which includes contracting with a learning management system (LMS) with the aim to implement this system in 2022. This LMS will provide a library of available BH workforce trainings and resources to develop and distribute recorded trainings that are adaptable for staffing flexibility needs. In addition, BH Leadership distributed an All-Staff Memo in April 2020 that ensures staff that they are allotted time during their work schedule to complete the required seven hours of CLAS trainings annually.

**1. The projected number of staff who need the required cultural competence training. This number shall be unduplicated.**

Every county employee in our division is required to complete seven training hours per evaluation year on provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The estimated number of BH workforce is 275 individuals.

**2. Steps the county will take to provide required cultural competence training to 100% of their staff over a three-year period.**

BHS is committed to follow the policies that have been established. Staff are required to meet their 7 hours of cultural awareness training hours per evaluation year. We have established a series of policies that underscore our commitment and practice, including the requirement for each staff to be evaluated on CLAS standards in their annual performance evaluation. In-person trainings were halted in March 2020 due to COVID-19 safety protocols. In order to support staff access to CLAS material, BHS distributed information on webinar, on-line trainings, and videos which qualify for CLAS hours. This expansion lead to the development of a CLAS Education Plan Policy which outlines these content types (trainings, webinars, etc.) which staff can access for completion of CLAS Hours. BH Leadership distributed an All-Staff Memo in April 2020 that ensures staff that they are allotted time during their work schedule to complete the required seven hours of CLAS trainings annually.

### **3. How cultural competence has been embedded into all trainings.**

**II. BHS** has been developing a cultural shift within the county organization, within behavioral health, and throughout different layers of the organization. We are committed to provide appropriate and necessary staff development, education, and training for staff, and embed cultural concepts in our trainings. **Annual cultural competence trainings**

In 2021, BHS offered a variety of CLAS related trainings which enabled staff to complete 7 hours of CLAS training. In 2020, SCCBHS is leveraging online resources such as Think Cultural Health, The National LGBTQ+ Health Education Center, and the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) Network for content specifically created for Behavioral Health Professionals on Improving Cultural Competency for Behavioral Health Professionals. In addition, the previously mentioned Speaker Series and Cultural Café CLAS events were very well attended and received positive feedback and requests for continuing into 2022. The below links are samples of the online resources provided to staff in 2021.

- <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education/behavioral-health>
- <https://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/resources/in/behavioral-health/type/webinar/>

### **III. Relevance and effectiveness of all cultural competence trainings**

#### **A. Training Report on the relevance and effectiveness of all cultural competence trainings, including the following:**

##### **1. Rationale and need for the trainings: Describe how the training is relevant in addressing identified disparities;**

Our cultural awareness trainings are offered with the goal of enhancing the cultural skill set of all staff. We have taken steps to create a cultural shift throughout the organization. BHS strives to include cultural issues in the trainings offered and has specific cultural awareness trainings on different topics. Such trainings cover the topics such as:

**Cultural awareness:** Involves continually developing your awareness of your own and other's cultures to assist in the performance of your professional duties. (Speaker Series)

**Cultural formulation:** Including assessing the patient's cultural identity and understanding how culture affects the explanation of the individual's illness, support system and the clinician-patient relationship as well as understanding how culture affects the assessment and diagnosis of culturally-diverse individuals.

**Cultural sensitivity:** Being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and influence values, learning, and behavior.

**Implicit Bias:** Increasing awareness of our attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner, and how these impacts client services, the workplace, and organization.

**Interpreter training:** Including training staff in the use of interpreters and training in the use of interpreters in the behavioral health setting.

**Latino/a/x:** Hispanic/Latinx population in the United States consisting of demographic, historical, sociopolitical, and geographic contexts that are critical to understanding the population as well as the diversity within. Specific concepts and frames of reference such as identity, acculturation, language, family values, religion and spirituality, traditional beliefs about health and illness, gender role socialization, and social class are discussed. Attention will be given to contemporary issues facing Latinx, including a discussion of factors that influence help seeking and receiving care.

**LGBTQ+:** Includes various aspects of providing effective mental health and substance use treatment services to LGBT individuals. Trainings can include topics related to legal issues, the “coming out” process, increasing LGBT-welcoming spaces, oppression trauma, substance use, LGBTQ+ elders, and gender identity.

**Social/Cultural diversity:** Diverse groups, consumers, family, LGBTQ+, SES, Elderly, Disabilities, etc.

Staff trainings are vital to ensuring cultural and linguistically appropriate services and includes staff on all levels, from administrative to management. These trainings focus on understanding the reality of the persons who may have different worldviews, persons who deal with the stigma of mental illness on a daily basis, and who may be reluctant to seek mental health and/or other services for themselves or a loved one. Trainings also focus on how to improve our skills in engaging and applying customer service principles in serving our consumers and families, as well as to reduce disparities associated with language barriers, access to services and low penetration rates.

Stigma regarding SUDs persists in marginalized communities and impedes: (1) use of medications to help with SUD treatments; (2) use of ASAM assessment criteria to support optimal care, versus court orders not driven by clients’ clinical needs; and (3) support for new and expanded sites for service delivery (e.g., NIMBY or “not in my back yard” opposition). Continued education and work with media, the public, and community leaders are needed to push back on these biases and beliefs, which otherwise create barriers for clients to obtain housing, jobs, childcare, and other services.

## **2. Results of pre/post tests**

All sessions involving Continuing Education Units require participants to complete an evaluation of the session. Pre/ post tests for trainings for psychologists, BBS licensures and trainings for California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals (CCAPP) credits are used.

### **3. Summary report of evaluations**

It is standard practice to evaluate each training that we provide or sponsor. A sign-in sheet is used to track and confirm attendance, and there are specific requirements for cultural awareness training credit, Continuing Education training credit.

### **4. Provide a narrative of current efforts that the county is taking to monitor advancing staff skills/post skills learned in trainings.**

We have created systems to track, monitor, and evaluate our training efforts. Behavioral Health builds from what we have learned and aims to consistently involve supervisory staff in how they may best support line staff, clinical staff and contract agency staff who are responsible for implementing programs and trainings. The mentioned CLAS Trainings during work hours Memo and LMS implementation are recent activities towards this goal.

Whenever feasible we have been moving away from the one-shot approach to trainings. Instead, we have been building on the idea of standardizing essential trainings supported through booster sessions, so that these efforts become standardized steps in the sustainability process. Some trainings are geared for supervisory staff, which can directly oversee and support the implementation of the skills learned in the trainings.

The CLAS Hour Report Form has been updated to include a 5-point Likert scale so staff can evaluate their perceived effectiveness of completed courses.

See Appendix A at end of report: This **optional staff/supervisor form** is intended to be used in support of or at the time of an employee's annual personnel evaluations to help structure a conversation regarding the integration of cultural competency issues into each employee's job performance.

### **5. County methodology/protocol for following up and ensuring staff, over time and well after they complete the training, are utilizing skills learned.**

We established a set of policies and procedures to provide the needed infrastructure. The methodology used to ensure staff complete their training and utilize their cultural awareness skills is embedded in these policies. Staff are required to receive seven hours of culture and/or language related training per evaluation year, and all supervisors evaluate staff on their "cultural competence" in their annual performance evaluation. Supervisors are responsible to oversee their staff and require them to attend needed trainings to ensure culturally aware and responsive services.

## **IV. Counties must have a process for the incorporation of Client Culture Training throughout the behavioral health system.**

We have an established practice to include client culture as part of our trainings. Sometimes the trainings focus specifically on what it is like to live with a mental health or substance use disorder diagnosis, and other times the consumer perspective is included in clinical or cultural presentations.

## **CRITERION 6**

## **COUNTY'S COMMITMENT TO GROWING A MULTICULTURAL WORKFORCE: HIRING AND RETAINING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY COMPETENT STAFF**

### **I. Recruitment, hiring, and retention of a multicultural workforce from, or experienced with, the identified unserved and underserved populations.**

**A. Extract a copy of the Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) workforce assessment submitted to the state for the Workforce Education and Training (WET) component. Rationale: Will ensure continuity across the County Mental Health and DMC-ODS System.**

We have an ongoing challenge of hiring and retaining bilingual bicultural psychiatrists as well as other licensed clinicians.

**B. Compare the WET Plan assessment data with the general population, Medi-Cal population, and 200% of poverty data. Rationale: Will give ability to improve penetration rates and eliminate disparities.**

As mentioned previously WET funding is reportedly not available for workforce development activities, yet BHS is able to continue with tracking, monitoring and analyzing our cultural response to our community through our quality assurance activities within QI. In comparing the data from the MHP and DMC-ODS EQRO Reports and MHSA Plan assessment with the general population, Medi-Cal population, and the 200% of Poverty data, it raises several challenges: first the shortages of licensed clinicians, especially bilingual (Spanish) speaking clinicians. Second, our workforce does not proportionately reflect the ethnic diversity of the community; there is a shortage of Latinx (a) staff throughout the system. There have not been positions designated for consumer and family members at the County at this time; however, the county has begun to move in this direction with the passing of the Peer Support Certification and Medi-Cal reimbursable services.

There is a severe shortage of Spanish speaking staff at almost all public agencies and COVID-19 continuation has greatly impacted overall healthcare workforce capacity, availability and endurance. The general population, Medi-Cal population and the 200% of Poverty data demonstrate that while our penetration rate is competitive with the State average, we are not satisfied with the low numbers for serving clients who identify Spanish as their primary language. We are curious as to the personal and social factors that contribute to these low numbers, including if there is a direct correlation to the shortage of Spanish speaking staff throughout our county's behavioral health system.

**C. If applicable, the county shall report in the CCPR, the specific actions taken in response to the cultural consultant technical assistance recommendations as reported to the county during the review of their WET Plan submission to the State.**

Not applicable.

**D. Provide a summary of targets reached to grow a multicultural workforce in rolling out county WET planning and implementation efforts.**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) included several actions that address efforts to grow a multicultural workforce. Although our WET services are not as robust as they once were (when we had the original funding), we do continue to do the following:

- Have continuous recruitment for bi-lingual behavioral health clinicians. Added the following statement that bilingual positions “require that the mental health clinician be fully fluent in Spanish and English to provide the full range of professional level mental health services in Spanish, including the facilitation of individual, group, family, and crisis counseling. Bilingual clinicians may be asked to translate written clinical materials and interpret for Spanish speaking clients that need to communicate with monolingual English-speaking mental health professionals.”
- Provide higher education field placement and internship opportunities for bi-lingual candidates within MHP and DMC-ODS services to support industry growth and staff hiring and retention efforts.
- Provide High School Outreach: To foster knowledge and create interest in mental health as a career path amongst high school students, with a focus on bilingual (Spanish) and bicultural students.

**E. Share lessons learned on efforts in rolling out county WET planning and implementation efforts.**

Not Applicable No WET funds have been available since prior to FY18-19 and as a result, we have not been able to continue these services.

**F. Identify county technical assistance needs.**

Hiring Spanish speaking staff. Learning from other counties about effective evidenced-based practices in CLAS.

**CRITERION 7  
LANGUAGE CAPACITY**

**I. Increase Bilingual Workforce Capacity**

**A. Evidence of dedicated resources and strategies counties are undertaking to grow bilingual staff capacity:**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) designates some positions as bilingual only, and encourages bilingual, bicultural persons to apply for all positions. Santa Cruz County has a continuous recruitment for bilingual clinical staff. The bilingual job announcement indicates that bilingual positions “require that the mental health clinician be fully fluent in Spanish and English to provide the full range of professional level mental health services in Spanish, including the facilitation of individual, group, family, and crisis counseling. Bilingual clinicians may be asked to translate written clinical materials and

interpret for Spanish speaking clients that need to communicate with monolingual English-speaking mental health professionals.”

We assess prospective employees in their ability to provide culturally aware services. Santa Cruz County Personnel Department evaluates and certifies staff speaking the threshold language (Spanish) in their ability to use Spanish. Staff passing level one is able to communicate orally. Staff passing level two are also able to read and write Spanish. Job openings are disseminated to all eligible employees within the Division by HSA Personnel.

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services has policies regarding the provision of Culturally Aware Services, including training requirements that cover client cultural, and working with diverse groups (e.g. Latinx, and LGBTQ). Contract providers will adhere to cultural aware standards, as specified in their contracts.

We do not have staff whose sole job is to interpret. Santa Cruz Behavioral Health standard is to provide services in the threshold language therefore we rarely use interpreters. When interpreters are needed, we work with medically qualified interpreter services interpreter services or bilingual mental health professional on our staff. For example, a bilingual mental health clinician who is facilitating an IEP school meeting may utilize an approved interpreter service or bilingual mental health staff to meet the language needs of attendees. This allows the bilingual facilitator to focus on their task and provide equitable and quality services. We offer trainings to staff on how to be effective interpreters, and how to use interpreters effectively. Interpreter services are also utilized for non-threshold languages and for sign language on an as-needed basis.

## **II. Provide services to persons who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) by using interpreter services.**

### **A. Evidence of policies, procedures, and practices in place for meeting clients' language needs:**

The County has a 24-hour phone line (**1-800-952-2335**) with statewide toll-free access that has linguistic capability for all Medi-Cal beneficiaries. It is answered during normal business hours by clerical and clinical staff that speak the threshold languages. In addition, Santa Cruz County has contracted with Language Services Associates.

To access a Qualified Interpreter, the following number is called (866) 937-7325 and when greeted the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services Account Code 50492920 is used. Staff are trained to use the language line; additionally, the protocol for using Language Services is outlined in a “quick reference guide” for staff.

To provide services for the hearing impaired, the County utilizes IRIS application from Language Services contract as well as a dedicated Access email address from County Behavioral Health Information webpage. For face-to-face evaluations of a client with a hearing disability, the Access Team shall provide assessments by a staff member in ASL

(American Sign Language). If such a staff member is not available, the Access Team shall use an interpreter from the county contract service for the hearing impaired. To provide services for the visually impaired Behavioral Health provides audio recordings of pertinent beneficiary and provider information at all clinic sites. In addition, information will be provided over the phone to the visually impaired by the Access Team.

The Santa Cruz County Mental Health Plan has also implemented the “Service Access for Visually or Hearing Impaired” policy and procedures to ensure continuous services to the visually and hearing impaired.

**B. Evidence that clients are informed in writing in their primary language, of their rights to language assistance services. Including posting of this right.**

Clients are informed in writing in their primary language that they have a right to free language assistance services. This information is posted in all service lobbies and included in correspondence for grievance, appeal, change of treatment staff requests, and NOABD processes.

**C. Evidence that the county/agency accommodate persons who have LEP by using bilingual staff or interpreter services.**

The Santa Cruz MHP and DMC-ODS standard is to provide services in the threshold language when at all possible. When interpreters are needed, we utilize medically qualified interpreter services and bilingual behavioral health professionals on our staff. For example, a bilingual behavioral health clinician may interpret for a monolingual psychiatrist. Interpreter services are also accessed for non-threshold languages and for sign language on an as-needed basis. BHS does not utilize family members, especially minors, for interpretation or translation services.

Service providers that contract with the County are required to have policies and procedures that are consistent with the County’s policy “Provision of Linguistically Appropriate Services”. It is prohibited to expect family members or friends to provide interpreter services.

**D. Share lessons learned around providing accommodation to persons who have LEP and have needed interpreter services or who use bilingual staff.**

Based on the trainings provided on how to interpret and how to use interpreters, staff have learned how to be a conduit of communication, and how the interpreter solely translates what is verbalized by each party and does not add to the conversation. Bilingual staff who are leading and facilitating coordinated care meetings have been encouraged to request interpreters to meet the language needs of attendees. This allows the bilingual facilitator to focus on their task and provide equitable and quality services.

**E. Share historical challenges on efforts made on the items A, B, and C above. Share lessons learned.**

A historical challenge for our BHS is finding qualified personnel that are bilingual in our threshold language (Spanish). To address this matter, we have designated some positions as bilingual only, and have encouraged bilingual, bicultural persons to apply for all positions. We assess prospective employees in their ability to provide culturally aware services. We also ask (in English) about their skills and abilities to perform the required duties in Spanish, and the Santa Cruz County Personnel Department evaluates and certifies staff speaking the threshold language (Spanish) in their ability to use Spanish. Staff passing level one are able to communicate orally. Staff passing level two are also able to read and write Spanish. Job openings are disseminated to all eligible employees within the Division by Health Services Agency Personnel (to encourage promotional opportunities).

Job announcements for bilingual clinical positions include language stating that bilingual positions: "require that the mental health clinician be fully fluent in Spanish and English to provide the full range of professional level mental health services in Spanish, including the facilitation of individual, group, family, and crisis counseling. Bilingual clinicians may be asked to translate written clinical materials and interpret for Spanish speaking clients that need to communicate with monolingual English-speaking mental health professionals."

**F. Identify county technical assistance needs.**

The biggest challenge the County has is in finding Spanish Speaking psychiatrists and clinical staff.

**III. Provide bilingual staff and/or interpreters for the threshold languages at all points of contact.**

- a. Evidence of availability of interpreter (e.g. posters/bulletins) and/or bilingual staff for the languages spoken by community.

The County's standard is to provide services in the threshold language. When interpreters are used, we access approved medically qualified interpreter services or bilingual behavioral health professionals on our staff. For example, a bilingual mental health clinician may interpret for a monolingual psychiatrist.

It is prohibited to expect family members or friends to provide interpreter services. LEP individuals are informed (in a language that they understand) in the Behavioral Health brochures and in the intake process that they have a right to free language assistance services. This information is also posted.

- b. Documented evidence that interpreter services are offered and provided to clients and the response to the offer is recorded.

Evidence can be found in the Service Request logs and documentation within the BHS' Electronic Medical Records (EMR). This information is usually recorded in Assessments, Treatment Plans and it is also documented in progress notes. A Spanish Audit was implemented in 2020 to review chart of beneficiaries identified as Spanish preferred language and review for continuity of Spanish services and client documents. When there

are discrepancies, this information is provided to the teams as a means to continually improve of meeting the needs of Spanish speaking clients in a linguistically appropriate manner. This work will continue in 2022 when the BBS licensed CLAS Coordinator position is filled in mid-December 2021

**c. Evidence of providing contract or agency staff that are linguistically proficient in threshold languages during regular day operating hours.**

At key points of contact the County provides services in the threshold language for the beneficiary and staff to communicate effectively. Clients speaking in the threshold language will be assigned to clinicians that speak their language, whenever possible. Medically qualified interpreter services are utilized when other options are unavailable.

When a client or client's family needs a translator to assist during a mental health or SUD assessment or evaluation, it is the responsibility of the clinician to either arrange or provide the translation services. The standard is to provide services in the threshold language. When interpreters are needed, we generally use other mental health professionals on our staff or medically qualified interpreter services. For example, a bilingual SUD Counselor or licensed clinician may interpret for a monolingual prescriber. When bilingual staff are leading and facilitating coordinated care meetings, they are encouraged to request interpreters to meet the language needs of attendees. This allows the bilingual facilitator to focus on their task and provide equitable and quality services.

It is prohibited to expect family members or friends to provide interpreter services. LEP individuals are informed (in a language that they understand) in the County brochures and in the intake process that they have a right to free language assistance services.

**d. Evidence that counties have a process in place to ensure that interpreters are trained and monitored for language competence (e.g., formal testing).**

Staff speaking the threshold language (Spanish) are evaluated and certified by the Santa Cruz County Personnel Department in their ability to use Spanish. Staff passing level one (1) are able to communicate orally. Staff passing level two (2) are also able to read and write Spanish.

**IV. Provide services to all LEP clients not meeting threshold language criteria who encounter the behavioral health system at all points of contact.**

**A. Policies, procedures, and practices the county uses that include the capability to refer, and otherwise link, clients who do not meet the threshold language criteria (e.g., LEP clients) who encounter the mental health system at all key points of contact, to culturally and linguistically appropriate services.**

BHS has a policy "Linguistically Appropriate Services" that addresses how we meet the needs of consumers who do not meet the threshold language criteria. Evidence can be found in the Electronic Medical Records.

Our current policy states it is prohibited to expect family members or friends to provide interpreter services. LEP individuals are informed (in a language that they understand) in the intake process that they have a right to free language assistance services. Medically qualified interpreter services are utilized when staff are not available to provide client language needs.

**B. Provide a written plan for how clients, who do not meet the threshold language criteria, are assisted to secure, or linked to culturally and linguistically appropriate services.**

BHS has a policy “Linguistically Appropriate Services” that addresses how we meet the needs of consumers who do not meet the threshold language criteria. It states: “If the beneficiary speaks a language other than a threshold language and there is no provider in the Mental Health Plan or DMC-ODS pilot who speaks the beneficiary’s language, the program will contract with someone to provide these services. The program may request the assistance of a neighbor county program to provide these services. LEP beneficiaries will be informed (in a language that they understand) that they have a right to free language assistance services.” We have a standing contract with an interpreter service and also use a language services vendor, when appropriate.

**C. Policies, procedures, and practices that comply with the following Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requirements:**

1. Prohibiting the expectation that family members provide interpreter services.
2. A client may choose to use a family member or friend as an interpreter after being informed of the availability of free interpreter services; and
3. Minor children should not be used as interpreters.

The BHS “Linguistically Appropriate Services” policy complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is prohibited to expect family members or friends to provide interpreter services. A beneficiary may choose a family member or a friend as an interpreter after being informed of the availability of free interpreter services. Minor children are not used as interpreters.

**V. Required translated documents, forms, signage, and client informing materials.**

**A. Culturally and linguistically appropriate written information for threshold languages:**

BHS has available general program literature for the identified threshold language that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Materials translated into the County’s threshold languages include such things as The DMC-ODS Handbook for Medi-Cal Beneficiaries, The Mental Health Plan Handbook for Med-Cal Beneficiaries, Provider Directory for both MHP and DMC-ODS, Consent for Treatment, Satisfaction Surveys, Grievance Resolution Request brochure, etc. Clients are informed in writing in their primary language that they have a right to free language assistance services. This information is posted as well as included in correspondence for procedures related to grievances, appeals, change of treatment staff, and NOABD.

- B. Documented evidence in the clinical chart, that clinical findings/reports are communicated in the clients' preferred language.**

This information is recorded in the Electronic Medical Record in client admissions, progress notes, treatment plans, assessments, intake forms, and scanned documents

- C. Consumer satisfaction survey translated in threshold languages, including a summary report of the results (e.g., back translation and culturally appropriate field testing).**

Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services (BHS) uses surveys as required by DHCS MHP Consumer Perception Survey and DMC-ODS Treatment Perception Survey. The Consumer Perception Survey has four forms Adult (for ages 18-59), Older Adult (for age 60+), Youth Services Survey (for ages 13-17 and transition-age youth), and Youth Services Survey for Families (for parents/caregivers of youth under age 18). The DMC-ODS has a survey for Youth and for Adult participants. Each of these forms is available in English and Spanish. They are sent out per DHCS survey cycle.

- D. Mechanism for ensuring accuracy of translated materials in terms of both language and culture (e.g., back translation and culturally appropriate field testing).**

Bilingual Level II Clinical and/or Administrative staff within the BHS program reviews and approves the final draft translations. The Cultural Humility Committee has made themselves available for Bilingual Level II committee members to review translated materials for linguistic and cultural accuracy and relevance.

- E. Mechanism for ensuring translated materials is at an appropriate reading level (6<sup>th</sup> grade).**  
**Source: Department of Health Services and Managed Risk Medical Insurance Boards.**

It is our aim, as identified in the “Linguistically Appropriate Services” policy to ensure accessibility and understanding of services, through communications in the beneficiary’s primary language. Bilingual Level II Quality Assurance staff develop, and review translated materials for linguistic and cultural accuracy and relevance, including required font size, cognitive ability, and reading level.

## **CRITERION 8 ADAPTATION OF SERVICES**

### **I. Client driven/operated recovery and wellness programs.**

- A. List and describe the county's/agency's client-driven/operated recovery and wellness programs.**

1. Evidence the county has alternatives and options available within the above programs that accommodate individual preference and racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse differences.
2. Briefly describe, from the list in “A” above, those client-driven/operated programs that are racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically specific.

There are two Wellness centers in Santa Cruz County: Mental Health Client Action Network (MHCAN) in Santa Cruz, and Mariposa in Watsonville. Both have transitioned to

on-line platform to provide services in a safe manner due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mariposa has also modified office procedures and spaces to comply with COVID-19 safety protocols.

MHCAN is a consumer owned and operated program that provides a safe space for persons with psychiatric disabilities to congregate and socialize. They also offer a variety of programs, including groups, classes, and alternative treatment (like acupuncture). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MHCAN shifted their services from in-person to online by providing virtual 1:1 peer support, classes, and support groups. Classes and groups include: physical fitness, 12-step groups, self-care, relapse prevention, substance use, mental wellness, and recreational opportunities such as role-playing games, poetry, chess. MHCAN's peer-based model helps clients reclaim their dignity through self-help.

Mariposa is located in the heart of downtown Watsonville, a community that houses many Anglo/Caucasian consumers as well as many underserved Latinx consumers and their families. The Mariposa Wellness Center program quickly became a hub for activities and support services for adult mental health consumers as well as for outreach activities. The center is a convenient, friendly, easily accessible gathering place for families and adult consumers to share information, learn about services and get support for engaging in wellness and educational activities. Activities for consumers generally take place in the daytime and in the early evening, to accommodate work schedules. The program is designed to provide supports for recovery. It strives to reflect the cultural, ethnic and racial diversity of mental health consumers and their families. Some groups are peer run and mental health staff provide others. Services are provided in Spanish and English.

DMC-ODS SUD treatment services and community support services have also adapted to COVID-19 limitations by transitioning to on-line meeting, group and individual service adaptation. In-person services are now conducted in open yet confidential outside spaced with appropriate PPE for all attending persons.

## **II. Responsiveness of behavioral health services**

- A. Documented evidence that the county/contractor has available, as appropriate, alternatives and options that accommodate individual preference, or cultural and linguistic preferences, demonstrated by the provision of culture-specific programs, provided by the county/contractor and/or referral to community-based, culturally-appropriate, non-traditional behavioral health provider.**

The MHP and DMC-ODS informing materials apprise beneficiaries of their rights and is provided in the beneficiaries preferred language. Additionally, the Mental Health Plan and DMC-ODS networks have clinicians that speak the threshold language, and some that are bicultural. The clinic site in Watsonville (a predominantly Latinx city) is staffed with clinicians and clerical staff that are bilingual, and most are bicultural as well.

- B. Evidence that the county informs clients of the availability of the above listing in their member services brochure. If it is not already in the member services brochure, the county will include it in their next printing or within one year of the submission of their CCPR.**

The MHP informing materials and the DMC-ODS informing materials notify beneficiaries of the availability of this listing. The CLAS Plan is posted on the BHS website.

**C. Counties have policies, procedures, and practices to inform all Medi-Cal beneficiaries of available services under consolidation of specialty mental health services. (Outreach requirements as per Section 1810.310, 1A and 2B, Title 9)**

The “Outreach to Medi-Cal Beneficiaries” describes the general principles of our outreach efforts to inform the community of available behavioral health services through planned activities that reflect the varying cultural and linguistic needs of our target populations.

The Division conducts a variety of outreach efforts to the cultural and linguistically diverse community. These include the following activities:

- a. Community Collaboration: Managers and supervisors represent Behavioral Health and take a leadership role in community collaborations.
- b. Staff Presentations: Staff respond to invitations to provide information about services, with priority given to those presentations that would allow staff to reach our target population. These strategies inform, educate, and help diffuse myths about mental illness
- c. Mailings & Newsletters: Mailings to the target population or articles presented in community newsletters and/or publications, as well as the Behavioral Health newsletter “We Are Serious About Mental Health & Recovery”.
- d. Informing Materials: Behavioral Health’s MHP and DMC-ODS materials (in both English and Spanish), notify the reader about signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance use disorder impact across the lifespan, and how to access services for them or a loved one. This is one way to provide resources and direction for consumers, family members, service providers, and community members.
- e. Program Activities: Outreach activities are a part of service provision in the Children’s Mental Health and Adult Mental Health, and DMC-ODS Plan and programs.

**D. Evidence that the county has assessed factors and developed plans to facilitate the ease with which culturally and linguistically diverse populations can obtain services. Such factors should include:**

1. Location, transportation, hours of operation, or other relevant areas;
2. Adapting physical facilities to be accessible to disabled persons, while being comfortable and inviting to persons of diverse cultural backgrounds (e.g., posters, magazines, décor, signs); and
3. Locating facilities in settings that are non-threatening and reduce stigma, including co-location of services and/or partnerships, such as primary care and in community settings. (The county may include evidence of a study or analysis of the above factors, or evidence that the county program is adjusted based upon the findings of their study or analysis.)

BHS facility signage is posted in both English and Spanish. At our current South County location in Watsonville psychoeducational material, wall art and décor are provided in culturally respect and threshold language (Spanish) capabilities to ensure a welcoming and inviting environment for clients. At each BHS location, services (including reception and direct clinical services) are provided in Spanish. In addition, Santa Cruz County

Behavioral Health Services larger facility in Watsonville provides increased access to behavioral health services in a welcoming environment, including substance use disorder services and psychiatric services. In addition, the new behavioral health clinic will remain on the same campus as the county medical clinic, to promote access to holistic culturally and linguistically appropriate medical services.

### **III. Quality of Care: Contract Providers**

**A. Evidence of how a contractor's ability to provide culturally competent behavioral health services is taken into account in the selection of contract providers, including the identification of any cultural language competence conditions in contracts with mental health providers.**

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services has policies and procedures that contain requirements to assure that culturally and linguistically competent medically necessary services. In addition, this is incorporated into network provider contracts.

### **IV. Quality Assurance**

**Requirement: A description of current or planned processes to assess the quality of care provided for all consumers under the consolidation of specialty mental health services. The focus is on the added or unique measures that shall be used or planned in order to accurately determine the outcome of services to consumers from diverse cultures including, but not limited to, the following:**  
**A. List if applicable, any outcome measures, identification, and descriptions of any culturally relevant consumer outcome measures used by the county.**

Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services (BHS) uses surveys as required by DHCS MHP Consumer Perception Survey and DMC-ODS Treatment Perception Survey. The Consumer Perception Survey has four forms Adult (for ages 18-59), Older Adult (for age 60+), Youth Services Survey (for ages 13-17 and transition-age youth), and Youth Services Survey for Families (for parents/caregivers of youth under age 18). The DMC-ODS has a survey for Youth and for Adult participants. Each of these forms is available in English and Spanish. They are sent out per DHCS survey cycle.

In addition, Grievances, Appeal, State Fair Hearing, Change of Treatment Staff requests are identified by age, gender and ethnicity.

**B. Staff satisfaction: A description of methods, if any, used to measure staff experience or opinion regarding the organization's ability to value cultural diversity in its workforce and culturally and linguistically competent services**

The County periodically conducts a survey designed to measure staff experiences and/or opinions regarding the valuation of cultural diversity in the Division's workforce, the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and their training needs.

A Survey of Needs was completing this year which identified many staff were already taking part in CLAS activities on their own time. The survey also identified what types of CLAS formats staff would like to take part in such as book groups and team discussion on issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

**C. Grievances and Complaints:** Provide a description of how the county mental health process for Medi-Cal and non-Medi-Cal client Grievance and Complaint/Issues Resolution Process data is analyzed and any comparison rates between the general beneficiary population and ethnic beneficiaries.

All grievances, in writing or orally, in English, Spanish or another language, are treated the same regardless of insurance status of the consumer. The same timeframes are used as well as protocols described in Federal Managed Care Parity rules. Grievances and requests to change providers and complaints are tracked and analyzed. The Quality Improvement staff shares aggregate data to the state as well as shared with the Quality Improvement Steering Committee. The data includes break down by ethnicity, age grouping, gender and language.

Appendix A: Supplemental BHS employee survey at time of annual performance evaluation:

## **EMPLOYEE CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES FEEDBACK FORM**

This **optional form** is intended to be used in support of or at the time of an employee's annual personnel evaluations to help structure a conversation regarding the integration of cultural competency issues into each employee's job performance. **These are suggested questions only**, meant to assist having a thorough and thoughtful dialogue. The personnel evaluation may be between a supervisor and administrative employee, supervisor and clinician or manager and supervisor. Notes taken on the form, by the supervisor/manager, will be kept only in the supervisor/manager's file to be used for professional development purposes. The agreed-on goal (question # 7) may be included in the formal written evaluation.

- 1. Describe a specific circumstance with a client/clinician/community group or staff member where you think your own values (socio-economic, religious, ethnic, etc.) affected the other person (client/ supervisee/staff member) in either a positive or negative way.**
  
- 2. Would you consciously repeat this circumstance again? Why or why not?**
  
- 3. How do you react and relate when an experience of a client, clinician or staff member is very different than or opposed to your own?**
  
- 4. How has this affected your clinical, supervisory or work relationships?**
  
- 5. Describe a specific circumstance when you made culturally based assumption(s) in relation to a client, supervisee or other staff? Describe what effect that had on the other person.**

6. **Describe a specific circumstance when you made gender based or sexual orientation based assumption(s) about a client, supervisee or staff member. Describe what effect that had on that person.**
7. **Develop at least one goal for the next year that is specific to increasing your sensitivity to how the needs of your clients, supervisees or co-workers might be different from your own.**